



Ortley Beach Voters & Taxpayers Association
P.O. Box 223, Lavallette, NJ 08735
Website: <https://www.ortleybeach.org/>

Ortley Beach Voters and Taxpayers Association (OBVTA)

Because of our membership and support, the OBVTA was able to achieve the following accomplishments in 2020:

- **Surf Club.** After years of lobbying and facilitating – including the hiring of a mediator to bring the parties together – progress was made and a deal in principle was reached for Toms River (with state and county help) to purchase the three beachfront Surf Club properties. What's left are administrative, legal and legislative tasks that the town and state have promised to fulfill. We will continue to be fully engaged to make sure that this one-of-a-kind property is purchased and protected.
- **Kayak.** Building on our success in obtaining a kayak launch and storage site off of 6th Terrace in 2019, we persuaded the township to increase the number of storage racks in 2020.
- **Pickle Ball.** Yes, pickle ball is coming to Ortley Beach. Because of our advocacy, Toms River is promising that three courts for the popular sport will be coming this spring at the shell parking lot on Rt 35 South.
- **Streetscape.** In partnership with Toms River, the OBVTA helped push forward efforts to revitalize the Rt. 35 North Business District, assisting in designing plans for enhancements like pedestrian lighting, benches, plantings and bike racks. A presentation for residents was made via Zoom this fall, and comments were collected by the design firm NV5. The OBVTA will continue to make sure a \$1 million state grant is spent wisely and for the benefit of Ortley businesses and their customers.
- **6th Street Elevation.** The long-awaited project requested by the OBVTA and local residents finally began and continues. The OBVTA is helping to identify other streets in need of elevation.

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Paul Jeffrey, Vice President
Mary Ann Giordano, Secretary
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- **Washington Avenue Elevation.** The town completed this project – the first in Ortley.
- **Zoning.** The OBVTA continues to advocate for development that complies with the spirit and vision of the Ortley Beach Master Plan, raising objections to zoning applications that greatly deviate.
- **Benches.** As requested by our members and promised after Sandy, the township placed benches at the top of the dune walkways.
- **Bike racks.** With biking increasingly popular among beachgoers, the OBVTA advocated for, and achieved, the addition of bike racks near beach entrances.
- **Mobi mats.** At the request of the OBVTA, the town added mats so that every entrance to the beach is covered.
- **Trash.** The OBVTA continued to press the town to clean up – or force the cleanup – of trash along streets and parking lots, particularly the masks and plastic gloves that proliferated because of COVID-19.
- **Rails.** The OBVTA continues to press Toms River to add handrails to the existing split rail fences on the dune paths, for the benefit of our seniors and the disabled.
- **Signs.** We continued to bring street sign issues to the township’s attention and advocate for safety and convenience improvements.
- **Business support.** The OBVTA advocated – and achieved – a change in building rules to reduce the distance to public parking required of new businesses, a stumbling block for many potential business owners.
- **Parking.** We advocated and achieved the removal of one-hour parking signs along the Rt 35 North business district, for the benefit of nearby businesses.
- **Beach parking.** We pushed the township to change signs and parking lines to obtain more parking near the beach.
- **Revaluation.** The OBVTA pressed for information related to Toms River ‘s revaluation of properties for tax purposes. The OBVTA is closely watching this process and will report information as it becomes available in 2021.
- **Efficiency Study.** As Tom River commences an efficiency study to save money and improve township services, the OBVTA will continue to monitor the process and ensure that all issues that affect Ortley Beach are properly addressed.
- **First Responders.** The OBVTA ended the year by starting a new campaign to improve ambulance and other emergency services for the barrier island. We have asked Toms River to consider a local alternative for emergency response and will continue to monitor the situation until response time and the quality of services improves.

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The organization itself was able to:

- **Maintain its high profile.** Because of OBVTA's large membership and persistent advocacy, we were able to influence issues and become a go-to source for news about Ortley Beach. Among other efforts, the OBVTA continues to attend all Town Council meetings and Zoning and Planning Board meetings when an Ortley issue is on the agenda.
- **Attract top-notch speakers.** The mayor, council president, town administrator and a police department representative attended our monthly meetings and responded to all of our members' questions. In addition, we were honored to have our U.S. Representative, Congressman Andy Kim, attend a meeting as a guest speaker.
- **Turn out in force.** Members were asked to attend a rally to influence the Ocean County Freeholders on an issue related to the Surf Club purchase, and they came out – with colorful signs – in numbers that could not be ignored.
- **Help our community.** By inviting guest speakers who represent local nonprofit organizations, we were able to facilitate donations for hunger relief, police vests and other issues at a time when such help is most needed.
- **Modernize.** We entered the 21st Century by adopting and implementing a new digital membership system, Glue Up, that consolidates information and makes it easier for members to track their membership. And we saved money in the process.
- **Reach out to potential new members.** We worked with builders and local real estate firms on outreach to new residents to improve our membership and maintain our clout as a community force.
- **Adapt.** We continued to hold meetings during COVID19 restrictions via Zoom. The only thing we were not able to recreate were the donuts and coffee.

And here are our community goals for 2021:

- See the completion of the Surf Club purchase – and start pressing for an extended boardwalk and other beachfront improvements.
- Work with the township to improve parking and achieve other business and resident-friendly enhancements.
- Advocate for improved emergency response and the restoration of a police substation on the barrier island.
- Move the Streetscape process forward and continue to try to hasten the timetable so that businesses, residents and guests can see improvements before the summer of 2022.
- Monitor the Revaluation process as it pertains to Ortley Beach.

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