

ORTLEY BEACH VOTERS AND TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

General Membership Meeting

Saturday, August 20, 2022

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order – A call to Order was conducted by President, Anthony Colucci beginning the August OBVTA general membership meeting.
2. Moment of Reflection – A moment of reflection was conducted by OBVTA Director, Mike Wymbs and was honored by the membership.
3. Roll Call – Roll call was conducted by the Secretary, John Clarke, and the following Board of Directors were present; Anthony Colucci, Paul Jeffrey, Debbie Barton, John Clarke, Joe Cantalupo, Cathy Crisafulli, and Mike Wymbs.
4. Quorum General Membership – President, Anthony Colucci requested Secretary, John Clarke to determine whether or not a quorum was present. Upon review of the members present for the General Membership Meeting, it was clearly established that a quorum had been reached as far in excess of 40 members of the membership were present at the meeting thereby establishing a quorum.
5. Minutes - The minutes from the July, 2022 General Membership Meeting were presented and accepted by a unanimous vote from the Board of Directors.
6. Treasurer's Report – Debbie Barton, OBVTA Treasurer, went over the Treasurer's Report and explained in detail the Treasury report for the OBVTA. Ms. Barton went over the outstanding amounts owed, the cash at hand, and the status of the current budget for the 2022 operating year. A copy of the full and in-depth Treasurer's report is posted on the OBVTA website. The Treasurer's report was offered by motion to be accepted and the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to accept the Treasurer's report. Some discussion was had with regard to the active membership that is being listed on the Treasurer's report and the members who have actually paid. The unpaid members still have until September, 2022 to make payment on their dues or they shall be removed from the active membership.

7. Guests – Originally, the agenda called for the OBVTA general membership meeting to include Councilman Justin Lamb and Mayor Mo Hill, as well as Police Lieutenant Gene Bachonski. Unfortunately, Councilman Lamb and Mayor Mo Hill were unable to attend the August general membership meeting. Lieutenant Bachonski was present and his general information shall be provided later in these minutes.

8. Beautification/Recreation Committee – Joan Strathern reported about the progress that was made concerning the plantings along Bay Boulevard. Previously, some members have expressed concern that the conditions of some of the bushes along Bay Boulevard present a serious safety hazard due to sight distance obstruction. At that time, we reported that we have been informed by the Ocean County Engineer that the sight distance for vehicles in and around these areas fully meets all prescribed safety requirements. However, since some people have expressed their concerns, we have asked Toms River to look into these issues. We also reminded the membership that in 2004, the Bay Boulevard median was bare and ugly and OBVTA members asked the Board to try to make improvements. At the request of the OBVTA, the county spent more than \$30,000.00 on plantings to beautify the area. Unfortunately, some of these plantings have grown large resulting in the current difficulties with sight limitations.

Since Toms River has not received a response from the county regarding this issue, Ms. Strathern contacted the county engineer, John Ernst, about the sight distance problem. John sent the county landscaping coordinator to Bay Boulevard to evaluate the conditions. Ms. Strathern met him there. As a result, a new plan for Bay Boulevard is being developed by the Ocean County Engineering Department. Trees that have been identified as possible problems have been tagged. The plan will be to try to improve the site distance problem while maintaining the beautification along Bay Boulevard. John Ernst promised to share the plan for our input before finalizing.

There was also discussion as to the current state of the Route 35 north streetscape project. Streetscape is progressing, albeit much more slowly than anyone wishes. Each time there are changes to the plans of streetscape, no matter how minor, these changes have to be presented to numerous departments within the state for approval thereby leading to additional delays.

Once we have state approval, NV5 will need to hold a public meeting to present the final plans. Then the plan will need to go once again to the state and then back to Toms River for official approval. It is still our hope that we can get the streetscape improvements before next Summer.

9. Beach Committee – The Beach Committee also presented their report as to the current state of the beach. One issue still being addressed is the pop-up parties and the large gathering of kids. It was acknowledged and reported by the Board of Directors that there has been more presence of police officers in and around the beach area and that this was hopefully helping control some of the large gatherings. It was further reported, however, that these large gatherings seem to have moved over into the Barnacle Bill area affecting businesses including, but not limited to Barnacle Bill's and the Starlight Hotel across the street. These large gatherings are not isolated to Ortley Beach, but rather are occurring up and down coastal communities throughout New Jersey.

