

BFE Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2016

The first meeting was called to order at 10 am on May 18 with Sue Callaway, Frank Weisgerber, George Junkin, Frank Brady (Miken), and Dave Wilson present. Bob Cestone has declined to be on the committee, and Joe Hinks was unable to attend.

The new ordinance (180-16) for house elevation in the VE Zone on Ocean Drive was reviewed. Dave Wilson proposed the committee's goal is to determine the allowable vertical height for living space and to establish the reference from which height is measured (BFE and/or street height) for all other flood zones. George Junkin proposed that in addition, an ordinance be developed to restrict the ground floor to be at or above the level of the street centerline to prevent flooding or drainage into the ground floor. These goals were accepted by a 3-0 vote with Frank Brady and George abstaining as the 3rd Councilman on the committee (only two can vote).

Frank Brady commented that the 33 ft vertical height in the new ordinance will allow three living levels on the west side. The current requirement of 32 ft without free board will be too restrictive with the 6 foot BFE proposed by FEMA for the west side. George Junkin proposed the 33 ft measurement without free board be from the bottom of the first floor horizontal structural member to the peak of the roof for all flood zones. All agreed that two feet of free board should increase the allowable vertical height to 35 ft, consistent with the new ordinance.

All agreed that BFE should be used as the reference in the flood zones. George pointed out that the street must still be used for houses currently not in a flood zone (X) in Cat Hill. The new FIRM is expected to place all of S Bethany in a flood zone.

Charts were presented that showed house heights above street level with the new ordinance at several locations in different flood zones on the east and west sides. House elevation limits in the flood plain were compared for Sussex County, Bethany Beach, and Fenwick Island. See the attached presentation.

George volunteered to propose new ordinance wording for all flood zones in S Bethany at the next meeting. The new ordinance proposal would then be presented for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

The next meeting will be held on June 9 at 10 am.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Dave Wilson  
Chairman