



## **COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2013**

**TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

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The Community Enhancement Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, August 21, 2013 at the Town Hall meeting room from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. The following individuals were in attendance: Sue Callaway, Chair; Donna Farrow; George Junkin; Barbara Sears; Kent Stephan; Bobbe Stephan; Carol Stevenson; and Don Chrobot, Maintenance Supervisor. Also in attendance was Joe Hinks, South Bethany Code Enforcement Officer.

Sue Callaway welcomed everyone to the meeting including new CEC member Barbara Sears. There were no public comments.

### **Dialogue with Joe Hinks, South Bethany Code Enforcement Officer**

Sue Callaway introduced Joe Hinks to the CEC members and requested that the group ask Joe to respond to their most important community enhancement issues. Joe initiated discussion by stating he believes that there are community standards which property owners must adhere to and he is committed to making sure ordinances are upheld and that the appearance and maintenance of their homes are directly linked to property values and the overall appearance of the community. Sue began by expressing her concerns about properties that are either for sale and have "languished" on the market for long periods of time or are owned by older individuals who are unable to care for the properties and in some cases, where families are not permitted, interested or have the resources to maintain the properties. Joe discussed how some properties are owned as an LLC and this can frequently be more challenging to locate the real owner and have them respond to ordinance violation calls, emails or letters. He referenced one particular property that fit the "languished" category and he is committed to pursuing the property violations and perhaps ultimately forcing it to a tax lien sale. Joe noted

that overgrown lawns and mowing lawns can be a laborious task – owners are frequently unaware of the lawn growth and state “we don’t know who to get to do it.” Joe is helpful in providing suggestions and generally the lawns are cut. Some arranged by the town but the owners are responsible for payment. Joe also stated that courtesy calls often find property owners frustrated with the responsibilities of taking care of the property but are attached to the property through years of ownership and fond memories. Barbara Sears inquired about the use of ropes and signs such as “no parking” and “no trespassing” on unimproved or improved lots. She stated that these signs give off a negative “vibe” and often people then feel they are not permitted to park in the right of way adjacent to such signs. Joe agreed to follow-up with one particular location. The importance in consistency in signs was discussed as well. Joe explained his process for ordinance violations including a very specific letter sent to homeowners referring to a specific code – a compliance due date – a photograph of the violation – and his contact information for follow-up. Responses range from thank you to varying degrees of hostility. Joe reminded the group that the town’s “Blue Sheet” is available for complaints and that such written complaints are anonymous. Joe noted that he is always available via email or calls for complaints and/or concerns about properties. Joe said he has been focused on citing properties who violate the removal of trash or recycling cans and has seen an improvement in response to these notices. The group agreed that property improvements and maintenance are important and supported his vigilance in homeowners following up with such tasks. Joe also stated that a considerable amount of his time is spent on issuing building permits for new construction and also for repairs.

### **Update on Ocean Drive Alternative Lighting Trial Test - Don Chrobot and Sue Callaway**

As discussed at previous meetings, the CEC has been exploring alternative lighting options to the street lights. Sue stated that the Delmarva Power street lights at two locations were removed in early July due to lack of community support. The neighbors had no interest in trying the proposed surrounds.

Sue presented a suggestion from CEC member and Ocean Drive resident John Speers that the CEC extend the decorative, solar-powered light effort (currently one is located on top of the S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street sign) to four additional locations adjacent to the current one so the impact of the solar lighting could be evaluated. The group unanimously agreed to purchase four additional solar light tops and stall them on the street signs south and north of S. 2<sup>nd</sup> so the impact of the lighting could be evaluated. Sue and Don noted that there are funds remaining in the CEC lighting category for this purchase.

**ADDENDUM:** Three additional lights have been installed – Don is awaiting replacement for the 4th light that arrived broken!

