Message from the Mayor and Council

The Slaughter Beach Town Council wishes to welcome all to the 2020 “summer season”. Again, this year, we had a very mild winter and the shoreline held up well.

We have had no days this winter where our access roads were impassable due to flooding. It seems that the breach repair at Fowler Beach has assisted to keep our day-to-day marsh levels low, which allows for the much-needed marsh storm absorption.

Real estate through March has continued to move upwards, with very few properties staying on the market for any significant time. Some have even sold prior to a real estate office listing.

As we write this newsletter up, we are in the beginning throws of the Covid 19 virus. The Town wants the entire community to act wisely and take direction from our state and federal health agencies. All of the dates shown in the following are subject to this issue, but we will make every attempt to update and keep all informed. Sign up for our email blasts!! How to sign up is listed below. We may have to move to electronic Town Council and yearly meeting(s), going forward, so please sign up for the email blasts, in order to keep up to date on these issues.

We have the usual number of topics this year, as well as new developments that are happening in our community, all of which we are so proud of, as they are quite positive:

1. The long-awaited signage project for the access roads is finally underway and we expect that the new signs will be installed in the summer of 2020. These signs will be a significant improvement over the existing old, ugly & miscellaneous signs planted at every access road.
2. Again in 2020, the town purchased a significant amount of beach grass which we planted in many areas along the beach in the later half of March. This was a volunteer effort and has significant impact on beach sand retention, especially south of the fire hall where it is always most needed.
3. We are pleased to be re-grading and paving Passwater Drive this season. This should be a significant improvement and reduce dust as well as the maintenance dollars we use for that road.
4. The Town has contracted the University of Delaware to undergo a hydrology study of our entire Township. This study should finish up in 2020 and give us a much larger and accurate view of what our community is exposed to from the surrounding marsh, creeks and rivers.
5. The Council is in negotiations and conversations with DelDot with regards to traffic “calming” devices to slow traffic down along Bay Avenue. We have invested in additional flashing signs, but the majority feel that traffic cushions may assist in slowing traffic down. Hopefully, we can wrap these discussions up with DelDot in a positive way. In the meantime, slow down to the posted speed and ask your visitors to do the same.
6. The interior and doorways of the public restrooms have been painted this past year. In addition, Memorial Fire Company sealed the outside of the restrooms (at their cost) while they were in process of sealing their building. Thank the firemen & auxiliary members when you see them!
7. We’d also like to thank the many volunteers and staff that contribute to the welfare of the Town. From pavilion beautification, to Coastal Cleanup to beach grass planting to highway cleanup and the many other efforts that so many of you participate in. It is a fine place we live in and vacation at, and all of you volunteers make it a better place.
8. The Town continues to participate in a State sponsored program to eradicate phragmites. These reeds are incredibly invasive and become a huge fire hazard at the end of summer. For information as to how to participate in the program, please contact any council person. Our fire in October 2019 almost started the marsh phragmites on fire. Wisely, the fire department jumped on this almost immediately. This could have been acres and acres of a fire. Thank goodness the fire company caught it so early.
9. Harbingers of Spring – Purple Martins and a new survey. The relationship between humans and purple martins began hundreds of years ago when Native Americans would put out gourds to attract purple martins so they would eat insect pests that could ruin their crops. In the eastern United States, purple martins now nest exclusively in man-made structures – without them, we would not have purple martins or the insect control benefits they provide!

Many of us have purple martin houses on our properties. We would like to document Slaughter Beach’s contribution to purple martin conservation. If those of you that have purple martin houses would take a few minutes sometime during the month of June or July to observe your purple martin homes and fill out a short survey, the information will be compiled and a report will be made available to the community and conservation agencies. Instructions for filling out and submitting the survey will be sent out in June and should be completed before the end of July.

If you don’t have a purple martin house and would like to put one up this spring, talk to a neighbor! Slaughter Beach is a great source of information on types of houses, where to get them and where to place them on your property.

