

Ortley Beach Voters and Taxpayers Association
April Membership Meeting
Saturday, May 15, 2021, 9:30 a.m.
Via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 9:33 a.m. (Anthony Colucci)

Pledge and Moment of Reflection for victims of Covid and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country (Mike Wymbs).

Present: Anthony Colucci, Debbie Barton, Cathy Crisafulli, Joan Strathern, Joe Cantalupo, Toni Tomarazzo, Mary Ann Giordano Wallis, Mike Wymbs, Paul Jeffrey.

Membership attendance: 43 participants at start; 58 participants at peak. Membership quorum established.

Minutes of the April 17, 2021 Association meeting. Motion to accept. (Joe Cantalupo, Debbie Barton). Accepted.

Treasurer and Membership reports: Debbie Barton
Dues collected was \$13,630 in April.
440 members were paid up through April, including 179 new residential members.

Expenditures were \$9,114, mostly to Glue Up, the membership management system, which is paid up now for two years.

Cash on hand as of April 30, 2021, was \$63,969.

Motion to approve membership and financial reports (Joe, Joan): Approved.

Anthony presented the new, revised 2021 OBVTA budget for approval. Expenses were adjusted to reflect that Beach Jam is postponed for another year. Budget is posted on the OBVTA website. Opened for comments; hearing none, a motion was made to approve the 2021 budget (Joe, Joan): Approved.

SPEAKERS:

Council Member Maria Maruca
Mayor Maurice "Mo" Hill
Lt. Walter Bachonski

- 1. The beach and dunes:** Bob Chankalian, the town engineer, is away, but he reported that work had started on replenishing the sand on the beach the previous Tuesday. A ramp over the dunes had to be built so the trucks could get to the beach. About 200 truckloads of sand were coming in. There is plenty of sand, but the sand fence we use is in short supply because of the Covid-19-related materials shortages, so the town will use an alternative, 2x3 foot size. The town is also awaiting rails, which likely won't be in on the walkways in time for Memorial Day weekend, so sand fencing will be put in where posts would be. At this point, Earle is dumping sand. Then the town will come in to grade it, replace the dune sand fencing and fill in the gaps of the missing fence posts on the walkovers. It will be done by Memorial Day. The walkover mats were not

damaged. Re: handrails to be added to the walkover fencing, Lou Amoruso will reach out to Board Member Joe Cantalupo to discuss cost and liability issues. Asked if the dunes could be cleaned by the town or volunteers, Ms. Maruca said volunteers are not allowed on the dunes and she would notify DPW about the debris.

2. **Boardwalk:** As was requested at the previous meeting, the boardwalk rails were inspected and found to have substantial rusting, etc. The town is going to price replacement parts, which have to meet codes. Buildings and Grounds will sand some and replace others.
3. **Surf Club:** Ms. Maruca and Mayor Hill said the report that a homeless shelter would be going onto the Surf Club property was entirely false and made up entirely. Ms. Maruca said the notion is an insult to the intelligence of Ortley residents. She pointed out that the town has been working on the Surf Club sale for many years to create open space – and that the use of Green Acres and Blue Acres money from the sale dictates that the land can only be preserved as open space. Nothing can be built there, she said. Any suggestion to the contrary is “totally, totally untrue.” Mayor Hill later said that the information in the widely circulated “article” was “grossly inaccurate” and a political hack job, and that the same kind of inaccuracies were being spread about the agreement with the Department of Justice over the House of Worship zoning agreement.

Anthony asked if there is anything that could be done to put pressure on the state to wrap up the Surf Club sale. Ms. Maruca said it is moving along. One Dept. of Environmental Protection unit has finished its approvals and the proposal is now with a land use unit. Meanwhile, lawyers for the Barcellonas, the owners of the property, have received the contract. She said things are going so slow in the state because of remote work conditions. “But we see this moving forward.” Anthony asked if we could expect completion midyear and she said she would not promote any timetable. A member asked why the structures on the properties could not be taken down now and she said they would be coming down shortly, but that she could not say more about that now. Another member asked if the empty parking lot on 35 North and 7th Avenue was part of the sale; she said No. A member noted that the 35 North lot is dirty. Mayor Hill said he would notify code enforcement. A member added that the Surf Club lots need to be cleaned, as well.

4. **Land use/Houses of Worship:** This has been a hot-button political issue in Toms River since the town signed a consent decree with the Justice Department a few months ago rolling back land use restrictions. Ms. Maruca said the town consented to go back to the same zoning restrictions it had followed for 40 years before 2017: that Houses of Worship are now restricted to 2-acre properties instead of 10 acres. She said the town consented to the Justice Department deal because to do otherwise could have cost up to \$7.5 million and might have resulted in TR losing its control of zoning. Asked if this would allow a possible House of Worship on the barrier island, she said that it would need a minimum of 2 acres, and meet buffer and parking regulations, and the land alone would cost someone about \$20 million these days. Mayor Hill later elaborated on the negotiations towards the settlement, saying the town had originally suggested a compromise of 7 rather than 10 acres. He said the DOJ wanted a 1 acre restriction but the town rejected that. He said the most important aspect of the settlement was that the town gets to maintain control over zoning. He said the town has a map up on the homepage of its website that shows how residential neighborhoods would be affected and he urged members to go to it.
5. **Pickle Ball:** The contract to build pickle ball courts on the shell parking lot on Rt 37 South was approved by the town Council on April 27th. The contractor, which has been used by the township before, is meeting insurance and other pre-construction requirements but will start work soon and is contractually obligated to complete the job in 90 days. She said the town does not want to be in construction mode on the barrier island during the summer.

