

Ortley Beach Voters and Taxpayers Association

September 2017 General Membership Meeting

Saturday September 23, 2017

Meeting called to order at 9:35am

Attendance: Paul Jeffrey, Anthony Colucci, Mike Wymbs, MaryAnn Giordano, Joe Cantalupo, Toni Tomarazzo, Cathy Crisafulli , Kathy Barisciano, Joan Strathern

A Quorum of members were present.

The minutes of the August 2017 OBVTA General Membership meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Kathy Barisciano reported funds available of \$66,723.00. The largest expenses in 2017 have been sponsored events, with the exception of beach jam where we earned approximately \$2000.00 profit. (The Beach Jam expense budget was about \$340 higher than budgeted but income was more than expected.)

Membership report 455 paid members (this is the number of families so the amount of people are much more – indicating at least 1000 members). This compares to last year where there were 436 members. There are 389 residential membership renewals, 45 new residential members and 20 business memberships.

Beach Called Ortley

For sale through the Friends of Ortley Beach – the book is for sale and can be purchased through the organization. This book is an amazing recount of the history of Ortley Beach with an amazing number of historical pictures. Superstorm Sandy doesn't define Ortley Beach – this community has a long and vibrant history and the book is skillfully done. Please support the organization by purchasing one of the books. Information can be found on the Friends of Ortley Beach website :

www.friendsofortleybeach.org

Guest Councilwoman Maruca

Councilwoman Maruca and Councilman Mo Hill again attended the OBVTA monthly meeting. Their engagement and participation is greatly appreciated (and Councilman Hill brought a 20lb box of dog treats to donate to local shelters along with the OBVTA!)

Councilwoman Maruca received questions from OBVTA prior to the meeting and offered the following information

– advertising signs on the boardwalk. Toms River Council approved for recreation publication at ball fields etc and did not anticipate that it would be at the beach. But beach is considered recreation. These are going to be removed and a cease and desist has been issued for no further ads at the beach.

- house at 423 B Coolidge Avenue A notice of violation by the code enforcement was issued in July 2017. It has been escalated and Toms River will go in to clean up and a lien will be put on the property. No power and no meter on the house. An uninhabitable property notice on this property.

-EMS building – Councilman Whitmann at last meeting was unclear about the status of this property.. Councilwoman Maruca advised that the plans for the property is in preliminary discussions. No architectural plans have been completed. Limitations are the size of the property and the flood plan which causes challenges. Not a FEMA reimburseable project. Must be taxpayer funded. Must ensure that this property is ADA compliant. Councilwoman Maruca said that the OBVTA will be included in the plans to redevelop this property

-Kayak launch still under review to ensure ADA compliant Looking at 6th Terrace site.

-Dune and Beach Replenishment – delays to the completion because of the storms in light of the dredges being moved to protect them.

-street signs – 6th Ave, Bay Blvd., fort Ave, Fielder DPW is replacing and county notified of missing signs on county roads.

-parking striping on north side of Fielder – striping done on south side of Fielder. Going to review the north side of the street.

Questions from the membership:

Question – last storm saw some loss of beach. Is there a plan to replenish and the answer was it won't be replenished at this point but Toms River is ready to address if there are any indications of breaches etc.

Question – former ambulance site...it needs to be cleaned up and cut the weeds down. Councilwoman Maruca said it will be addressed and Paul Jeffrey asked that the trailers on the property be addressed as well.

Question – paving and the bid going out for the project. What is the timeline for the paving. Answer – bids have been out for a couple of weeks. It is expected that the contract will spread in to the spring. The north beaches will be in the spring. It is expected that the bids will come back in a few weeks and once approved by the council should start within a few weeks. Dependent on the weather as well for completion.

-Request DOT funding grant to raise 6th Terrace by Harborside. This project will be similar to the Washington Street project.

Question – closing of Bridge last week of October. This is the last winter that this will happen. Scheduled to be reopened May 2018 and be completely fixed.

Question – bathrooms on the boardwalk should be opened after Labor Day. They were not opened at 11:00 am on day. Should be opened seven days a week. Also, sand mats are necessary in the two handicap ramps to make it easier to get on to the beach. Not just mats on the cross overs – mats all the way to the beach. Answer – mats on every walkover will be present and handrails on the sides of each walkover.

