

**TOWN OF BETHANY BEACH  
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 12, 2016 – MINUTES**

The Bethany Beach Town Council held a workshop/special meeting at 9:15 a.m. on February 12, 2016 in the Town Meeting Room, 214 Garfield Parkway, Bethany Beach, DE 19930.

Members present for the meeting were: Jack Gordon, Mayor, who presided; Lew Killmer; Bruce Frye; Rosemary Hardiman; Joseph Healy; Jerry Morris and Chuck Peterson.

Also present were: Cliff Graviet, Town Manager; Lisa Kail, Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk; and interested members of the public.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Vote on a Resolution to Schedule a Public Hearing to be held at 1:00 p.m. on March 18, 2016, to Discuss and Possibly Vote on a Resolution to Close Access, As Necessary, the Maryland Avenue Extension

Mayor Gordon explained that the Town Council does not usually vote during workshops/special meetings. However, a vote will be taken today on adopting a Resolution to schedule a public hearing to be held at 1:00 p.m. on March 18, 2016, to discuss and possibly vote on a resolution to close access, as necessary, the Maryland Avenue Extension.

Mr. Graviet explained that per the Town Charter, the Town Council is mandated to set a date for a public hearing by Resolution to close access to a street.

Mr. Killmer made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Presentation by Oasis Design Group, LLC regarding Proposed Central Park

Mr. Scott Scarfone, Oasis Design Group, LLC gave a presentation regarding proposed designs for Central Park. He explained that plans are to develop the park in seven phases. He illustrated two options – Options A and B. *(Copies of the presentation are available for review in the Town Manager's Office.)*

Mr. Scarfone accepted comments and suggestions from the Town Council and those present in the audience. The next step is to solicit input from property owners.

Mr. Gravier noted that the presentation will be put on the Town's website and a mailing to all property owners will be done in the near future.

Presentation by Matt Heim, Representative of Assateague Coastal Trust, Regarding Seismic Testing

Mr. Matt Heim, Assateague Coastal Trust, gave a presentation regarding seismic testing. His presentation focused on the fact that the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is currently in the process of trying to open the mid and south Atlantic planning areas for exploration and development of offshore oil and gas, which include using seismic testing or geological and geophysical surveys. This testing would cause harm to fish and marine life. In the event of an oil spill during testing, local habitat, property values, and local economies would also suffer.

Mr. Heim asked the Town Council to adopt a Resolution opposing this activity noting that Fenwick Island, South Bethany, Dewey Beach, Rehoboth Beach and many other communities up and down the coast have already done so.

Following some additional discussion, Mayor Gordon noted that this would be on the March Town Council agenda.

At this time, the Town Council recessed the meeting for lunch. (11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

Discussion regarding Regulating the Use of Drones

Mr. Gravier distributed an ordinance prepared by the Town Attorney regarding drones. He asked Town Council members to review it. It will be the subject of a future workshop. All agreed.

Discussion of Funding Sources for the Storm Emergency Relief Fund (SERF)

Mr. Peterson recommended the following funding sources for SERF:

- Increase rental taxes by 0.5% to general about \$100,000 a year from summer visitor taxes.
- Increase property taxes by one cent to raise \$100,000 from property owners.
- Create an annual year-end budget review to look at any transfer tax and building permit revenue that exceeds the budget to see if this can be added to SERF.

Mr. Peterson explained that his recommendations would allow SERF to be funded by both property owners and visitors alike. It was also noted that the .25 cent increase previously made in parking meter fees would generate more income once the lot purchased by the Town is paid for.

A discussion ensued about funding for beach replenishment. Mayor Gordon reminded everyone that SERF would be used for emergencies only, not replenishment.

Mr. Healy recommended that a contingency fund for beach replenishment be established and leverage funds be put aside for future projects.

There was a discussion about future projects and creating a priority list with estimated costs.

Mr. Graviet explained that there are dozens of ideas of things that we would like to see done throughout the community. Once a decision is made to move forward with a specific project, then cost estimates would be obtained.

It was agreed to move forward with SERF funding as outlined by Mr. Peterson. These funding options would be voted on as part of the adoption of the budget for FY 2017.

#### Town Manager's Review of FY 2017 Budget

Mr. Graviet explained that the proposed budget for FY 2017 includes a \$170,000 enhancement for improvements to the Blackwater property. This funding will allow for a temporary office building with ten cubicles to serve as an off-site emergency operating facility. This will also cover costs associated with site preparation, concrete pads and HVAC. There is currently \$230,000 in this year's budget for this purpose.

Also included in the budget are funds for the following:

- Construction of a shooting range on the Blackwater property for the police department – (\$20,000)
- New tractor for public works to be mainly used for beach cleaning – (\$80,000)
- Additional full-time employee for the public works department – (\$30,000)

#### Review of Town Council Agenda for the February 19, 2016 Town Council meeting

Town Council members reviewed the agenda. There were no changes.

Mr. Healy asked if there would be any increase to sanitation fees or water rates in next year's budget.

Mr. Graviet advised that staff is not recommending any increases in those lines at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Lisa A. Kail, MMC  
Administrative Assistant/  
Town Clerk

