

**Ortley Beach Voters and Taxpayers Association**  
**Membership Meeting**  
**April 13, 2019**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
**The Moose Lodge, 1801 Bay Blvd., Ortley Beach**

8:30 a.m. Welcome Back breakfast served.

Meeting called to order 9:28 a.m.

**Roll call:** Anthony Colucci, Cathy Crisafulli, Joan Strathern, Mary Ann Giordano Wallis, Kathy Barisciano, Annette (Toni) Tomarazzo present; Joe Cantalupo, Mike Wymbs, Paul Jeffrey absent. Quorum established.

**Minutes** of the October 2018 Membership meeting accepted by membership. (Motion by Mary Ann, 2<sup>nd</sup> Joan)

**2019 Budget** – Kathy Barisciano

See April Treasurer’s report

W/ verbal correction to Advocacy spending line, budget approved by membership (Motion by Kathy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Anthony)

**Treasurer’s and Membership reports** –Kathy Barisciano.

See April Treasurer’s Report

Approved by membership (Motion by Kathy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Joan)

**Items for Discussion:**

**a. Surf Club:**

Anthony provided background on the former Surf Club site, neighboring house, and parking lot on Ocean Ave.

Toni updated on status of purchase:

Sign of the times that we are doing more thanking than complaining at council meetings these days.

At the latest council meeting, she advocated for the purchase as a “once in a lifetime opportunity.” Thanks to Sandy, we have the opportunity to secure public beach access.

How? Have to have a private owner willing to sell and someone has to buy the property.

To move forward, need a bona fide appraisal of the property, so good faith negotiations can take place.

We have already been in touch with the owners, their lawyers, the township, and wrote letters of support to the state.

Goal now is to keep the process going, as the state/town await that appraisal from the owners and attempt to bridge the gap of several million dollars.

OBVTA has sent a letter to the council members, mayor, and others expressing our support for the project and insisting that they prioritize this project to push it toward fruition.

We also have drafted a letter from the membership, addressed to the Town Council President, asking for the town’s total support.

Copies of the letter will be passed out, with some envelopes, and we ask members to write a personal note, sign it, include their home address and email address, and mail it to the council (mailing address is on the letter).

Ask neighbors who are not there or not members to do so, as well. Link to the letter will be on the OBVTA website, so people can print it out themselves. See letter on “Recent News” tab of the website.

Council member Maria Maruca said the council is onboard. She said the town and state have done their appraisal, and made an offer based on that. The seller has not provided a pre-Sandy appraisal, and now there is a gap of a few million dollars. They are at the goal line and it is only a question of who is going to carry the ball over.

Question: When will the appraisal be ready? Maruca: The state is asking for it.

Question: Is there a drop-dead date? Maruca: She doesn’t believe so; generally accepted that this is “a once in a lifetime opportunity” and a “jewel” that is available.

Question from Kathy B.: Will the town make up the difference? Maruca: Town is contributing several million for improvements.

Anthony said the project and improvements will benefit all of TR. He said the town’s plans include an elevated boardwalk, a 50x80 foot pavilion with glass doors that will allow usage for 8 months of the year; a playground; bocce ball court; pickle ball court; 120 parking spots. Anthony said he was shown the rendering by Town Business Administrator Don Guardian, but that Anthony was not allowed to have a copy yet.

Mary Ann said a link to the letter to the town council will be on the OBVTA web site, and urged owners to follow through and encourage their neighbors to send letters in. Even though the council, led by Council members Maruca and Mo Hill, have expressed support for the project, we have to make sure they see this as a priority.

Member said we need to bring the issue to a wider audience and generate excitement for it so the township will support it.

Member question: Will the boardwalk now be extended the length of Ortley? Golden Gull and the lots next door remain under private ownership with no known interest in selling, so probably not.

**b. Dunes and beach:**

Anthony said the town is required to maintain the dunes per Army Corps of Engineers requirements, including dunes, vegetation, walkovers.

He said the town is now adding mats to every entrance and is extending mats down to the beach at the two handicap ramps.

Anthony said OBVTA has asked for benches to be added at the cutouts at the tops of the walkways. Also asked for benches on the beach, along the sand fence.

The town is adding two additional lifeguard stands and additional staffing, and is extending beach hours on weekends and holidays to 6 p.m.

OBVTA asked the town to add some kind of bar or other blockage to the pipe fencing on the east side of the boardwalk, where the chain link fencing was removed to make boardwalk sand removal easier.