Issues concerning the lack of the mats located at 8th, 5th, and 2nd Avenues were also discussed. The town, during recent storms, had removed some of the mats closest to the beach areas. These mats have never been replaced and, as a result, it has greatly increased the difficulty for people entering and especially those exiting the beaches in those areas. It was agreed once again that the OBVTA would follow up with Jared Tate from Toms River Parks & Recreation to address this issue.

Similarly, the lack of signage throughout Ortley Beach reminding people to stay off the dunes was also addressed. No proper signage has been in place and, as such, it was agreed that the OBVTA would follow up with Jared Tate with this issue as well.

10. Taxes – A great deal of information was discussed with regard to the recent property tax appraisal that have taken place throughout Toms River and, more relevantly, at the current time, the latest tax rate increase following the appraisal. Toms River officials have in the past seemed to indicate that the lack of appeals that were filed is evidence of the accuracy of the appraisals. It is argued, however, that with the lower tax rate that was initially suggested by Toms River officials, that this seemed to keep the overall taxes, and the number of appeals of the residents down. With the recent realization that the tax rate is actually 9%

higher than projected in the letters we all received, Ortley Beach residents are unhappy with their overall property taxes and with the fact that there is no longer a chance to appeal for this calendar year. A note was made that there is a senior freeze available and that residents should look into this option. It does have income limits, however.

11. Beach Replenishment – Beach replenishment by the Army Corps of Engineers was discussed. According to all information available to the OBVTA, the Army Corps of Engineers are in the process of submitting the contract for the beach replenishment out for bids. There are really only two companies who can do it and there is some hope that the contract will be awarded shortly. In all likelihood, beach replenishment will not occur until at least the winter time, or Spring of 2023.

12. Community Center – There was also some discussion as to the use of McDonald's as a community center for Ortley Beach. The membership discussed this but it was acknowledged that this McDonald's property is private property and Toms River has no authority to force them or use that property as a community center or for any other purpose without their permission. The general membership did feel that this was a good location for a community center and possibly a staging area for a local EMS and that this matter should be looked into further.

13. Lieutenant Gene Bachonski gave his usual thorough report of police matters around Ortley Beach. Lieutenant Bachonski addressed the issues of the mass gatherings and did indicate that the number of officers had been increased and visibility of those officers have also been increased and that from the complaints that the Toms River Police Department were receiving that this seemed to be helping alleviate the issues of the mass gatherings. Lieutenant Bachonski also indicated that there is an uptick in car thefts in and around the area and reminded residents to keep their cars locked and also make sure the key fobs are not left in vehicles. He did indicate that there are some situations where apparently persons had broken into homes for the purpose of obtaining the key fobs in order to steal vehicles. Lieutenant Bachonski also reported on the issues of opioids in and around Toms River and indicated that Toms River is one of the worst towns in the state with regard to opioid abuses. Apparently, there are instances of fentanyl being found in marijuana which can lead to life threatening

situations not only for the persons using the drugs, but also for responding emergency personnel. Lieutenant Bachonski indicated that September 17, 2022 there is a police auction for cars and other property and that information concerning this can be found at the Toms River website.

14. Secession – The membership in general, and Mel and Maureen Persi in particular, brought up the issues of Ortley Beach secession from Toms River with the recent news reportings occurring involving South Seaside Park obtaining a legal victory over Berkeley Township in their bid to secede from Berkeley. A great deal of discussion occurred with regard to this issue and it was generally agreed that this should be monitored with regard to any potential possibility concerning Ortley Beach being in a position to secede from Toms River. During the course of this lengthy discussion, Mel Persi, a member of OBVTA, began circulating a petition asking people to sign the petition asking that the OBVTA, specifically the Board of Directors, conduct a feasibility study with regard to the possibility of secession. This issue was not on the meeting agenda and not brought up by the Board of Directors, but rather initiated by OBVTA members during the course of the meeting.

15. Close of Meeting - A motion was then brought to have the August 20, 2022 general membership meeting brought to a close and that was unanimously approved.