Question – explain how the tax rate is established on the fire district. Councilwoman Maruca said that the rates for District one and District two are set by an autonomous body. They will be invited to the next OBVTA meeting.

Discussion of Surf Club property by Councilwoman Maruca and Councilman Hill. Councilwoman Maruca said that the town rejected a proposal by one developer that called for the closing of Ocean Avenue. The councilwoman was asked why the township is not actively pursuing the purchase of the property. She advised it is very expensive. However, it was pointed out to her that there is very limited shore land available...this presents a once in life time opportunity to secure open space on the ocean for the good of the entire township. The reluctance of the council to commit the resources to this important opportunity now and over the last four years is indicative of a lack of commitment to the barrier island. Literally tens of millions of dollars have been committed to purchasing land in the northern sections of the mainland.. the same consideration must be given to the barrier island or the this council and Mayor will have wasted the only opportunity to preserve open space of this type on the ocean.

Councilman Hill advised that there are many needy areas of Toms River that need to be addressed with open space funds and noted for example that Route 9 has not been designed or upgraded to handle the amount of traffic that has grown through development of that area. (However, this is not a municipal road and developers and the state and the county must be held responsible for improvements)..this is apples to oranges when debating the merit of securing open space in Ortle Beach and the once in a life time access to beach front property that will be squandered by this council and Mayor if proper, enthusiastic and professional work is not done to secure this land immediately. For years the beaches in Toms River were not maintained – no dunes etc – resulting in more damage to this community than some surrounding communities (see the dune system that was nurtured and maintained in Lavallette and Seaside Park) – to let this opportunity go unaddressed is another slap in the face of the barrier island and all residents of Toms River who would have access. This is better than a bunch of \$1Million condo developments who's rateables will do nothing for the Toms River budget when compared to the services that will be required.

Guest Sgt. Barchonski

-warmest thoughts to Puerto Rico on the destruction at the hands of Hurricane Maria

-Third Ave – pedestrian and bicycle lanes. TR police are going to visit homes regarding development of bike lanes.

-Washington and Eisenhower – crash evaluation as to whether there should be a stop sign on Washington and a recommendation will be made as to where the stop sign should be situated – possibly on Eisenhower.

Question – another question about the light in Seaside at Stewart's. Sgt. Advised that this is a very common crossing light but no education was done to teach people how to abide by the light.

Guest Joan McDonald Deluca

Her organization worked in Ortley Beach after Hurricane Sandy. Spearheaded the relief efforts for Hurricane Maria for individuals in Texas to pay forward the help we all got after Sandy. Collected donations – food and water that went to Texas in a van delivered by Doug Quinn very quickly. Then many worked to fill a tractor trailer with donations for Texas. Targeted several groups to make contributions. Joan went with the truck to ensure that the donations were used and weren't put in a warehouse.

First stop was the Altruistic Relief Kitchen. The Kitchen works out of a TeePee and cooks out of army pots. The community leaders come and take food to break down into individual servings and deliver to the neighborhoods. They started feeding 300 people and within seven days they were feeding 3000 people.

Second stop was to go to a couple of locations where the Kitchen was feeding people. Joan's team asked people if they needed supplies such as diapers, shovels etc. The group was then directed to a facility for the elderly that was being repopulated and the remaining supplies were left there.

This project not only provided needed supplies but gave everyone a feeling of hope.

Plan is to send one more truck at least to Texas and some to Florida. Fresh fruit was donated by Jerry's and was very much appreciated. Continued donations can be delivered and the locations for collections will be published on the OBVTA website.

Spirits donated \$10,000. Part of the Money given to Team Rubicon – a group made up of veterans offering support and funding. Money went to the Altruistic Relief.org and funds were used to pay the cost of the delivering the supplies to Texas. A complete accounting will be published shortly.

Amazon Smile

Friends of Ortley Beach are now authorized to receive donations through Amazon. Amazon makes the donation once someone indicates the preference.

Cathy Crissafulli updated the OBVTA on the Friends of Ortley Beach. Sharon Collucci has really made all of the projects this year possible, working alongside Gail, Bob, Cathy and Paul among others. The FOB needs a Treasurer and a Secretary to complete the Board of Directors and additional members are needed for the committees.

Sandy 5th Anniversary

MaryAnn discussed the upcoming anniversary and the recovery and survival of our community. St. Elizabeth's has planned an event on Oct 29 "a celebration of Superstorm sandy and a celebration of survival". There will be a service at 9:30 am on Oct. 29th and the public is invited to participate. The priest will deliver a homily that is related to the storm. A light brunch will be held in the church after and then the group will go to the ocean.