Concerns expressed about kids' and dogs' ability to slide under the middle rail and run on the dunes. Member said she has already seen dog and human footprints on the dunes.

Anthony said OBVTA has requested signage forbidding dune trespassing, with fines listed.

Anthony said the town has agreed to add about 10 more bike racks – one at every entrance and an additional one at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue lot.

Anthony said the town has also been asked to put up signs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue lot advising people that there is “overflow parking” on the site of the old first aid squad building (35 South).

Anthony said OBVTA has also asked the town to put up signs at the foot of the stairwells to the boardwalk along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue lot, telling people not to block access while they are loading and unloading cars.

**c. Other issues:**

**Kayak ramp:** The township has a plan for the kayak launch site. The plan includes storage, seating, bike rack, parking for 7 cars and vinyl fencing. Anthony said he saw the plan but was not allowed to have a copy. The plan is now pending before the state. Once the township gets approval, it will start the construction.

**Pickle ball:** The town will paint pickle ball stripes on the tennis courts.

**Streetscape:** Paul recently had a three-hour meeting with the state DOT and local officials and walked block by block along 35 North to discuss and develop business area and streetscape improvements. Benches, planting, trash cans, lighting all under consideration.

**Police officers:** The police have graduated Class 2 officers who will be added to Ortley to walk and bike this summer. An additional 5 officers will be added over the summer.

**Construction:** Anthony passed along to Don Guardian several complaints from homeowners about contractors who are working early morning and late hours, in violation of township rules. Chief Little has instructed police officers to approach the contractors and issue warnings.

**Business needs:** OBVTA has asked the township for a meeting to discuss the difficulties businesses are having overcoming restrictions, fees, parking quotas, etc. We have heard several instances of businesses that have aborted plans in Ortley because of the impediments.

**Third-floor construction:** The building department had been allowing 7-foot ceilings on the third floors of new homes, in conflict with town rules restricting height on third floors. Now the township has introduced an ordinance to formally increase the building height. Anthony said members might want to weigh in on the matter at the April 23 township meeting, as many homeowners were precluded from adding residential space to the third floor after Sandy, while now it may be legal. One of the issues is whether Ortley has the proper firefighting equipment to access a full third floor.

**Building size and master plan:** Toni said the planning board is allowing larger homes and more two-family homes, in conflict with the master plan. She cited the parking problems that are likely to develop, and related the example of the new owner of a lot next door to St. Elisabeth's who was given a variance (over the objections of OBVTA representatives) to build a two-family home with a total of 12 bedrooms and back to back to back parking; she expressed skepticism about whether that parking plan

will ever be followed. She is also challenging the town for agreeing to the 12-bedroom home, on the stipulation that the owner never rent the home – a stipulation that Toni said likely had no legal weight.

Kathy B. pointed out that the OBVTA did succeed in persuading the planning board to refuse a variance to the owners of the lots on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ocean, behind the Lord House, to build four ocean-facing townhouses on the land. Instead, they are building two two-family houses.

Council Member Mo Hill said he is a member of the land-use committee, and he will review the height and large house issues when it meets on Tuesday, April 16. He said the council was told that the increase in height of third floors came with the stipulation that the third floor could not be used as bedrooms which would present fire hazard problems. He said he would check on this.

Toni said our elected representatives need to appoint someone from Ortley to the planning and/or zoning boards at the next opening, so that Ortley's needs are taken into consideration.

**Strategic plan:** The board is reviewing and updating its strategic plan for the OBVTA and will present our priorities at the next association meeting.

**OBVTA:** Anthony pointed out that the OBVTA leadership works year-round for the benefit of Ortley Beach. He urged members to feel free to bring issues to our attention, whenever they occur.

Mo Hill said Ortley Beach is the most well-represented community before the town council, because of the OBVTA's efforts and presence at every meeting.

#### **Guest speaker: Lori Garrabrant from the Toms River Shakespeare Festival**

Lori Garrabrant said she is a native of Toms River and a classically trained theater professional who wanted to bring Shakespeare to her hometown.

The first year, in an ode to the resilience of the shore and Superstorm Sandy survivors, a corps of actors presented "The Tempest," which was very well received.

From the first to the second year, the audience for the three performances – two in Huddy Park, one in Ortley Beach – doubled from about 150 people to about 300 people.

This year, the third planned season, they will present "Measure for Measure"

The goal is to bring community together and share theater in the open air. "We are forming a tradition here." She noted that "arts have power to drive tourism and foster the economy" – ie, the cast stays and spends here.

