

## **ORTLEY BEACH VOTERS AND TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**

General Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order – A call to Order was conducted by President, Anthony Colucci beginning the September OBVTA general membership meeting.
2. Moment of Reflection - A moment of reflection was conducted by the OBVTA Directors in support of Ukraine 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, John Clarke, Joe Cantalupo, Cathy Crisafulli, and Joan Strathern.
4. Quorum Board of Directors – 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 in excess of 40 members of the membership were present at the meeting thereby establishing a quorum.
5. Minutes – The minutes from the August 20, 2022 General Membership Meeting were presented and accepted by a unanimous vote from the Board of Directors.
6. Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer's Report was presented and included the outstanding amounts owed, the cash at hand and the status of the current budget for the 2022 operating year. It was clarified that the current membership will most likely be adjusted as a large number of members have not renewed their membership prior to the September deadline. If these new members do not re-up, then the membership report will be updated to reflect the same. A push will be made by the OBVTA to have old members contacted in an attempt to give these members who haven't paid, an opportunity to pay prior to the September deadline. In addition, with the cash at hand being at a fairly high level, and no immediate need for those monies, some of that amount will be invested in a CD through the Union County Credit Union that will provide additional interest to be earned on the money.

7. Guests – Originally, the agenda called for the OBVTA General Membership Meeting to include Mayor Mo Hill, Councilman, Justin Lamb, and Police Lieutenant, Gene Bachonski. Mayor Mo Hill was unavailable for our meeting and Councilman Lamb joined the General Membership Meeting via Zoom. Discussion was had with Councilman Lamb concerning recent issues at Ortley Beach including continuing the Lifeguards for an extended period of time after Labor Day, having a beach patrol on duty through the Fall season as well as the inclusion of railings on the access points to the beach to better assist people entering and exiting the beach. These issues were discussed, and Justin Lamb will be following up with these matters with Toms River.

Lieutenant, Gene Bachonski - Lieutenant, Bachonski gave a summary of police activity in recent times. Toms River Police Department received 972 calls over the summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. That works out to roughly 10 calls per day to Toms River Police Department involving Ortley Beach. Fourteen (14) of those calls were fireworks calls which Toms River Police Department responded to in a door to door manner. Seventy-four (74) calls were involving juvenile calls, 48 calls involving car crashes, 4 of which were with injuries. Seventy-four (74) of the calls were for parking tickets. Overall, Lieutenant, Bachonski felt that the Toms River Police Department had handled a great deal of calls and had handled the calls in a prompt manner.

Lieutenant, Bachonski followed up with the issue of the direction of the streets between Harding and Fielder Avenue. Lieutenant, Bachonski indicated that these issues were not up to actual police department but have to deal with the Toms River council and/or the planning department to address changes herein. He did note that these issues had been brought up in the past and that Toms River had felt that there was no need to change the direction of the streets.

Issues were brought up regarding the speed limit on Bay Blvd. and one of the members indicated that while the speed limit is 35 mph, they regularly see traffic traveling at a much greater rate of speed and that the Toms River Police Department should address this potentially dangerous issue. In addition, members brought up about bicyclists travelling in the wrong directions on Route 35 North and that this creates dangerous conditions. Additional members also discussed the issues of vehicles not stopping for pedestrians at the crosswalks and for the Toms River Police Department to look into these issues.

