



COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2012

TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

The Community Enhancement Committee held a meeting on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at the Town Hall meeting room from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. The following individuals were in attendance: Sue Callaway, Chair; Donna Farrow; George Junkin; Sharon Nonn; John Speer; Bobbe Stephan; Kent Stephan; Carol Stevenson; and Don Chrobot, Maintenance Supervisor. Also in attendance were Kathy Jankowski, Mayor and Pete Brockstedt, Code Enforcement Inspector and Sam Spiegleman, WAVE Reporter.

Sue Callaway welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced Councilman Jim Gross who was attending the meeting with particular interest in the agenda item of the Solid Waste Ordinance. There were no other public comments. Sue took the opportunity to thank Don Chrobot and Ron for doing such an excellent job with the tremendous trash removal task that followed the flood. Sue noted that Donna Farrow's comment that the trash removal was "Community Enhancement at its finest!" was very appropriate. Sue also thanked the Mayor for the leadership she provided before, during and after the flood and Hurricane Sandy. Due to Mayor Jankowski's tight schedule, the discussion immediately moved to the first agenda item.

Roundtable Discussion with Mayor Kathy Jankowski and Code Enforcement Inspector Pete Brockstedt – Perspective on the CEC and the Role of CEC in Engaging SB Property Owners in Community Enhancement Beyond Code Compliance

Mayor Jankowski started the discussion by describing the numerous amounts of phone calls and emails she receives – especially during and after the flood – but the majority of them have been very complimentary about South Bethany's flood clean-up and also

about other work that the CEC is doing. The following is a list of comments, items of concern and actions to take in response:

- Kathy noted that particularly during the Adopt Contest property owners remarked how good the canal ends looked. She emphasized the importance of continuing this effort and doing more – particularly along Route 1;
- At a meeting regarding Sea Colony's future storm water management efforts, the Mayor stated that there were numerous favorable comments about South Bethany's Route 1 median improvements and as a result, other communities are being encouraged to make enhancements and influenced to make changes;
- The Mayor stated that she would like the CEC to explore the possibility of creating permeable walking paths along the west side of Canal Drive and in Cat Hill in areas where there is room to develop walking paths. This suggestion is in response to citizen comments regarding the very heavy foot traffic along Canal Drive and streets within Cat Hill. Sue pointed out that she learned during implementation of the phragmites initiative that the town owns all the land up to the Assawoman Canal. When asked, Don Chrobot pointed out that Melvin Cusick has substantial experience working with wetland issues and would be a good resource to seek out initial information.
- When asked, the Mayor noted that the development of the Assawoman Canal Trail would end at the dead-end of Black Gum Drive. There is some discussion going on regarding the development of DNREC-owned docks to be established along the trail. This led to the Mayor pointing out that there are on-going requests to develop a kayak launch in South Bethany....discussion centered on potential locations including town-owned Bayshore Drive bulkhead, and privately owned areas at the end of Canal Drive and Anchorage Drive.
- Another area of concerns is the on-going issue of mailboxes and trash bins in disrepair. The Mayor noted that the Council is initiating work on a solid waste ordinance that addresses trash disposal. Sue noted that the draft ordinance was to be discussed later in the agenda.
- The Mayor's discussion also focused on the issues of mildew on houses and houses in need of painting. Pete Brockstedt noted that these are two code enforceable issues. Sue asked Pete to summarize the enforcement process and follow-up to issuing a letter/email/or phone call to property owners. He said that most responses are favorable. Pete did state that improvements were needed on the enforcement side and he is working on changes. Sue added that these issues have been

addressed in two CEC flyers but perhaps can be re-worded and presented in a new format and different flyer that can be mailed out with the Rental Declaration Page sent in late winter.

- The Mayor suggested a concept of “Letter Boxing” to create greater community spirit and interest in South Bethany. She explained the internet concept of offering clues to designated locations around South Bethany and how this could foster promoting the town and provide guests – particularly young people – with a fun activity.
- Kathy then discussed street lights and her vision for South Bethany. She would like to develop a prototype of the Town that portrays how the town will look in ten years. This included streets lined with attractive lamp posts similar to those found in other towns such as Bethany Beach. She noted that there has been a request to turn off and remove a street light on W. 5th Street yet South Bethany has no overall street lighting plan and there is really no organized way of developing street lighting.
- Kent Stephan commented that he thought the town should look at what we can do to improve property owners’ standards – which the town should work to “persuade” people to do a better job with their properties. He talked about his previous suggestion to initiate a “Show-Off South Bethany” campaign that encourages property owners to think about the town and what you can do to make it look better. He suggested offering town-wide discounts on crepe myrtles or creating a focus on improving the appearance of your dock! This concept will ultimately increase property values and rental incomes. Kent also suggested an idea of setting standards for creating 5-Star rentals and getting realtors to buy into this concept of promoting such locations. Kent also reminded the group of an idea to approach someone like Lord’s Landscaping to develop a model plan for Oceanside landscaping. Pete Brockstedt noted that evaluating the condition of landscaped Oceanside properties is frequently challenging because of natural vs. “out of control” landscaping.
- Sharon Nonn suggested that a new strategy would be to market South Bethany as a place to retire. People that live in South Bethany have a greater interest in its appearance. She described how many “weekend” or seasonal homeowners have limited time and interest in fixing up their home and are skeptical about making landscaping improvements as they are not there to water or maintain.