"While productions are free, producing is not" – 80% of donations are from individuals or private companies.

There is no lead sponsor this year, and they are seeking corporate sponsorship.

They are supported by a 501c3 and looking to form their own 501c3. Soon, they will be looking for board members.

"We're very excited to come back here for a third year; we see an opportunity here."

She thanked the Friends of Ortley Beach and the OBVTA for support.

She said she is hoping that Toms River comes through financially to support something like this, that's "free and on the beach."

She left behind flyers soliciting corporate sponsors and individual donors.

#### **Guest speakers: Gail D'Amico and Julie Shino, Friends of Ortley Beach**

Next meeting is Saturday, April 20, at 10 a.m. at St. Elisabeth's; have monthly meetings year round.

Launching a new speakers series.

2 events coming up soon:

June 29<sup>th</sup>, townwide garage sale, register now for the map -- \$10.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, Walk for Ortley Beach – walkathon.

**Guest speaker: Council member Maria Maruca**

Mobi mats are being rolled out – beige color with a stripe down the middle. “Looking really good.”

Pickle ball lines to be painted by Memorial Day weekend.

Signs to keep off dunes will be coming.

Public works schedule for pickups will be Mondays and Wednesdays from May 25<sup>th</sup>; recycling on Thursday (previously on Fridays, so she will be double checking).

Kayaks will require a permit for storage; fee of \$25 for required DEP sticker. Can find form on town website (and may be added to OBVTA site).

Today’s beach sweeps (cleanup) was going on, despite the rain.

**Guest speaker: Council member Mo Hill**

Primary coming up; he will be outside campaigning after the meeting (he is seeking the Republican nomination for mayor).

Member question: Can town put up signs directing people not to launch their kayaks from the Third Avenue park on the bay, as that site is dangerous. Hill: Will look into it.

Member question: Status of 6<sup>th</sup> Terrace road elevation/reconstruction? (Maruca answered: 45-60 days). Member: Can’t move forward without community input. (Maruca agreed)

Member asked whether the township could add street signs on the beach at the foot of all the ramps, as it is disorienting from the beach and difficult to identify the correct walkway for egress. Maria Maruca said she will bring it up with the town.

Member question: Are there plans for a dog park in Ortley? Hill: No, but 2 sites being looked at in Toms River. OCUA is unwilling to share their property for recreational use.

5<sup>th</sup> Avenue member question: Can anything be done to get the Barcelonas to clean up their vacant parking lot? Maruca: Will look into it and see about issuing a warning.

Member question: Have any fines been levied since the town put in place an abandoned homes process? Maruca: Yes, but different circumstances for each property. Before calling code enforcement, shoot her and Hill an email first, so they can help expedite action.

Question from member: Boat ramp in TR? Hill: Yes, permits are out. Will be in Gilford Park, south of the Dillon’s Creek Marina. Check with Jared T., rec director.

**Guest speaker: Police Sergeant Bachonski**

This is his fourth year presenting to us; first meeting was on May 16, 2015.

Neighborhood Watch: He is working with Pat Klaslo, volunteer leader for Ortley Beach. She will be organizing block captains. Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month at the Toms River PD, 7 p.m.

Class 2 officers: Brought on. Go on list to become full-time officers. Hired mostly for Ortley Beach – on quads, terrexes, etc. They will deal with dune trespassing, etc., and will be actively looking for beach violations.

Will also have our usual Class 1 officers. They are younger, no firearms, on bikes or walking around. Provide more eyes and ears on the ground.

TRPD Open House: Saturday, May 11.

Holding a police camp for intermediate school students in July.

Will be on hand to help with Beach Jam, as usual.

Re: construction noise: No noise from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. Landscaping 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Construction restrictions on Sundays.

At next meeting: There will be a giveaway of two Ring doorbells to people who show up with the Neighbors app on their phones.

Member question: Is there a plan for a police substation in Ortley? Bachonski: No.

**Call for nominations for Board of Directors: Anthony**

Nominations to be taken at the next meeting.

Particularly looking for someone to serve as treasurer, as Kathy B. is term limited after two terms serving in that role.

Vote will be taken in June.

**Board comments:**

Cathy C.: Beach badges are on sale for Ortley Beach. They could be purchased at Townhall in the Rec Department or at the Senior Center on Garfield Ave.

Preseason badges are \$35 for the season and \$50 after Memorial Day.

\$25 for a weekly badge and \$8 for a daily badge.

**Meeting adjourned 11:19 a.m.**