



ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

Message from the Mayor and Council

Welcome to the 2024 Summer Season! Your Slaughter Beach Town Council has spent the past year working to manage growth in our community while enhancing our infrastructure for everyone's benefit. The completed **Coastal Resiliency Design Studio (CRDS)** project gave us many opportunities to review as a community and helped us define priorities for continued resiliency while sustaining the natural environment.

One part of the CRDS program was defining how residents see our community and the top three words were "home, peaceful and quiet". The first step toward resiliency is the **Slaughter Beach Sewer District** installation, which will disturb the quiet, however this piece of infrastructure will put us solidly on the map in Sussex County and Delaware, allowing us to compete for funds and recognition more equitably. Details about the sewer project can be found on our website under "wastewater", from the original Q&A to the most recent Minutes from the March '24 meeting with Sussex Engineers.

Our most recently completed project, with significant help from the volunteer fireman with the Slaughter Beach Memorial Fire Company, is the park renovation and update that was completed in October of '23. The **Memorial Fire Company Park**, along with the resurfacing of the tennis and basketball courts (Draper Recreation Area) and the Pavilion are generous perks that the Town provides to its residents and their guests, and these are tremendous assets when we are competing for grant funding as a public beach.

Spearheaded by former Mayor Kathy Lock, the **Bay Beach Association (BBA)** has had significant success working with our federal partners and we now wait for the state and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to fulfill their obligations. If this all comes together as expected, we hope to have proper beach replenishment soon.

Resiliency is the keyword for our small, rural community. With potential flooding from the Marsh as well as from the Delaware Bay, the Town Council works weekly with the **University of Delaware** to make sure we are chasing the right grants, working with the right contacts, and being made aware of any opportunity that would benefit our ability to protect not only our homes and lots, but the animals and natural environment that drew us here in the first place. One such effort has us working with the City of Milford on a feasibility study for linking our towns with safer passage for pedestrians, handicap, and cyclists. This is a Milford grant, but as a municipality we need to show our ability to partner with other communities for the greater good.

A project that doesn't require our funding but did require our support is the rotating "drawbridge" at the north end of town spanning the Cedar Creek. It had been slated for replacement in 2023, however, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) found the expense was beyond estimates and are now pursuing grants for additional funding. The Town has written letters of support and will continue to push for the bridge to be updated, however we are assured it is in good shape and no one should fear its viability. To follow progress, go to <https://deldot.gov/projects> and look for "**Replacement of BR 3-164 on SR 36 Cedar Beach Road.**" For now, we have not been notified of a timeline for replacement.

The greatest gift in the Town of Slaughter Beach are the residents. Town Council wishes to extend sincere thanks to every one of you that offers time and energy to help us be a better place, from picking up garbage on your walks to planting flowers and improving the look of your lot/residence and waving to the strangers that drive along our roads. Our volunteers spend countless hours on pavilion beautification, Coastal Cleanup, highway cleanup and beach grass planting every year and Town Council appreciates all of it. Again, we would like to express genuine gratitude to the dedicated men and women of the Slaughter Beach Memorial Fire Company and Ambulance service. We recognize and acknowledge our good fortune having such an amazing group of first responders dedicated to keeping us safe.

Town Council is happy to report progress and share great news this year:

- We have been working with the **Memorial Fire Company** to promote **Smart911**. This program invites homeowners to voluntarily sign up and complete a questionnaire that would be used ONLY in emergencies and shared ONLY with first responders. It includes information on number of pets, whether they are indoor only, flights of stairs, handicaps for anyone living in the home and other information that is vital during an emergency. We urge you to sign up at <https://smart911.com> and to make sure the Town has your most up-to-date contact information.

