



Bethany Beach Landowners Association (BBLA)

PO Box 401, Bethany Beach, DE 19930

[www.bbla.us](http://www.bbla.us)

April 2015

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Greetings:

The lead article in this edition of your BBLA newsletter deals with a very important topic about which you can expect to hear a good deal in the coming months: The so-called Storm Emergency Relief Fund or "SERF." The questions of whether and how to create a fund to pay for the Town's portion of the cost for restoring the beach, dune and boardwalk following a destructive storm such as Hurricane Sandy, the so called super storm that caused catastrophic damage to coastal communities in New Jersey and New York a few years ago. BBLA supports the creation of a SERF and in a letter to the Town Council on February 13 we explained why and discussed various ways by which the necessary money might be raised. The full text of that letter is available on the BBLA Web site at [www.bbla.us](http://www.bbla.us). (Click on "current issues" and scroll down to "Storm Emergency Relief Fund.") If you do not have access to the Internet and would like to have a copy of the letter, let us know.

BBLA's annual membership meeting will be held this year on Saturday, June 27 at the Library, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Our guest speaker will be announced at a later date. All BBLA members are invited to attend. The meeting will be open to the public. A short business meeting for reports to the membership and election of officers and Board members will be held after we hear from our guest speaker. Everyone who has paid their dues for 2015 is eligible to vote in this election and is also eligible to serve as an officer or a Board member. Please plan on attending. We look forward to seeing you on June 27.

Have a safe and enjoyable Spring and Summer,  
Mike Horne  
President

## **STORM EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND (SERF)**

At a Workshop on February 16, 2015, the Town Council reaffirmed its determination to establish a storm emergency contingency fund. In the event of a catastrophic storm causing major damage, the Town would, at a minimum, have to meet a federal requirement to contribute a 25 percent share of the cost of some repairs and reconstruction. Depending upon the availability of federal and state funding, costs could be much higher.

The Council agreed that the Budget and Finance Committee would review possible options for building the SERF and, in doing so, should consider some of the suggestions the BBLA Board made to the Council by letter dated February 13, 2015. Following its review, the Committee will then make recommendations to the Council.

The Council also briefly discussed two possible sources of revenue: the transfer tax and building permit fees for the new hotel (approximately \$640,000); and a possible property tax assessment, noting that a \$50 assessment could generate approximately \$70,000.

Subsequently, on February 19, the Budget and Finance Committee considered a number of funding ideas, including the two possibilities discussed by the Council and increasing the hotel occupancy tax and rental tax by 1% to 2%, with the proceeds dedicated to the emergency fund. The Committee and Council are expected to discuss the SERF funding issue more extensively before any decisions are made. The BBLA Board intends to monitor developments, including opportunities for public input, and will keep our members informed.

## **TOWN BUDGET**

On March 20, the town Council approved an \$8.4 million budget for fiscal year 2016, which began on April 1. The budget includes provisions for increases in parking fees and water use rates.

So that summer season costs are paid to the extent possible by summer revenue, hourly parking fees will increase by 25 cents to \$1.75/hour. Fees for daily and weekly parking permits and shuttle bus operators will also increase. Summer expenses reportedly have increased substantially in the past few years, mainly with lifeguard staff enhancements as well as other costs. It was noted that property owner parking permits are still free for the first permit and \$35 for each additional permit. Note that the new parking fees go into effect on May 15.

Water use rates, which have not increased in seven years, will increase by 21 percent. The rate increase is needed to cover increases in the cost of operation of the water plant, including personnel, water treatment and electricity. It is estimated that the average customer will pay less than \$55 more per year.

## **OTHER NEWS AND UPDATES**

### **Route 26 Widening Project**

The 2-1/2 year improvement project, which is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2016, reportedly is on schedule. With the replacement of two bridge culverts near Lord Baltimore Elementary School and the Millville Town Hall, drivers are no longer required to use the detours through Ocean View and Millville.

While drivers can again travel straight through from Clarksville to Bethany Beach, you will still experience delays from time to time due to lane closures. Lane closures are permitted as necessary 24 hours a day until May 15. After May 15 and during the summer season, two lanes of traffic will be maintained during the day. With probable delays in mind, drivers who are now familiar with them may still want to use the detour routes to avoid some of the likely congestion.

Information on the project is available from the Delaware Department of Transportation at: [www.deldot.gov/information/projects/sr26/index.shtml](http://www.deldot.gov/information/projects/sr26/index.shtml). Individuals can register for weekly e-mail updates or download a smart phone application at [www.sr26.deldot.gov](http://www.sr26.deldot.gov). They can also contact the DELDOT public information office by phone at (800) 652-5600 or (302) 760-2080, or by e-mail at [dotpr@state.de.us](mailto:dotpr@state.de.us). The project engineer, Ken Cimino, indicated that he will try to respond to all questions and complaints from residents and businesses. Individuals can contact him by phone at (302) 616-2621 or by e-mail at [Kenneth.Cimino@aecom.com](mailto:Kenneth.Cimino@aecom.com) and also ask to be included on his weekly e-mail list.

### **Streetscape Project**

Work on the project, which was delayed by winter weather conditions, is expected to be completed by the end of April. The project was paid for almost entirely by the State of Delaware.