1. We continue to encourage all residents to provide the Town office with an accurate email address. Thus far, we have many of you signed up, but we still are missing some 15+% of property owners, leaving us with only a billing address. The Town employs email as a vehicle to keep our residents informed about emergency notifications, to get real-time safety information to all residents before, during and after a storm event, or to disseminate information about town events. Please sign up at slaughterbeachsignup@comcast.net. In addition, in 2017, the Town developed a new database, which lists all contact information for property owners. We strongly advise all owners to send in current contact information, so that we can readily contact you should any need arise. This information will be closely held, so no need to worry about the information getting into other’s hands.
2. Please be aware that the Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS) is a State-wide system designed to notify Delaware residents of an emergency in their area. The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, along with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, encourages residents who exclusively use mobile telephones to register their numbers in this state-wide database. To register your mobile telephone or VOIP phone, log onto <http://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/BF1D885328BF>. We also encourage local residents to tune into DELDOT’s radio notification system at 1380 AM for current State-wide storm and traffic conditions.
3. Our Town’s financial position continues to move forward positively, with a very strong balance sheet and additional “rainy day” funds in our general fund. We encourage all to attend the yearly Town Meeting and monthly Council meetings for more details.
4. As our Town continues to be more and more attractive to day use and weekly visitors, we find many who bring their pets to our community. This is welcomed, and the vast majority of visitors (and property owners) keep their animals under control and pick up after them. However, we have seen some people who do not pick up after their animals. We all want a clean environ to live and play in. If you should see this behavior, please feel free to respectfully point out to them, that it is their responsibility to pick up after their pet(s).
5. Our newest Council Person, Stephen Heyse; has a great interest in Slaughter Beach history and has started gathering information, images, maps and historical documents regarding our Town. If you have information that you think he could use in this documentation, please contact him @ councilperson@slaughterbeachde.com
6. Beach Replenishment. The entire council continues to work with our US Senators, our Congresswoman as well as State and County officials and US Army Corps of engineers to provide a viable path to beach replenishment. 2019 and early 2020 have seen some forward movement as well as some backwards movement. Ask any council person for an update or attend either the annual meeting or any council meeting, as it is always in the forefront of our efforts.

The Third Annual (Run from the) Greenheads 5K Run/Walk

The town is hosting the third annual 5K run/walk scheduled for Sunday, September 27th. The theme celebrates Oktoberfest as we had to move the date from May and the originally planned Cinco De Mayo theme. This run celebrates our annual visitors, the infamous Greenhead flies, and given the timing - Oktoberfest. We’ve had a lot of fun planning for the race. Runners will start at 9:00 at the Pavilion and continue north along Bay Avenue, make the turn at Beach Plum and return to the Pavilion. There will be prizes, games, and The Reunion band will play at the finish line. This year we’ve added Titos Beverage to our sponsor list, and they’re providing adult beverages in conjunction with beverages provided by Dogfish Head Brewing Company.

We’re proud to announce that proceeds will stay in our community with 100% of net proceeds going to the Slaughter Beach Memorial Fire Company. Register for the race/walk @

*http://www.trisportsevents.com*

Please be aware that traffic on Bay Avenue will be impacted during the run/walk. DelDOT issues a permit for southbound Bay Avenue to close to accommodate the participants. Your patience throughout the event is appreciated.

We’re also looking for volunteers to assist with parking, prep work, etc. If you’re interested in pitching in, you can contact any council person or sign up at *slaughterbeachsignup@comcast.net.*

Fun-filled family activities, including pie eating contests, donut eating contests, one-legged races, potato sack races, pinatas (for adults and kids), and numerous other activities are planned for that day, weather permitting, and we look forward to seeing you there.

Marvel Boardwalk

The Town of Slaughter Beach, and Delaware Nature Society, and many State and Federal agencies, as well as private concerns, all joined together to fund the construction of the boardwalk (in 2019) into the Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve (entrance across from Marvel Avenue). We are on pace to see over 10,000 visitors a year to this facility. Please visit this lovely new area and enjoy. The type of tourist this facility draws is so appropriate for our community. They understand the need for our nature conservancy and are so appreciative of what we have to offer. This is just what we want our neighboring communities to think about our little piece of paradise.

July 4th Regatta

The Slaughter Beach Sail Club is holding its 12th annual Regatta on Saturday, July 4th at 10:00 AM. It will be held at Delaware Avenue, North.

Yard Sale

The annual Memorial Day town yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd, 2020. This is a shortened sale period, in the hopes of driving a lot of traffic for that day alone. You are all (of course) welcome to carry the sale on extra days should you wish to do so, independently. The 23rd event will be advertised in a local newspaper and on the Town website.

Annual Large Item Pickup

The annual large item pickup is scheduled for Friday, May 29th. Place items next to your regular trash. Any items containing refrigerant (refrigerators, freezers, A/Cs) must bear an official tag stating that the refrigerant has been removed. In addition, please note that the trash haulers will not pick up construction waste.

Annual - Yard Waste - Dropoff

As we did last year, we are offering a relatively new service to the community, which is yard waste pickup. We will be doing this twice a year. We will be placing a large dumpster at Harrison Ave, from May 1st to May 4th for yard waste ONLY. In addition, we will placing a second drop off at Virginia Ave, from September 11th to September 14th. Both of these sets of dates are intended for your drop off to occur Saturday & Sunday, as we cannot guarantee what time of day on Friday they will be placed, nor what time of day on Monday they will be picked up. If we find that trash is left at or in the dumpster, we will not be able to offer this in the future, so please only bring yard waste materials.

DuPont Nature Center (DNC)

The Nature Center is a wonderful place to visit, especially with children or grandchildren. Their hours are a bit up in the air now, but the tentative plan is to open May 15th and be open Tuesday thru Sunday, 10 AM to 4 PM till September 1, at which time it will be Wednesdays and Saturdays until October 1 when it will close for the season.

The Center is conveniently located next to Slaughter Beach at the end of Lighthouse Road. Admission to the Center and programs are offered to the public free of charge, but donations are welcome.

