



BBLA Board Note: Due to page limitations for the annual January membership mailing, this is an abbreviated newsletter. It provides information on a few topics and developments since the full November newsletter.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO SERVED THE COMMUNITY DURING SNOW STORM EMERGENCY

On behalf of our over 1260 member households, the BBLA Board wants to express our appreciation to all the Police Department, Volunteer Fire Company, EMS, Water Department and Public Works Department and any other on duty personnel who protected and served the community during the January snow storm and the state of emergency declared by Governor Carney.

The January 3-5 storm, referred to variously as the “Blizzard of 2018”, “Winter Storm Grayson” and the “Bomb Cyclone of 2018” dumped about 10-12 inches of snow on Bethany Beach with higher drifts in some areas depending upon winds and location. Working during the storm and the days that followed was especially challenging because of the high winds and single digit temperatures. Police officers and other emergency personnel responded to calls for assistance as needed. Two Water Department employees dealt with at least 60 home shut-off emergencies due to frozen and broken pipes, working through packed snow and ice. Seven Public Works Department employees with plow-equipped vehicles worked throughout the storm and afterwards with very little rest to keep the Town’s 19 miles of roadways open and passable. Here again, the work was more difficult than normal because of high winds and drifting snow.

Considering the conditions, all the on-duty personnel performed above and beyond normal expectations in dealing with the emergency situation. We are proud and grateful to have such dedicated individuals serving our community.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF SHADING DEVICES ON THE BEACH

On December 12, 2017, the Town Council determined that the proliferation and use of canopies, tents, cabanas, pavilions and other non-traditional shading devices on the beach adversely affected the use and enjoyment of the beach by others and presented potential safety hazards. The determination was based on consideration of complaints, other public comments, a fact-finding study and the results of a Town-wide survey of property owners and residents in which over 70 percent favored prohibition of such devices. Accordingly, the Council voted to amend Chapter 223 of the Town Code by ordinance to only permit the use of traditional-size umbrellas (basically, up to 8’ in diameter by 7’ 6” high, and as otherwise defined in the implementing ordinance) and so-called “baby tents” (36” x 36” x 36”); and to prohibit all other shading devices. The ordinance amending the Code will become effective on the date it is finally approved by the Council. It may be approved as soon as the Council’s monthly meeting in February. See http://www.townofbethanybeach.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_01192018-1206 for full text.

WETLANDS PROTECTED BY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

On January 20, 2018, the Town Planning and Zoning Commission considered an application for approval of a 4-residential unit subdivision along the Route 26 frontage of the applicant's larger property. Construction of the residential units and related infrastructure such as sewer lines would entail filling in wetlands on the property. A previous application to the US Army Corps of Engineers for permission to fill in a larger area of wetlands on the property for another development project was opposed by the Town Council and the BBLA Board because, among other adverse effects, it would exacerbate flooding of properties along the Loop Canal. That application was eventually denied.

In the application before the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Commission reviewed and discussed the proposed subdivision plan and the issues involved. The Commission also considered the public comments on the matter at the meeting, virtually all of which were opposed to the application because of the adverse effects of filling in any of the wetlands. After review and consideration, the Commission denied the application.

HEARING SCHEDULED ON ROPEWALK RESTAURANT LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION

As previously reported, the exterior design plans for a new Ropewalk Restaurant on Garfield Parkway were approved by the Town's Non-Residential Design Review Committee in April 2017. The plans are for a 2-story, approximately 335-seat establishment on the site previously occupied by the Fish Tales business, which has moved across the street. Permits for demolition of the old structure and construction of the new building were subsequently issued, the latter permits issued after revised plans for a water supply system for fire suppression were approved by the office of the State Fire Marshall. Construction of the restaurant is underway.

Ropewalk Bethany, LLC has applied for a liquor license from the State Alcohol Beverage Control Commission and objections to issuance of the license were filed by a number of Bethany Beach property owners. The Commission has scheduled a Public Protest Hearing to review the application and consider related testimony. In addition to those who filed objections, the Commission may also consider the testimony of others who would like to testify, although repetitious testimony will be discouraged. **The BBLA Board has not taken any position on the merits of the liquor license application or the restaurant.**

The ABC Commission hearing will be held on February 13, 2018, beginning at 5 p.m., in the Sussex County Administration Building, located at 2 The Circle, Georgetown, Delaware.

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