

**Town of Bethany Beach
Planning Commission Minutes
July 21, 2007**

The Bethany Beach Planning Commission held a meeting on Saturday, July 21, 2007 in the Bethany Beach Town Hall, 214 Garfield Parkway, Bethany Beach, DE 19930.

The following members were present: Kathleen Mink, who presided, Lew Killmer, Donald Doyle, Lonny Moore and Fulton Loppatto.

Also present: Town Council Secretary- Treasurer, Jerry Dorfman, Councilman Steve Wode, Councilman Tracy Mulligan, John Eckrich, Building Inspector, Seville Pettit, Administrative Secretary and interested members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m.

OPENING OF MEETING

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Doyle made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moore and was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Approval of Planning Commission Minutes dated June 16, 2007

Mr. Killmer suggested a small change. Mr. Doyle made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Moore and unanimously approved.

Announcements/ Comments/ Updates

Commercial Design Review Committee (CDRC) (Doyle)

Mr. Doyle reported there was a second meeting with the Blue Surf. The previous plans that were presented to the CDRC were modified. The stores along South Atlantic that were elevated above Base Flood Elevation are now shown to be at ground level. This change eliminated the steps and front porches. The cupolas were eliminated and the north elevation was substantially changed.

Mr. Killmer added some concerns about the different designs and modifications that are being presented to the potential buyers. Some issues dealt with were State Fire Marshals, D.N.R.E.C and Connective requirements and some request were granted. The CDRC did not approve the Blue Surf's plan and they will be returning for the third time.

Town Council & other Town news (Killmer)

Mr. Killmer reported that he and Mr. Loppatto attended a workshop entitled Sussex Communities Growing Better sponsored by the University of Delaware Coastal Community Enhancement Initiative. The workshop consisted of a group of people that design towns.

Mr. Killmer also reported that he attended a workshop in Dover entitled Sea Level and Global Warming.

Ms. Mink stated that she sent [a request](#) to the Communications Committee [regarding developing within](#) the [Town's](#) new website, [a means](#) for the public [to directly](#) communicate with the Planning Commission, such as an on-line bulletin board .

[Ms. Mink's second request was for the website to provide the capability for doing a multiple choice survey which could then be automatically tabulated. This would not replace the larger Town Wide mailed survey. It would provide the Planning Commission with means to obtain from the public a measure of interest or concern. Such a survey will be directional, not statistically significant.](#)

Mr. Mulligan stated that there were phone calls made to potential firms and volunteers put topics together and added Ms. Mink's comments and sent it to the proper committee.

Comments, Questions & Answers discussion for Planning Commission Members

There was no discussion at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ QUESTIONS

Mr. and Mrs. Hill, [residents](#) of [Gibson Ave](#), stated some concerns [they have regarding](#) sidewalks. Mr. Hill stated that it seems over the years, as people build [new](#) houses the sidewalks fade away. Mr. Hill wanted to know if [sidewalks are](#) Town property, can [they](#) be reclaimed so [that](#) the sidewalks can reappear.

Mr. Killmer stated that the issue with the sidewalks can be dealt with [at little or](#) no cost. The Town will be reclaiming the property and [providing](#) clear pedestrian access [in](#) the heavy traffic areas.

Mr. Eckrich stated that he and Brett Warner the Director of Public Works have been working with property owners. Delmarva Power Electric company has agreed to remove the transformer and a property owner has started to work on her property to make [its sidewalk](#) accessible. The sidewalks will not be replaced, but the [sidewalk areas](#) will be [cleared](#) of any rocks, landscaping and transformers.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and possible vote on chairing initiative to study and make Recommendations on revising House Numbers on specific streets. If agreement To chair an AdHoc Committee, appointment of that person.

Mr. Eckrich reported that there are some [house-](#)numbering issues in the Town, [specifically Kent Ave and Evans Road. Other streets should be reviewed for consistency. Having consistent numbering plans will make it easier for](#) emergency vehicles, [delivery trucks, and visitors](#) to find the correct residence. Mr. Moore [will Chair this initiative, with primary support from Mr. Eckrich. Representatives from the Post Office and the Fire Company will be included in this effort.](#)

Status of each Planning Commissioner's Special Project.