- 6. Badges:** Ms. Maruca said badges can be purchased now for \$45 at the Recreation Office in Warren Point and in the office of the tax collector. They will be available at the Lifeguard Stand (Lord House) on Memorial Day weekend, when staff comes onboard and the beach is officially opened. They will go up to \$60 on Memorial Day (May 31st). The day rate is \$10/day during the week and \$11/day on weekends and holidays. She said TR hopes next year to go digital with badge and other sales. Mike Wymbs asked if the town could post signs at the lifeguard stands now advising people of where and how long they can get discounted badges. She said she would look into it.
- 7. Ocean County Utilities Authority site:** In response to a question, Ms. Maruca said it is a government entity so does not pay taxes to the municipality.
- 8. First responder services:** Mike Wymbs asked about the status of the town's efforts to reach out to Tri-Boro Ambulance Corps, which is 24/7 year-round in Seaside Heights, to make them the first responder (rather than the TR emergency service) to speed up response time on the barrier island. And he asked whether the town's feasibility study had weighed in on the efficacy, as Ms. Maruca and other town officials had said it would last fall. Ms. Maruca said Lou Amoruso, the town business administrator, would have more details about the feasibility study. As for Tri-Boro, she said they are already designated the first backup for response if the TR crews can not make it to the barrier island promptly. Mike asked if they could be officially designated the first responder and she said they essentially are. But she said Mr. Amoruso would reach out and see if there is any way to tighten up the town's agreement with them. Anthony said we would prefer Tri-Boro as the primary responder.
- 9. Feasibility Study:** Ms. Maruca said the town's study, meant to increase efficiencies, was presented to the Council's administrative committee, which she, Mr. Turnbach and Council President Geoghan now sit on. They had more questions, which the consultant is now answering, but they expect the study will get to Lou Amoruso soon and be presented to the entire Council. Mayor Hill said the efficiency study was under review and there were lots of recommendations re: digitizing personnel records and HR processes, etc., and that the consultant was asked to go back and do a cost analysis. Anthony asked if the findings would be posted on the website; Ms. Maruca said at least bullet points will be posted.
- 10. 6th Street Elevation:** The anti-flooding project is almost done. Cathy Crisafulli said residents were told they could not park on the streets there on Monday and Tuesday because re-paving will take place. She asked if the town could help secure parking nearby, like at the Docksider, and protect the residents from tickets. Ms. Maruca said she would look into it.
- 11. Storm water ordinance:** In answer to a member question, Ms. Maruca said the language of the town's storm water ordinance was changed to comply with state verbiage. She said she would get the change in language.
- 12. McDonald's property:** In answer to a member question, she said she has not heard anything about use of the McDonald's property. Anthony proposed that it be bought and used as a community center.
- 13. Bay Boulevard:** A member again pointed out that Bay Boulevard needs cleaning up. Ms. Maruca said she would again alert the county, which has control of that road.

Lt. Bachonski:

- Parking:** Lt. Bachonski said it appears all of the painted spots and signage are in place in Ortley and that he would be coming over to inspect and make sure everything is OK so that officers could easily enforce the parking regulations.

