

## **Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting Saturday, June 6, 2020**

### **1. Call Meeting to Order**

*The meeting was called to order at 10:00AM in the Memorial Hall of the Slaughter Beach Memorial Volunteer Fire Company by Mayor Harry Ward. Council members present were Rebecca Craft, Kathleen Lock, Bob Wood and Gary Plescia. Community members in attendance are shown on the attached sign-in sheet.*

### **2. Welcoming & Announcements**

*Mayor Ward thanked those in attendance and proceeded with the update of annual events.*

### **3. General Information**

*We currently have 210 fulltime residents, with the number expected to rise during the upcoming census. There are approximately 300 homes on a total of 365 building lots, 16 rental units (although not all fulltime rentals), 2 commercial properties. Sale of properties on Slaughter Beach seem to occur quickly after listing.*

*Finances: This year the council decided to open a secondary bank account at Shore Bank. This was done in the event there is a banking issue at the primary bank, WSFS. Minimal funds were deposited. At present there is \$695,000 at WSFS and \$20,000 at Shore Bank. There is approximately \$90,000 in accounts receivable on two grants that have closed but have not yet been reimbursed (USDA and the Community Transportation Trust Fund)*

*The annual audit process has continued with the town receiving clean audits for the last three years. A rainy-day fund has been set aside and includes sufficient funding for the town to remain solvent for 7-8 months in the event of a fiscal emergency.*

*All financial processes are now automated for the town and policies and procedures are in place that include oversight of town finances though an outside auditor, bookkeeper and CPA.*

## **2. Town Staffing**

*The town employs part-time staff who cover various areas. Each employee received pay raises last year. There are not fulltime town employees.*

## **3. Election Update:**

*There will be no town election this year since only three people filed for the three open positions. A reorganization meeting will be held immediately prior to the next town meeting to identify who fills each position.*

*Members of the town council continue to work with area organizations to enhance our visibility in the beach community: RASCL, SCAT, ABC, ACT. We are continuing in our consultancy relationship with Tony Pratt to have the Town's voice heard on matters related to beach replenishment and inlet restoration.*

*We continue to communicate regularly with the Memorial Fire Company, DE Bay Launch Service, DNC, DNS, as well as Sussex County*

## **4. Fire Hazard Update/Phragmites**

*The new ordinances expected to be approved at Monday's council meeting include homeowner responsibility for keep phragmites controlled if they are located on property that is accessible, and not located on a wetland. The town will continue to run phragmites control projects in the fall. If you have previously signed up to be included in the project, you will be called to confirm if you would like to continue to be involved. Information about the control program will be included in the annual newsletter along with information about how they burn so homeowners are aware of the danger they pose.*

## **5. Roads**

*Passwaters Road has been paved. This paving project will save the town annual maintenance costs, which can then be used to repair and update the other town roads. Within 4-5 years, we expect all roads to be in good shape.*

## **6. UD Study**

*The Town is currently working with DEMA to study the waterflow (hydrology) of the marsh. Data will be used to develop plans on how to remediate potential flooding damages. They study will continue through October 2020.*

## **7. Speed Control**

*Discussions have been held with State and local stakeholders to place speed cushions along Bay Avenue. The Delaware Department of Transportation has agreed to pay for and install the cushions. We have worked with the fire company to ensure they will not deter fire control efforts.*

## **8. Speed Control Signage**

*Signage along Bay Avenue has been repaired and new signage purchased. Installation is expected to be complete within the next month.*

## **9. October 30, 2019 Fire/Demolition Update**

*Two of the three homes destroyed by the fire have been demolished. Due to unforeseen family issues, the third home still has not been demolished. The Mayor has been in contact with the family and is assured it will be taken care of soon.*

## **10. Water Company Agreement**

*The original agreement signed with Artesian Water was found to be defective in that it included only existing customers of the Slaughter Beach Water Company. A new resolution was approved for submission to the PSC to include future users as well.*

## **11. Water Main Upgrades**

*Artesian Water Company is in the process of upgrading the wells that serve the south end of the beach. A new well has been drilled and pipes installation continues.*

## **12. Town Office Clean-up**

*Members of the council and the town clerk have spent hours going through the town office shredding old and outdated materials from the 1920's through the*

1970's. The filing system has been re-structured and historic information saved. Special thanks for Kathy Lock for spearheading this effort and the countless hours spent on the cleaning.