### **Bio-Retention Areas Along the East Side of Route 1**

Sue noted that the mailbox survey had been completed and that 21 of the 27 homeowners indicated they wanted to continue having mailboxes along Route 1. The Postal Service has clearly indicated that home delivery service is not available on the side streets. Those currently receiving direct service are “grandfathered” in and their home service will continue. Sue noted that they are awaiting design plans from the project director Larry Trout of AMT. Once the designs are available, the location of current mailboxes will be determined and landscaping plans will be determined.

**ADDENDUM:** The design plans will be presented to the town and CIB at a meeting to be held on Monday, 9:00 am September, 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Town Hall meeting room. Sue Callaway and Don Chrobot will be attending the meeting. In addition, Sue Barton of the University of Delaware will be attending to discuss landscape design ideas for the 17 bio-retention areas on the east side. It is assumed that construction will start shortly thereafter. The group will also conduct an onsite visit of the east side areas.

### **Update on Landscaping Projects – Don Chrobot and Sue Callaway**

Sue commended Lori Cicero and Barbara Sears for volunteering to weed the RHMP flower bed. Their help and support is greatly appreciated. The group also discussed that with the development of the landscaped rain gardens on the west side, the York Beach Mall beds, the circle beds, the median bio-retention beds and the forthcoming east side bio-retention beds that additional maintenance efforts for watering and weeding are needed. The CEC is exploring additional volunteer efforts but also hiring an additional part-time person to help weed the multiple beds. Sue pointed out that the landscaping initiatives have resulted in a much improved visual enhancement to South Bethany as many positive comments are received, so the importance of maintaining the beds is significant.

**ADDENDUM:** Lord’s landscaping will replace one tree in the median that did not survive and two trees near the Layton Road traffic light will be moved in response to complaints about impeded site along Route 1.

### **Update on Painted Pole Proposal - Kent Stephan and Sue Callaway**

Sue noted that she was still waiting to hear from Jim Smith of Delmarva Power regarding the CEC request to paint the telephone poles.

### **Addendum:**

Sue received an email from Jim Smith of Delmarva Power on August 29<sup>th</sup> was received and the request had to be vetted through several channels. Following thoughtful discussions they are not going to allow the practice due to safety, liability and long-term maintenance issues.

### **Update on Adopt Program - Sue, Sharon, Bobbe and Carol**

Sue stated that the Adopt Thank-You Party was a huge success and that more than 32 people attended. It was a glorious evening and everyone had a good time. Many of the Adopters noted how the program had made them feel much more a part of the South Bethany community.

Sue noted that plans for the Adopt Beauty Contest, beginning Friday, August 23 and ending Monday, September 2, have been finalized. Sue and Carol placed 20 Adopt Contest signs at each site and Sue and Pam Smith have finalized all aspects of the online voting process. An Email News Update about the contest will be sent to SB homeowners on August 21 and an additional reminder on August 28. Sue thanked Dee Burbage for agreeing to print out ballots and track responses.

**ADDENDUM:** Coastal Point featured an article about the Adopt Beauty Contest in its August 23 addition. Thanks to Bobbe Stephan and Carol Stevenson who joined Sue Callaway on Friday, September 6 to count the Adopt Beauty Contest ballots and determine the results. We received 156 ballots. A results email announcing the top five winners was sent to all Adopters on Saturday, September 7. Carol Stevenson and Dick and Maryanne Schmidt whose Bayshore Drive canal end won the contest, were presented with a \$100 gift certificate from Lords Landscaping on Monday, September 9. Along with Mike Lord, Mayor Kathy Jankowski and Coastal Point reporter Maria Counts and photographer Chris attended. We appreciated their support.

In addition, we have confirmed adoption of the Petherton Road End; the canal end along Canal Drive between W. 5<sup>th</sup> and W. 6<sup>th</sup> Streets; and the canal end along Canal Drive between W. 7<sup>th</sup> and W. 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. We now have a total of 23 adopted canal/road ends.

### **Adjournment**

The group adjourned at 3:00 pm. The group confirmed Thursday, September 26 at 10:00 am for the next meeting. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall Meeting Room.