Loppatto – Development of Planning Commission interactive web site

Mr. Loppatto presented the Planning Commission members with information entitled “E-Government Initiative for Bethany Beach. [The question being pursued by Mr. Lopatto was: “how does a municipality deliver public service and perform more efficiently with a new delivery service, i.e. the internet ?”.](#) [Mr. Lopatto did not specifically address Planning Commission needs.](#) It was suggested that this might be a discussion more in the realm of the Communications Committee rather than an AdHoc Planning Commission group.

Mr. Loppatto will develop an [updated](#) draft after receiving comments from the Planning Commissioners.

Moore – Development of updated requirements for PRDs

Mr. Moore presented the Planning Commission members with [new requirements to be considered for](#) Planned Residential Developments, (PRD's) [such as](#) providing a specific percentage area of open space and recreational areas.

Ms. Mink stated the [new PRD requirements](#) would be placed into Chapter 200 Land Use. [Requirements for grandfathered PRDs](#) under 50,000 square feet are in place. Requirements for PRD's greater than 50,000 need be developed now. The information provided would start a new category and requirements for developments.

Doyle – Vision of Bethany Beach's future (what are we today and to what are we evolving) to serve as our longer-term planning assumption

[Note: This next section is transcribed from the recording of the Planning Commission meeting.](#)

[\(Begin\) Doyle](#) : ‘T'd rather verbally go over this, but anything that tickles your spots for vision here, please email me also. Some people with an opinion outside of this committee that I asked to give me some thoughts on this, but some of the things that occurred to me as I was looking at it, is the growth of this town is certainly going to continue at a density standpoint. I think it is going to continue in the future at both from a standpoint of people, but also resident and business. I think you are seeing examples with the Blue Surf and some of the other businesses here recently. You are going to see one story buildings become two story buildings, for example the Connor's property along the strip. I'm not encouraging them to do it, but I think the property is going to be too valuable to keep as laundromat. I think those things will disappear because of not the population here only, but the population that is going to be west of us. This population is going to throw obviously more tourist in here. I think the homes are, the residential properties, it doesn't seem like anything that we're seeing lately here is anything less than a mc mansion. When somebody rebuilds or even remodeling, I see people remodeling their homes, I think one family, the Ranse's in our neighborhood put about \$300,000 in their existing home that

they own. They just wanted a different house in the same location. I think that density issue is going to cause the guideline to look substantially different in the future.

Parking is not going to become a just an east of Rt.1 issue. I think you are going to start hearing people talking about, what these nice people here were talking about, on the west side of Rt.1. I think we'll see people bringing their cars and parking in areas in Lake Bethany, Turtlewalk, Bethany West and Bethany Glen, because they will want to jump on the trolley or be closer, maybe take their bike and ride in from that point on. The density issue will dramatically, I think cause us to find that we will have parking by permit only throughout the town just to protect the residential parking that exist today that we take for granted. I think we are going to see more of these larger buildings that are being built recognized, which means there is going to be more of a business flavor to live in Bethany Beach. Landlords, I find generally, don't have the same view of Bethany Beach as residents do.

Ms. Mink questioned if it was landlords in the residential property or landlords in the commercial district.

Mr. Doyle stated he was talking about the residential property. Where they build a large place, we're seeing more of it everywhere, build a large place, we've always seen it down on the east side. I think we are going to see it on the west side of Bethany Beach. While we'll always be a, and I think it is important maintaining an image of being a family resort more than any other beach area along here. I think we are going to see us have a family resort, more touristy nature in every neighborhood, which is not good or bad, but it changes the chemistry. Police would have to be a larger group then we have today. A negative issue, I think we are going to have more incidents of improper behavior then we've been use to. I just think the population brings mischief. I think that is going to also change the attitude of people towards personal security and also the behavior of people, road rage things of that natural which we see today.