2. **Dogs on beach:** He said he has researched the matter and all dogs, except service dogs (emotional or comfort dogs excluded) are prohibited from going on the public beaches based on beach use restrictions in local ordinances. He said Class 1 officers would be enforcing the rules.
3. **The TR Police Department Foundation** will hold its first golf outing on Wed., June 23.
4. **Traffic flow:** Mike Wymbs again brought up the safety issue created by the fact that Fort Avenue traffic goes westbound, which creates a problem when Jerry's Farm Stand is in operation and drivers try to pull out from Fort onto Route 37 North and find their sight line blocked by cars parked outside Jerry's. Bob Chankalian has refused to change the direction back to where it was before Sandy, Lt. Bachonski said, but he would bring it up again with him. Another member said Harding at 35 North is confusing because it is two ways between 35 North and South and people coming out of Seaside don't realize a car might be coming when they make a left. He recommended painting lines in the street to signal the direction issue. Ms. Maruca said she would alert Bob Chankalian. Lt. Bachonski pointed out that 35 is a state road and that the town could not do anything re: signage on it but that he would notify the state. Joe Cantalupo later asked who makes the decision about the direction of the streets. Anthony said it has been the town engineer but that it is time for the OBVTA to put pressure on the mayor and council to address our concerns.
5. **Noise policy:** A member noted that there was activity at the OCUA property before 8 a.m. one morning and asked if the quasi-government entity was required to abide by local noise ordinances. He said absolutely and that he would look into it. Another member said there had been construction work going on on Easter Sunday and asked if the town ordinance precluded work on Sundays. Ms. Maruca said she would check if there were restrictions and, if so, if they were only seasonal. Anthony urged her to check into it and see if any restrictions could be imposed year-round. He said a lot of people now live in Ortley year round and need full-time protection from nuisances, etc. Lt. Bachonski said he would look into it. He said later that Ordinance 368-3 deems a sound a nuisance if it is audible from 100 feet away. As for construction, hours are limited from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.. Monday through Saturday. Landscapers are limited to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. 7 days a week. Garbage trucks are limited from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. 7 days a week.
6. **Fireworks:** Lt. Bachonski said the town is pulling together stats on fireworks complaints to try to cut the problem off before it starts this summer. He said police would be targeting specific addresses and want to be proactive and will knock on doors to get ahead of the problem this year. He said they would take action if a violation is committed.
7. **Police Appreciation Week:** Ms. Maruca thanked Lt. Bachonski and the entire TR PD for doing such a great job year round. Mayor Hill echoed her compliments and gratitude.
8. **Proposed Town Council cannabis sales ban:** Ms. Maruca said the council decided to put off the matter for two more meetings and would be putting together an advisory committee, which will include representatives on both sides of the issue, as well as someone from the TR PD. She said the matter would then be brought up again for a final reading at the June 9th Council meeting. Ms. Maruca said applications for the advisory committee were being taken now and she said they could be sent to Ralph Stocco, Mr. Amoruso's administrative assistant. She said the committee now has five members so far.

Streetscape: Joan Strathern

Joan said there is an update re: the progress of the Streetscape project, a \$1 million grant from the state post-Sandy to improve aesthetics and amenities along the 35 North business corridor. The effort is going on six years and each phase requires review and approvals from the state, which is moving slowly due to its Covid-reduced staff. The money will be doled out in 3 phases, the first of which – final design – was

just approved by the state and endorsed by the Town Council. So the design company, NV 5, should be able to start the final design, which will be done in consultation with the OBVTA Streetscape Committee. Joan said she hoped that design would be completed by fall and said, "at least we're beginning to see the end of the tunnel." Anthony thanked Joan and the committee for its work and for sticking with it all these years.

Nominations for OBVTA BOD: Mary Ann Wallis

Mary Ann announced that there were only three nominations for the three positions up for election, and all were the incumbents: Anthony Colucci, now president; Debbie Barton, now treasurer; Joe Cantalupo, member at large. (Because of the recent bylaws change, all elections will be for directors, not officers, with the BOD choosing its officers at its July BOD meeting. In addition, three seats will be elected each year; a fourth BOD member who was up for re-election this year, Mike Wymbs, had his term extended one more year, so he will run in 2022.) Because the process was slightly changed this year, Mary Ann said the nominating process would remain open, should anyone at the meeting want to nominate themselves or another member (nominations were supposed to be received one week prior to that meeting). Anthony kept the nomination process open for several minutes. After several minutes, the nomination process was closed by Mary Ann. At the June membership meeting, the re-election of Anthony, Debbie and Joe will be certified with a vote by the Secretary (Mary Ann), per the by-laws when there is an uncontested election of an open seat.

Disinformation: Mary Ann

Mary Ann talked about the issue of disinformation and an article she had written about how to spot it; the article is posted on the OBVTA website under News.

Membership Renewal: Paul Jeffrey

Paul noted that the organization has just moved to a new membership management system, Glue Up, and that kinks were still being worked out. As a result, he said, some members may have gotten a dues payment reminder after they had already paid their 2021-22 dues. He asked members to send an email to obvta@ortleybeach.org if they wrongly received a reminder after paying or if they were unsure if they had paid. (Members can check on their payment status themselves by logging into their account on the Glue Up system; go to GlueUp.com and type in your membership email address.) He said so far only 6 or 8 mistaken reminders out of more than 700 memberships have been detected.

Member comments:

Bylaws: Member Mel Persi said he had raised concerns at the last meeting that the bylaws were amended with only a minority of membership votes. He said he had sent a memo to the OBVTA board and had hoped that the issue would be presented today for discussion so that a revision process could be put in place. A discussion ensued about the procedure for bringing motions to the membership. Toni Tomarrazzo said the motion should be specific and in writing. Mel said he would write something up.

Wreaths Across America: Debbie Martin said the Women of the Moose was sponsoring Wreaths Across America and said an event would be held at the VFW on Thursday, June 3rd, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with food trucks, etc. Sponsorship of a wreath is \$15. Anthony asked Debbie to send him an email and said he would get the word out to the OBVTA membership.

Motion to close (Daniel DiPrenda, Joan Strathern): 11:15 p.m.