### **13. IT Management**

Gary Plescia is working with Comcast to organize the office, to potentially provide internet access to the pavilion, researching speed for live streaming town council meetings and integrating with the database to potentially allow for mass texting. He is also researching methods to scan documents directly into Sharepoint.

### **14. 5K Update**

The 5k originally scheduled for May has been postponed to September 27<sup>th</sup>. The new theme will be Ocktoberfest. Community members are encouraged to volunteer. All proceeds will go to the Memorial Fire Company.

### **15. Ordinance Changes**

A review of town ordinances was undertaken approximately a year ago to ensure they were consistent with the Charter and other local requirements. Outdated historical references were deleted, and enhanced enforcement efforts were created. Conversations were held with county and state officials to ensure that when new ordinances aligned with their standards, that they would enforce. The new ordinances will be a voted on at the June 2020 council meeting.

### **16. Zoning Change**

One adjustment was made to the zoning laws. This addresses permitting for sheds on properties.

### **17. Pew Charitable Trust**

Sea Grant approached the town council about potentially partnering with the Pew Charitable Trust (PCT). A brainstorming session was held, and ideas generated reviewed by PCT. It was recommended that the town seek out a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for a planning grant. The subject of the planning grant would be an exploration of the area's economic impact in terms of eco-tourism, environmental protection, Mispillion Cedar Creek Watershed and wetlands protection. The initial proposal to NFWF was approved

*and a team of partners is now working on the major proposal. It is hoped that a case can be made for long-term sustainability of the area in terms of climate change and all that goes with it.*

## **18. Closure of the Wastewater and Sewer Grants**

*These two grants have been completed and we are currently waiting on reimbursement.*

## **19. COVID 19 Impact**

*Based on currently knowledge, COVID has had a limited impact on the town. Only one known diagnosis that is believed to have occurred while the individual was in a rehabilitation setting.*

*The bathrooms were closed, short-term rentals will be permitted to open July 1<sup>st</sup> and the basketball courts and playgrounds remain open. A discussion about opening the bathrooms will occur at the June 2020 council meeting.*

## **20. Sand on the Beach**

*The Army Corps of Engineers is moving forward with the dredge project. Our consultant, Tony Pratt, has been working across a spectrum of resources to have the beaches taken care of. Everything now appears to be funding based. If a jetty project is created, it could mitigate some of the mud issues at the north end of the beach.*

## **21. Town Charter Change**

*A charter change was approved which will allow the town to hold property outside of town boundaries. This was undertaken so the town could accept the gift of property. This could result in an economic boon to the town when, and if, the property is ultimately sold. More information will be provided in future council meetings as it becomes available.*

## **22. Community Relationships**

*The council continues to work with federal, state and local agencies to maintain important relationships and networks.*

### **23. Changes to Council Personnel**

*Over the course of the last year, Vice Mayor Ken Lewis resigned and was replaced ultimately by Gary Plescia.*

### **24. Yard Waste Policy**

*The town held yard waste pickup events twice last year and once so far this year. We anticipate holding a second event in the fall again this year.*

### **25. Route 36 Bridge Repair Project**

*The bridge over Cedar Creek is listed for replacement. The project is expected to take at least one year, during which time the only access to the beach will be Slaughter Beach Road. There is not specific timeframe for when the work will be done at this time, but it will be publicized when known.*

### **26. Pavilion Roof Repair**

*A new roof has been installed on the pavilion this year. In addition, electrical service was repaired on the marsh-side near the recreation courts.*

### **27. Boardwalk Warranty**

*The boardwalk was inspected, wood replacements completed and piling corrections made during the 1-year warranty period. The stainless steel bolts have a five-year warranty and will be inspected to ensure they are in good shape.*

### **28. Bayshore Byway Survey**

*A letter of support was written on behalf of the Byway and information about it will be included on new street signage.*

### **29. Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) Update**

*The CLUP was completed in 2018 and is reviewed annually. The 2020 review will be completed this summer. The document is located on the town website for anyone wishing to review its contents.*

### **Community Questions**

*Questions were raised related to flood insurance rates and how they compared between private and federal sources. Some discussion amount the residents occurred, but all agreed it was not a council issue at this time.*

*The Mayor thanked all for completing their census this year as it does impact local funding.*

*A resident acknowledged the new pop-up library, and all agreed it was a nice addition to the community.*

*Becky Craft made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 pm. The motion was seconded by Kathy Lock. **The motion carried, 5-0.***