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- The "**Seaside Envoy**" program has worked beautifully in helping the Town maintain up to date records for our neighbors in case of an emergency. These volunteers made it possible to update our files and add phone and emergency contact information! Several of our Sea Envoy contacts have gone above and beyond duty and the Town is incredibly grateful to these volunteers for helping us improve communication with residents and owners from out of town. To participate or check your information, contact any Council member (see last page).
- The **Marvel Boardwalk**, which was built with assistance from the Delaware Nature Center, continues to draw high numbers of eco-friendly visitors to the Town and surrounding area. In any given year we record approximately 10,000 visitors, which highlights just how valuable Slaughter Beach, and its natural environment is to our area and local economy. The number of visitors to Town (in general) has increased every spring with "birders" in our community as well as the increased use of our public spaces and pavilion.
- The Town resurfaced and graded several streets, primarily at the north end of the community this past year. This investment is partially grant-funded and helps to off-set our costs in **maintaining access roads** for residents and visitors alike.
- With the Mayor's guidance, the Town Council introduced a monthly **evening social program**, inviting guest speakers and allowing residents an opportunity to gather and get to know their neighbors after the presentation. To date topics have included Dark Skies, Fire Safety, Recycling and Elections.
- Low inventory of **real estate** and the nationwide price increase trend continues here in Slaughter Beach. Prices are up and we continue to see new construction throughout the community.
- Town Council thanks our dedicated Town Clerk for bringing the **Bookmobile** back to Slaughter Beach! Times are announced in the weekly email, to be on the list message townmanager@slaughterbeachde.com.
- We continue to see far less trash on the beach and in all public areas in our community. Our thanks to the sponsors and volunteers of the "**Adopt a Highway**" program, and the many residents that participate daily in picking up trash.
- Our Town's financial position is very positive with growth to our "rainy day fund" while still maintaining and investing in our resources. The annual **auditor's review** came back with an excellent rating and we expect the same at the end of this year (June 2024).

Slaughter Beach Historical Society (SBHS)

The Slaughter Beach Historical Society (SBHS) has compiled historical events dating back to the 1600's and is currently recording local history as reported by residents whose families go back multiple generations. This history is being shared with all through the SBHS website, <https://sbhistory.org>. As a non-profit corporation, if you are interested in donating or sharing history, please email the group at info@sbhistory.org.

Statewide Property Tax Re-Assessment

In 2021 Sussex County began a court ordered re-assessment of all properties. This process is being conducted by Tyler Technologies, nationally recognized experts, and they will survey approximately 182,000 properties over a 3-year period. The new values are being set at what is projected to be the fair market value (the amount a property can be sold for) as of July 1, 2023. To-date residents have not received their reassessments on Slaughter Beach. For more details go to <https://sussexcountyde.gov/assessment>.

Memorial Fire Company

Slaughter Beach Memorial Fire Company and Ambulance Corps extend thanks to the residents of Slaughter Beach for your continued support this past year. Another generous act on behalf of the fire company is that they are now hosting meetings and contributing materials for the Slaughter Beach Historical Society. This generosity extends to the use of additional space within the firehouse for Historical Society materials.

The fire company has brought the new water response boat online. The Town was able to assist the fire company with budgeting for the boat lift which is now docked in the Mispillion/Cedar Creek harbor, near the public boat launch. We continue to be thankful for the close access we have to land and sea support from these hard-working and dedicated volunteers.

Delaware Nature Society (DNS)

Delaware Nature Society provides educational programs at the Marvel Saltmarsh Preserve and Scenic Byway to educate school children about the diverse environment and wildlife habitats in our town. With their assistance we are able to keep count of the number of visitors to the Boardwalk and we are grateful for their continued support in keeping our natural environment a priority.

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Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS)

Please be aware that the DENS is a state-wide system designed to notify residents of an emergency in your area. The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center (in Georgetown) along with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) encourage residents who use mobile telephones to register their phone numbers in this state-wide database. To register, log onto <https://dema.delaware.gov/onlineservices/index.shtml?de=dens>. We further encourage residents to tune into DelDOT's (Delaware Department of Transportation's) radio notification system at 1380 AM for up-to-date storm and traffic conditions. **PLEASE NOTE**, if you do not allow tracking on your mobile device, you will not receive public safety messages.

Slaughter Beach Sail Club (SBSC)

The Slaughter Beach Sail Club continues to sponsor a July 4th regatta at Delaware Avenue, North. For details, please email the "Commode Ore" of the SBSC, Harry Ward at 09sbsc@gmail.com.

Annual Town-Wide Yard Sale

The annual Memorial Day town-wide yard sale is scheduled for Saturday May 25, 2024, from 9am until 3pm. The event will be advertised in a local newspaper as well as on the town website.