I think from a standpoint of finances, the town is going to have to be, find ways to increase the revenue stream to create reserves they haven't had before. We pretty well built this town out, I think from an infrastructure for the government. We go through with that property, we've had the bandstand, the town hall. You are just hearing other towns, doing what we've done, South Bethany, Millville some of those. We have a town hall here I guess with the ages and it's beautiful. The Natter property will be a part unlike any other area, the church property of here being recreational or natural in nature. I don't think there is too many and the bandstand, you can talk all you want about sewage and things of that nature, but there's a limit to how far we can there. I think our revenue streams in the future probably going to have to be dedicated towards commitments we haven't had to do today, like beach preservation. I suspect somewhere in Sussex County, if I were them I'd have the introduction of beach passes, because they are going to have to have revenue to do something that the federal government is doing today. The State of Delaware benefits from tourism more than the town people in Bethany Beach. There's tendencies for government, I think absentee balloting is going to be a more important thing in the future and how we did it. We may never be able to do it like you were talking

about, Tracy, the idea of doing absentee ballots over the internet, but as more people become tourist or residents become tourist. Rental units, you are going to find more and more of the government being effected by lobbying groups who have an interest in rental properties. For example, this church property over here, I wouldn't be surprised to see absentee owners thinking we ought to pave it over for parking. It would be good for them because their places, their residents would have more parking spaces. I think government regulation is going to have to be aggressively done. I think people like this commission, CORC and some of the rest have tightened up our regulatory process as we learn from negative experiences. I think we'll have to do more of that in the future, it's along those kind of things that I am trying to develop this.” [\(End\)](#)

Killmer – Development of strong communications between the business Community and the Planning Commission

Mr. Killmer stated coming for other towns the interest in this issues is the relationship between the town government and the business owners and [commercial property owners](#). Mr. Killmer reported after contacting Coastal Delaware towns and town managers, they sent information about types of businesses and incomes.

Mr. Killmer also has been actively involved with the coordinator for the State of Delaware for the Mainstreet program out of Delaware Economic Development office. One of the concepts was to create more upscale businesses in the future.

Mr. Killmer would like to do more research how other towns conduct their communications between the business community and their Planning Commissions.

Mink – Identification of Comprehensive Plan’s recommendations (Town Council endorsed initiatives) needing development of new regulations

Ms. [Mink](#) reviewed the Comprehensive Plan to see what the Planning Commission’s [next steps are](#) to support recommendations relating to Zoning and Land Use [that is what new regulations need development or updating](#). There were no items in the plan [requiring](#) Planning Commission [action](#). There are [recommendations](#) that require the efforts and resources of other groups in order to be [implemented](#) and if they are not implemented, they can be removed for the plan.

Ms. Mink [will identify those](#) recommendations and [present to the Planning Commission for](#) discussion of under which entity should various recommendations be most logically placed. Upon agreement by the Planning Commission, a final document covering the Comprehensive Plan’s “unfunded mandates” will be prepared for Town Council consideration and action. Ms. Mink stated that if decisions are made that specific recommendations are not going to be implemented, then perhaps those recommendations should be eliminated from the Plan.

Killmer & Moore – Development of recommendation for town-wide Pedestrian walkways

Mr. Killmer presented the Planning Commission members with information entitled “ Location of cracks in the Sidewalk along Garfield Parkway and Surrounding Area Between the Coastal Highway and the Bandstand Area” and “ A Sidewalk Survey of the East Side of Bethany Beach (Route 1 to the Ocean : Cedarwood to Fifth Street)”

Mr. Killmer reported he walked around the town and out of 852 lots there are 142 sidewalks that vary in being in excellent condition to a potential tripping hazard. After Mr. Killmer described the conditions of the sidewalks, suggested to develop a comprehensive sidewalk system in sections. There will be [upcoming](#) discussions on which areas [should be](#) handled first.

ADJOURN

Mr. Doyle made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Loppatto and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Seville Pettit
Administrative Secretary

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS July 21, 2007

1. Mr. Eckrich to see if Sedona’s Restaurant steps are in the Towns right-of-way.
2. Planning Commission members to email comments and concerns to Mr. Moore and Mr. Eckrich about the updated requirements for PRDs.

3. Planing Commission members to eMail comments and concerns to Mr. Lopatto regarding "E-Government Initiative for Bethany Beach.