While you are at the Center exploring all that is there, be sure to stop by to view the live feeds from the two nature cameras. One is solar powered and focuses on the annual Horseshoe crab/shorebird phenomenon while the other, new last year, is mounted on an Osprey nesting platform.

Staff and volunteers at the Center also conduct several informative programs for folks of all ages. The Center is a true asset to our community and sure to provide many “wow” moments for you, your family and friends.

For further information, please contact Lynne Pusey, Director, or her staff at 302-422-1329.

Delaware Nature Society (DNS)

DNS provides educational programs at the Marvel Salt Marsh Preserve to educate school children about the diverse environments and wildlife habitats in our town. As previously mentioned, the Town partnered with DNS to design and build a boardwalk and observation deck for these educational programs.

The Delaware Nature Society will once again be coordinating the annual Slaughter Beach horseshoe crab spawning survey (pending). For more information or to register for training, please contact Elliott Workman, or Matt Babbitt at Abbott’s Mill Nature Center at (302) 422-0847.

Council Meetings

We welcome and encourage all town residents to attend our Town Council meetings, held the 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 PM on the 2nd floor of the Memorial Volunteer Fire Company. The access door is on the south side of the building. If we need to, we will be using electronic meetings through this Covid 19 shutdown period. Register for the Town email blasts in order to get the latest news.

Annual Town Meeting

The annual town meeting will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. at the Slaughter Beach Memorial Fire Hall, second floor (pending). This is your opportunity to hear “the year in review”, for those unable to attend monthly meetings.

Election Information

The Town Council seats held by Kathy Lock, Bob Wood & Stephen Heyse expire this year. Each seat is for a term of two years. If you’re interested in running for office, please file a Notice of Intent with accompanying affidavit that you meet the qualifications for office at the town office located at 357 Bay Ave. Please request a form by either calling (302) 424-7659 or by emailing townofslaughterbeach@comcast.net. The deadline for filing is June 5th at 5:00 p.m. If more than one person files for each open seat, an election will take place on July 4, 2020 at the fire hall. Polls will be open from 8:00 AM to 12 noon.

***Qualifications for office:***

* You must be at least 21 years of age;
* not have been convicted of a felony or crime of moral turpitude;
* be a citizen of the United States as of June 30, 2020.
* have been either domiciled in Slaughter Beach or a freeholder (property owner) in Slaughter Beach since January 1, 2020.

***Voter Qualifications:***

Any person shall be qualified to vote who, on the date of the election:

* Is a United States citizen;
* Is eighteen (18) years of age or older;
* Has for not less than thirty (30) consecutive days preceding the date of the election, been either
1. a freeholder in the town (defined as a natural person who holds title to or a life estate, in and real property located within the Town boundaries)

**OR**

1. has been domiciled in the Town (defined as physically residing in town and has his/her true, fixed, and permanent home and principal establishment in the town of Slaughter Beach).

Please note that if property ownership is held by an LLC, corporation, or other similar artificial entity, the property is not held by a “natural person” and individuals with an ownership interest in the LLC, corporation, or other similar entity would not qualify to vote as freeholders. However, those individuals might qualify to vote if they are domiciled in town.

The most recent Sussex County Property Tax records available as of May 1st shall be considered proof of ownership for all individuals identified in those records as Slaughter Beach property owners (FREEHOLDERS). A Supplemental List of Property Owners will be created for those property owners not on the Sussex County Property Tax records who can provide the Town with proof of ownership. Both lists shall be available for review by potential voters. Property owners may submit a request to the Town via telephone or electronic mail to ascertain whether or not they are listed on the Sussex County Property Tax records or the Supplemental List of Property Owners. All individuals will be required to provide proof of identity to vote OR are personally identified by a majority of election officers in the polling place who can attest to a voter’s identity and address. Please refer to the Town website for additional information regarding voting and for a list of the documents that will serve to identify each voter.

***Absentee Ballots:***

Any individual wishing to vote by absentee ballot must request a ballot by filing an affidavit of qualifications with the Town no later than 12:00 PM (noon) June 24th. Absentee ballots may be requested through the town website, or by writing to the Town at 357 Bay Ave, Slaughter Beach, DE 19963-4909, or by telephone at (302) 424-7659, or by sending an email to townofslaughterbeach@comcast.net. Individuals who have requested an absentee ballot will not be permitted to vote by machine on the day of the election.

Town Officials

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Mayor* Harry Ward (302) 422-0894 | *Secretary* Rebecca Craft (302) 632-3156 |
| *Vice Mayor* Bob Wood (302) 228-2374 | *Tax Collector* Angela Tibbitt (302) 424-1127 |
| *Councilman* Stephen Heyse (301) 213-9287 | *Code Enforcement* Bob Clendaniel (302) 270-0687 |
| *Treasurer* Kathy Lock (302) 422-5234 | *Town Clerk* Kathy McFadden (302) 424-3925 |