

**Town of Bethany Beach
Planning Commission Meeting
November 19, 2016**

The Bethany Beach Planning Commission held a meeting on Saturday, November 19, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in the Town Meeting Room.

Present: Mike Boswell, Chairman, who presided: Lew Killmer, Diane Fogash, Dr. Larry Fishel, John Gaughan, Fulton Loppatto and Susan Frederick (Building Inspector)

Also present: Molly Daisey, Assistant Town Clerk and interested members of the public.

Mr. Boswell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Killmer made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Dr. Fishel, the motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Approval of the Planning Commission Minutes of October 20, 2016

Dr. Fishel made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gaughan and unanimously approved.

Announcements/Comments/Updates

The NRDRRC has not had a meeting since the last Planning Commission meeting, so there is no update. At the Town Council Meeting yesterday, Jerry Morris was nominated to be the Secretary/Treasurer and will also head the Budget and Finance Committee, replacing Chuck Peterson who has moved out of Town. Also, this Committee will be now known as the Planning and Zoning Commission. A contract submitted by East Coast Structure Movers for \$45,700 to move the Dinker Cottage to its new location was approved. There will be no Town Council Meeting in December.

Public Comment/Questions for the Planning Commission

New Business:

A. Begin planning and preparing the five-year update to the Town's 2012 Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Killmer stated that it is very important for the Community to be involved with the Comprehensive Plans, however this community is not very present until Spring. He would like to create a draft document and then hold public hearings in the spring/early summer to be reviewed and approved by the Town. The last step would be taking the Plan to Dover to be approved by the State. The state can make suggestions, it is up to the Town to make the suggested changes or not. Susan Frederick (Building Inspector), Cliff Graviet (Town Manager) and Lew Killmer are required annually to update the plan, what has been done to complete various aspects of the Comprehensive plan. These updates are passed along to the State, which has been happy with the updates so far. Mr. Killmer would like to focus on editorial changes, minor wording changes then the more serious aspects of the Plan, like what is the vision of the Town, what our plans are and how is the Town going to achieve them. It's

imperative to have recommendations that will better the Town, and most importantly, make them achievable.

Mr. Gaughan asked if the plan should be written in present text, as where the Town is right now. And items that have been completed, will an addendum be added to those items? Mr. Killmer responded that in his opinion, both should be done. At the beginning of the plan all of those items will be listed in the executive summary. In the letter from the State that approved the 2012 plan and in the plan itself, it mentions intergovernmental coordination and cooperation. Sussex County is beginning their next plan, so many things that affect Bethany Beach, are a result of what happens outside of our community. Mr. Gaughan feels there needs to be close coordination with Sussex County with anything that would affect Bethany Beach. Mr. Killmer replied that the State does require Towns to send their plans to all surrounding communities and get their input. Unlike other areas in Sussex County, Bethany Beach differs because there are no strategic growth areas.

Mr. Gaughan pointed out that when reviewing our Comp Plan, our community is too small to address assisted living or housing for elderly. His fear is the county, facing an influx of new homeowners and trying to keep taxes low, with the counties limited resources, the responsibility may be shifted to the incorporated areas of the county. He does not feel Bethany Beach is prepared to do that. This is a reason he feels we need to be in close coordination with the County in updating our Plan. The state of Delaware is projected to have a deficit of roughly 160 million to 300 million dollars this year. The State is currently looking at items it pays for, and what items can be passed on to the counties, which could trickle down to the incorporated areas. The last time the plan was updated and information was gathered from the US Census Bureau, the average age was 63 and is now currently 65. There are more elderly people moving here, the problem the Town runs into, is the people who provided these services can't afford to live here. This is something that will have to be dealt with in the future. Dr. Larry Fishel agrees with this being an issue that will need to be addressed.

Mr. Boswell asked that everyone write down what their vision is for the future of Bethany Beach. Mr. Killmer commented that the Town is required to create a vision statement. He provided a handout with information regarding the Town moving forward.

Future visions Mr. Killmer feels should be focused on are public transportation, the need to provide senior based services, how to attract more year-round businesses, resiliency, SERF Fund, Blackwater Property, mobile command center and the 50 year commitment from DNREC and the Army Corps of Engineers, proposed annexation issues and economic security and sustainability. Mr. Gaughan suggested using this list as a template for the any additional thoughts. Mr. Boswell added that if the December Meeting is cancelled, that the members send each other their ideas on the vision statement. Mr. Killmer reminded the Commission there is to be no commenting or 'back and forth' regarding what is sent out. It is to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Killmer has updated the Town, County and State Officials listed in the plan. He will create a draft of the executive summary for the Commission to review. This is mostly what the State looks when approving the plan. Pages two thru seven are the most important and this is where the Commission's focus will be.

Mr. Killmer will get updated numbers from the county and the Town's Building inspector regarding construction permits issued in the last five year. That will justify statements made in the vision statement. The projections for populations growth for Sussex County will come from

the State Office of Planning. Tourism is the second largest source of funding for the State, second to only Agriculture. Dune maintenance and beach replenishments are key points for Bethany Beach.

Mr. Gaughan asked about the executive summary (pages 2-6) if it will encapsulate what has been done, identify the goals that we had and new goals. Mr. Killmer replied, yes it will summarize what has been done and what we hope to do.

Page eleven, Overall Community Vision and Goals will also be an area heavily focused on. Here we will be able to further express through recommendations.

Mr. Gaughan pointed out on page eleven, Vision for the Environment it states, "To conserve and sustain natural areas and resources for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. To encourage, promote and educate citizens and visitors in achieving a green Bethany Beach". He feels the way 'green' is used in this statement may be misleading to the community. Mr. Killmer responded that these are the types of things that can be changed while doing the update.

Bethany Beach's Comprehensive Plan has been used as a 'model' for other Towns as to what the State Office of Planning expects. And other Towns have asked to use ours as a model.

Mr. Killmer asked that a word version of the plan be sent to all committee members.

B. Discussion and possible vote regarding a December meeting

Hearing no objections to cancel the December 17, 2016 Planning Commission meeting, Mr. Boswell called for a motion. Ms. Fogash made a motion to cancel the December 17, 2016 Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Mr. Gaughan, the motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting will be January 21, 2017, unless something comes up and the commission must meet before then.

Adjourn:

Ms. Fogash made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Fishel seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

The next Planning Commission meeting is Saturday, January 21 at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Molly Daisey, Assistant Town Clerk