

November 18 Council Meeting
South Bethany Police Department Building Expansion

South Bethany Property Owners:

I felt the need to express my thoughts about the need for the expansion of the police department facility in light of the recent communication by the SBPOA and possible opposition to taking this action. I happen to have significant expertise in both physical and cyber security and part of that is a knowledge of some of the legal and safety aspects regarding establishing and maintaining adequate physical security. This is what I do for the Federal Government and specifically the NRC.

I spent some time with the Chief a few months back when the issue of a need for more space was first brought up as a council issue. He gave me a tour of the existing facility and we reviewed several glaring areas of concern in regards to safety of the officers and staff as well as the public, plus issues that have a legal impact on the town and on law enforcement efforts. I was quite appalled at how the department is being forced to shoe-horn their activities into the available space. We do not have adequate facilities for the officers based on having both male and female officers. We do not have suitable facilities for restraining prisoners and we may be in violation of the law in regards to juvenile detention capabilities. Weapon maintenance and storage is not adequately secure or safe. Chain-of-custody rules for evidence can't be maintained, which means that evidence may not be usable in court. If the station has to be a command center during a major storm the facility does not support a 24/7 presence with anywhere near a suitable support environment. And on top of that the facility is not adequate in the face of a threat from a violent and armed attacker. I am not suggesting that we need an armed fortress, but in today's threatscape we are putting administrative staff at risk if we don't make some basic physical security changes.

The Chief can explain all of this to you and I am sure he would be happy to give you a tour and discuss why they can't just shift things around to accommodate their needs in the current space (clearly they have already been doing that for some time and have reached the end of that option.)

I clearly see the need to make the expansion and changes suggested to the facility. My wife and I have pledged to donate a new stacking washer/dryer pair to the department as a sign of our support (the Chief did not include those amenities in his plan and I feel he should have them.) As a business person I also know that you are in a better position to recruit and retain the best people when you give them a reasonable and safe place to work.

We can debate the best ways to pay for the effort and discuss alternatives and options to control and contain the costs but we are very fortunate in that our Police Department has \$50,000 in donated funds and \$50,000 in Sussex County Grant Funds to help offset the \$206,000 cost projection for this project and I don't feel that there is any doubt that the department badly needs the added space and that their ability to perform their duties is adversely impacted by the current facility.

I ask for your support on this project.

Thank you!

Tim Shaw
Council Member

Tim Shaw
Council Member
timshaw4@verizon.net

"The Best Little Beach in Delaware"