8. Committee Notes – Beautification/Recreation Committee – Joan Strathern gave an update of the beautification/recreation committee, including the streetscape project. It was reported that the streetscape project was still in the works but that there was no date to begin the actual construction as these matters were still being dealt with by the various committees in the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Joan also discussed the issues involving site lines on Bay Blvd. Ms. Strathern reminded the membership that these plantings were added to the area of Bay Blvd. at the request of the OBVTA. At previous meetings, some people have had complaints concerning the Bay Blvd. site lines and feel that since the bushes have grown larger over the years, they are now presenting the site line problem. Joan has been in discussions with John Ernst, the Ocean County Engineer concerning these complaints. As a result of these discussions, the Ocean County Forester went out to Bay Blvd. to inspect. It was decided that a plan would be developed to trim or remove some of the plantings to enable better site distance along Bay Blvd. while maintaining the beautification that has been done. Mr. Ernst said that once the plan was developed, he would share with Joan and her committee to seek their comments. An OBVTA member, Roseanne Ferraro, commented that the plants growing along Bay Blvd. are indigenous plantings that are important to the ecological health of our town and she was against them being removed. Other people have commented that they did not feel these plantings presented a site line problem and if everyone stopped and checked for cars in the middle of the median before crossing, their problem would be solved. Joan invited Ms. Ferraro to join her committee when the plans are presented for review.

Beach Committee – John Clarke gave a overview of the activities of the beach committee. Generally speaking, the issues involving the lack of the mats at the beach access points located on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues. The town, during recent storms, had removed some of the mats closest to the beach areas. These mats had never been replaced and were sitting at the storage area near the northern lifeguard station at Ortley Beach. Given it becoming late in the season, it was reported that this issue may need to wait until the spring to be addressed again with Toms River. In addition, the lack of “stay off the dunes” signs were addressed. These issues have been raised repeatedly with Toms River but apparently have fallen on deaf ears. It was agreed that the OBVTA Board of Directors would follow up with Toms River concerning this particular issue as well.

Paul Jeffrey made reports to the membership concerning the money that is being used and allocated for the upcoming dune and replenishment program to be conducted by the Army Corp of Engineers. The total amount of the replenishment will be \$60,000,000.00 with \$30,000,000.00 being provided by the Federal Government through the Army Corp of Engineers. The remaining \$30,000,000.00 will be split between the State paying 75% and local the remaining 25%. Of the local, it was originally indicated that local governments would pay their entire portion. However, Ocean County has agreed to pay half of the local portion for all Ocean County Municipalities. For Toms River, the county will pay ½ of the total of \$2,000,000.00 cost. This will save Toms River taxpayers over \$1,000,000.00.

The Clean Ocean Action Committee has been set for October 22, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue parking lot. A beach sweep will be conducted at that time to clean up the beach as well as the Bayshore if enough volunteers are available. Pre-registration for the event is required.

In addition, our former long-time Secretary and long-time Board of Director, Mary Ann, was present at our meeting and was commended for her long-time service to the OBVTA. Mary Ann was presented with a gift card from the OBVTA for her long-time service as a token of gratitude for all that she has done. Mary Ann gave a short thank you speech and was well received by the membership.

9. Members Comments – Many member comments were addressed and included in the paragraphs referenced above, however, one of the more prominent comments was made by Maureen Persi a long-time OBVTA member. Maureen Persi indicated that she formed a committee of one and began going door to door in Ortley Beach asking residents for their support for an Ortley Beach Community Center to be located at the vacant McDonald's building. However, this idea morphed into whether those she spoke with wished the OBVTA would conduct a feasibility study to determine what it might take for Ortley Beach to secede from Toms River Township.

Maureen Persi reported that in short, the sentiment in Ortley Beach is that we are no longer a bungalow community that we were prior to Superstorm Sandy and that Ortley Beach is now a high-rise community supported by influential professionals. Maureen Persi reported that the vast majority of those she spoke

with were eager to sign the petition asking that the OBVTA Board of Directors conduct a feasibility study concerning possible secession from Toms River Township.

Maureen Persi then presented the Board of Directors with the petitions signed by 429 people from Ortley Beach and formally asked that the OBVTA Board of Directors do a secession feasibility study.

A copy of Maureen Persi's full statement at the meeting is posted along with these meeting minutes.

10. Close of Meeting - A motion was then brought to have the September 17, 2022 General Membership meeting brought to a close and that was unanimously approved.