### **New Water Plant System**

Work on the new water tower and pump house is in the final stage of construction and the new water system is expected to be operational by the start of the summer season.

### **New Storage Area Property**

As anticipated in the last Newsletter, the Town has completed purchase of a property in the Frankford area. The site can be used for storage of trolleys, benches and life guard stands during the off season, as well as for Public Works Department equipment, vehicles and other material during serious storms and flooding events.

### **New Trolley Routes**

To shorten the time it takes riders to get to and from the beach and downtown area, the Town will use two trolleys on two different routes this summer. Using Garfield Parkway and Route 26 as a dividing line, one trolley will cover the area north of that line; and the second will cover the south side. Both trolleys will make stops along Atlantic Avenue. No old stops have been dropped and some new stops have been added. It is estimated that the new routes can be driven in less than thirty minutes, cutting the previous total trip time in half. Information flyers will be printed and available and the new routes will be posted on the Town website: [www.townofbethanybeach.com](http://www.townofbethanybeach.com).

### **New Hotel Delayed**

Latest reports indicated that due to weather-related delays in construction and other issues, the new hotel, apparently to be known as the Bethany Beach Ocean Suites, is not expected to be ready to open before June.

### **Landscaping Information**

In response to the large number of requests for information from residents and visitors every year, Town staff employees Melinda Linde and Jessica Williamson, who design, plant and maintain the beautiful flower beds in town, have prepared a brochure with information about the various flowers they have planted. The best means of distributing the brochure have not yet been determined. However, the information in the brochure will be available on the Town's website.

### **Trash Collection Schedule For May 1 – September 30**

Just as a quick reminder, the Town has published the following schedule for trash collection for the season (and beyond for some material):

Regular trash (twice a week). For Zone 1, every Monday and Friday; for Zone 2, every Tuesday and Saturday. (Visit [www.townofbethanybeach.com](http://www.townofbethanybeach.com) to review the zone map.)

Residential dumpsters at townhomes will be picked up every Monday, Wednesday and Friday; and commercial dumpsters every day.

Recycle items (once a week). For Zone 1, every Wednesday; for Zone 2, every Thursday.

Yard waste will be picked up every Tuesday from May 1 through December 31 with carryover to Wednesday a.m. as needed. Waste must be in heavy-duty paper yard waste bags or labeled containers. Limbs must be tied into bundles no larger than 5 feet in length and 2 feet in diameter. A minimum \$40 fine will be assessed for collections not properly prepared.

Free bulk collections of acceptable items will be picked up the last two weeks in April and October, on days the Public Works Department schedule permits. Special collections of bulk items can also be arranged through PWD. Visit the town website for a list of acceptable bulk items.

See the Town website for other details.

### **Farmers' Market Season Begins on June 14**

On Sunday, June 14, the Bethany Beach Farmers' Market will begin its 8<sup>th</sup> season and will continue operations on Sundays until August 30 this year.

As in previous years, the Market will operate in the PNC Bank parking lot at the corner of Garfield Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue. The Market opens at 8:00 am and closes at noon on Sundays.

The Market features a wide variety of locally grown, freshly picked farm produce, as well as baked goods and other products popular with area residents and visitors. For more information, or if you want to volunteer to help out, contact the organization by e-mail at: [www.bethanybeachfarmersmarket.com](http://www.bethanybeachfarmersmarket.com).

### **VFW Events**

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7234 will conduct three patriotic events in May which residents and visitors may want to attend.

May 9. A ceremony to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War will be held at the Post, 29265 Marshy Hope Way in Ocean View, beginning at 11:00 a.m. (Marshy Hope Way is the continuation of Cedar Neck Rd. going toward the Indian River Bay.)

May 25. A Memorial Day ceremony will be conducted at the bandstand on the boardwalk in Bethany Beach beginning at 11:00 a.m.

May 30. Another ceremony to commemorate Memorial Day will be held at the Post beginning at 11:00 a.m. (Until 1968 Memorial Day was traditionally celebrated on May 30.)

And just a reminder, on May 23, the VFW Chicken Shack, adjacent to the National Guard Training Site on Route 1, will begin a new season selling its secret recipe BBQ chicken every Saturday. Funds raised are used to support veterans' assistance programs. For more information about VFW events open to the community, check the Post website: [www.vfw7234.com](http://www.vfw7234.com).

### **Christian Church Conference Center Dedication**

On April 11, the Christian Church Conference Center dedicated its new Alexander Campbell Hall facility, located on the northeast corner of the Conference Center's campus at Pennsylvania and Central Avenues.

The Christian Church, an integral and historic part of the Bethany Beach community since 1901, brings many groups to Town through most of the year for meetings, retreats, camp programs and other activities. In a major enhancement of the Conference Center's capabilities, the new Campbell Hall will provide air conditioned accommodations for about 82 guests, a large meeting room and smaller meeting rooms.

The dedication program, to which Town officials, various organizations and the public were invited, included tours of the modern new facility. The BBLA was represented by Board Members Patrick McGuire and Margaret Young.

#### **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS**

Jerry Hardiman, Mike Horne, Claire Loftus and Doug Mowrey.