Annual Large Item Pickup

Large item pickup is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28, 2024. Place items next to your regular trash. Any items containing refrigerant (refrigerators, freezers, air-conditioning units) must bear an official tag stating that the refrigerant has been removed or it will not be collected. **NO construction** related material will be collected (lumber, windows/doors, bath fixtures, etc.).

Yard Pruning Drop-off

We will be placing one large dumpster on selected beach access roads on the last weekend of each month from May to October to collect yard waste **ONLY** - leaves, branches, dead plants. If we find that trash or other debris is placed at or near the dumpster, we will not continue to offer this service in the future. The schedule and placement of the roll-off dumpsters are as follows - and please keep in mind, delivery of the dumpster can be Friday night or Saturday morning:

May 24th - May 27th @ Bridgeham Ave
July 26th - July 29th @ Evans Ave
Sept 27th - Sept 30th @ Delaware Ave North
June 28th - July 1st @ Maryland Ave
Aug 23rd - Aug 26th @ Simpson Ave
Oct 25th - Oct 28th @ Sussex Ave

Pets

As our town continues to be more and more attractive to visitors, we find many bring their pets to the beach and while the great majority of pet owners keep their animals on leash and pick up after them, some do not. There has been an increase in the latter over the last year so we ask that everyone respect our public spaces.

Council Meetings

We encourage all town residents to attend our Town Council meetings, held the 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00pm in the fire hall at 359 Bay Avenue. Council meetings are held both in person and via Zoom and the Agenda is posted one week prior on the board at the fire hall, in addition to being on our website. Homeowners and residents that provide updated information can be added to our weekly newsletter which includes a link before each meeting. The annual meeting will be held in person on Saturday, June 1, 2024, at the fire hall at 10:00am.

Election Information

The three Town Council seats held currently by Bob Wood, Joanne Plescia, and Ben Monastero will expire July 8, 2024. Each seat is for a term of two years. If you are interested in running for office, please file a "Notice of Intent" with the accompanying affidavit at the town office by Friday, May 31, 2024, at 5:00pm. Details for filing and accompanying paperwork can be found on the website or by contacting the Town Clerk, Kathy McFadden at townclerk@slaughterbeachde.com. If more than one person files for each open seat, the election will be held on July 1, 2024, at the fire hall with polls open from 8:00am to 12:00noon.

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Qualifications for office

- You must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age;
- You cannot have been convicted of a felony or crime or moral turpitude;
- Be a citizen of the United States as of July 1, 2023;
- Have been either domiciled in Slaughter Beach or a freeholder (property owner) since June 1, 2023.

Qualifications to vote

- 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;
 - A freeholder in the town (defined as a natural person who holds title to or a life estate in real property located within the Town boundaries;
- OR**
- Has physically resided in the Town and has his/her 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 or similar, would NOT qualify to vote. However, if owners are domiciled in the Town, they may qualify to vote. The most recent Sussex County Property Tax records available as of May 1, 2024, shall be considered proof of ownership for all individuals requesting recognition as property owners (FREEHOLDERS). For questions, please contact the town office prior to the election at (302) 424-7659.

Absentee Ballots

Any individual wishing to vote by absentee ballot must request a ballot by completing and returning an affidavit of qualifications with the Town no later than 12:00pm (noon) June 18, 2024. Absentee ballots may be requested through the town website by writing, calling, or emailing the town office (see below). Individuals that request absentee ballots will not be permitted to vote by machine on the day of the election, July 6, 2024.

Letters: *Town of Slaughter Beach, 357 Bay Avenue, Milford, DE 19963-4911; Phone (302) 424-7659 and leave a message; Email townofslaughterbeach@comcast.net.*

Town Officials

<i>Mayor</i>	Bob Wood	(302) 228-2374	<i>Town Manager</i>	Julia Geha	(267) 909-1886
<i>Vice Mayor</i>	Harry Ward	(302) 422-0894	<i>Tax Collector</i>	Jennifer Cornell	(302) 670-1659
<i>Secretary</i>	Ben Monastero	(410) 925-9412	<i>Code Officer</i>	Bob Clendaniel	(302) 270-0687
<i>Treasurer</i>	Joanne Plescia	(856) 313-4910	<i>Town Clerk</i>	Kathy McFadden	(609) 658-0165
<i>Councilperson</i>	Jamie Draper	(914) 703-2223			