OBVTA will partner with the church and advertise the event .

One other Sandy Anniversary event that has been announced. On Oct 14 the NJ Organizing Event will hold an event in Manahawkin Information on this will be posted on the OBVTA website.

NJ Gov Race

Shorebeat newspaper has been asked by NJ Common – a press organization that works with press throughout the state. Shorebeat is asking for a few volunteers to meet with the reporter at a roundtable to talk about what they want from the next NJ Governor. Four to six people are asked to participate. Please let Paul Jeffrey know if you are interested.

Master Plan

Zoning changes in the master plan addresses congestion, responsible building, traffic safety. The changes have been implemented. Limits 2 family east of Route 35 by requiring variances with more stringent requirements. West of Route 35 no new 2 families.

The last zoning board meeting (follow up Oct 12) – developers asking for large developments to maximize profits. 2 lots that had 2 family homes originally and are located across from the Lord House. The property received a variance to rebuild the two families side by side east to west behind the Lord House because the family that owned the property asked for the help in order to afford to return to the community. That family then sold to a developer who bot both lots to build a four unit development by flipping the property to face the ocean. This is contrary to what is called for in the master plan.

More money to the developer for four units that face the ocean without any commitment to the town. A parking area for 16 cars is included but the congestion and the traffic right behind the Lord House will be problematic. In addition, parking at the beach front spots will be challenged with overflow from the units.

This application is scheduled to be discussed on Thursday Sept 12 at 7:30 in the Toms River Administratvie building. Please review the agenda of the Zoning Board published typically the day or two before the meeting to ensure the application is still on the agenda. The Zoning Board asked for a site inspection and it may be carried to a future meeting if that has not been completed.

OCUA Property

OBVTA attended last Freeholder meeting to again request access to part of the OCUA property as a passive park. 15 people attended and protested in front of the Freeholders.

Approximately 15 people held a protest in front of the building before the meeting to draw attention.

Toms River Council sent non binding resolution to the Freeholders to support this initiative and the OCUA board led by 40 year OCUA veteran John Parker (that's not a typo, that's right 40 years of ruling without consideration for the public – and his appointment is renewed by the Freeholders?) still refuses to consider the use of the fallow land for a passive parkall because the current Chairman alleges that the ground is unsafe – at the same time renting the land for parking by the Toms River township, the use of the land by utilities and the renting of the property for the parking of over 500 cars for a Mumford and Sons concert. But the property is unsafe for Ortleigh Beach park land????

The Freeholders were unsympathetic. One even alleged that homeowners in Ortleigh knew what they were getting when they bought their homes!!!! (an unbelievably arrogant response from a Freeholder that is elected to represent constituents.)

The OBVTA will continue to advocate for the open space.

NFIP

Paul Jeffrey discussed Safe NFIP legislation and sent a letter to Congressman McArthur – the letter is on the OBVTA website and advocates for the continuation of the program to ensure coverage for the millions of Americans that need it and address the deficiencies with the current versions of the bill.

Stop FEMA now held a symposium. McArthur not supporting the current bill .

This is a very important issues. Changes to the flood coverage will cause significant expense to property owners with possible reduced coverage.

Responses to Questions from the OBVTA from Paul Shives-Toms River Administrator that were not addressed elsewhere during the meeting:

-Signage (missed one) 7th ave and ocean - sign will be replaced. No street sign on bay blvd as you enter from 35 north and county engineer will be contacted. Correct stop signage on Washington and Eisenhower.

--the stop sign at Washington and Eisenhower will be reviewed. A 2013 Google map showed that Eisenhower had the stop sign, now Washington has the stop sign. This is going to be reviewed by Police Department.

-parking restriction on route 35 near Rockafella's should be removed (limited to one or two hours should be removed). This was in place when the bank was opened. Paul Shives advised that the parking authority agreed to remove and he will follow up to ensure it is done.

Commercial Property

-Johnny Fries is for sale. Business and the restaurant for sale if the price is received. The steakhouse development continues and may be open by Thanksgiving. Changes requested by the inspectors has slowed the development.

Next Meeting On Saturday October 21, 2017 at 9:30 am at the Ortley Beach Moose on Bay Ave.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am