- Carol Stevenson asked how property owners locate vendors to help with home improvements. Pete noted that he and Renee McDorman update the town's Mercantile List quite frequently. Sue suggested that to facilitate locating the appropriate vendor for a specific task, that the Mercantile List be categorized so that people can easily identify the right vendor for their needed service. Pete agreed that this was a good idea and would indeed be very helpful. He agreed to work with Renee and Dee on this task and Sue offered assistance as well.
- Mayor Jankowski described the next issue, dog waste, which she thinks has gotten worse. When asked by some property owners to expand the time-span that dogs are allowed on the beach or to open up hours during the season for dogs on the beach – the Mayor responds that in her view, the dog waste issue would only get worse. Too many dog walkers are not picking up after their pets both on the beach and on side streets, especially along Canal Drive and Ocean Drive. The group agreed that enforcement and fining dog owners is a very challenging response (Pete did not think a single fine has been issued) and that stepping up sending informational flyers is a good alternative.
- The final issue discussed was the email distribution of community information and how to best handle it. Sue noted that she and the previous Mayor and town staff had worked on increasing the number of email addresses included in the Email News Update system. Kathy estimated we have about 900 at this point although some are duplicates or multiple families' addresses – i.e. husband and wife. Since mailing frequent news updates is too labor intensive and expensive, Carol Stevenson suggested the idea of appointing Block Captains who would be designated to provide information to those who are not receiving Email News Updates. Sue suggested another idea that the town gather a list of property owners NOT receiving town emails and send them a letter requesting that they provide the town with an email address of a relative, neighbor or friend who could receive the town emails and pass the Email News Update information on to the property owner. Capitalizing on recognizing the importance of receiving timely information during an emergency – such as the recent flood/Hurricane – underscores the importance of having the ability to reach all South Bethany property owners via Email. The Mayor noted that CEC News Updates could be sent anytime – they did not have to be sent from the Mayor.

The Mayor concluded the round-table discussion by once again thanking the CEC members for their volunteerism and involvement in community enhancement. The group then moved to the next agenda item.

Newly Proposed Solid Waste Ordinance: the placement of the containers, location and condition of bins etc. and affect on community appearance. (Pete Brockstedt and Sue Callaway)

With the draft Ordinance on the screen, Sue informed the group that the Town Council would be reviewing this newly proposed Solid Waste Ordinance at the Town Council Workshop on Thursday, December 13th. She and Pete were both interested in retrieving feedback from the group since CEC has been heavily involved in promoting the appearance of trash bins, etc. and enhancing the town's overall appearance. Kent Stephan noted that he thought this was the single most overall item impacting beautification. Pete presented the highlights of the Ordinance which include: definitions of several items including the most important one – curbside; rental properties required to provide one 96 gallon recycle cart; rental units required to provide a minimum of two 64-gallon containers; if leaving the cans and carts curbside, they must be stored in a bin that accommodates them; and if not storing them curbside, they must be stored at or under the house. Both Sue and Pete agreed that the appropriate condition of the bin was not included and that the term suitable bin was subject to interpretation. Councilman Jim Gross provided a history of events that have led to the introduction of this Ordinance and how trash and recycling have become a formidable issue for the town. Kent Stephan thought it was important to keep in mind the targeted outcome of the Ordinance – overflowing bags and trash - and to work backwards to see if the proposed Ordinance language addresses that outcome. Suggested by Mr. Gross, the CEC agreed that once the FINAL Ordinance is completed, to prepare an appropriate flyer that specifically outlines the new requirements for all property owners. The timing will hopefully coincide with the final approval of the Ordinance. Discussion also focused on having Maintenance prepare a prototype of a bin that will accommodate the required cans and cart. This example would be on display at Town Hall. The group also asked if the Town could make them for property owners (at cost) or recommend handymen who could build one.

Before moving on to other agenda items, Kent Stephan mentioned another issue that had been discussed previously – the condition and size of realtor rental signs. Many of the signs throughout town are in poor condition and create an eyesore. His thoughts were that if a standard were developed that required a more uniformed size and condition, the appearance of the town would be improved. The group agreed to look into the regulations of other towns and consider mentioning this at the Meet and Greet with Realtors scheduled for February 2013.

Ocean Drive Test Lighting Project and Street Signs

Don Chrobot announced that the Ocean Drive sign improvement project was completed. All street signs and sign posts have been covered. Sue thanked Don and Ron for their work on this project that is a great improvement along Ocean Drive. Sue noted that as discussed previously, Phase 2 recommendation for new street signs on the East and West side of Route 1 will be included in the FY 14 Budget proposal. Phase 3 will assess the number of posts on the east-west streets on the Oceanside for future budgeting. John Speers described the Ocean Drive Test Light project that has the lights in two locations N. 2nd Street and S. 5th Street. Mixed reviews from neighbors on the N. 2nd Street test which needs adjustment as DP did not hang per instructions and the S. 5th Street light has been quite well received but would like a shield around the bulb within the light shade. Sue said she is working with Delmarva Power on making the adjustments and expects the changes within the next week. In the winter months, John Speer will be researching the following other options for Ocean Drive lighting: 1) decorative coastal lighting (similar to Fenwick Island's Route 1 coastal non-holiday lighting but smaller) hung on electric poles; 2) solar lighting; 3) and decorative light posts installed by homeowners on their properties. Neighbors around the S. 5th Street light are pleased with the degree of safety and security the lighting provides.

Christmas Lighting and Decorations

Sue stated that an Email News Update was sent to property owners last week to inform that the decorative holiday lighting along Route 1 had been destroyed during the flood (the lights were stored in the flooded town garage). The problems began to occur about a week or two after they were installed. Further evaluation by Delmarva Power and Nightlighters, confirmed that the saltwater had corroded the lights. Don and Sue will be researching the costs and options for new lighting and including this expense in the FY 2014 budget.

Mailboxes in South Bethany

In response to a previous discussion of the condition of mailboxes clustered along the eastside of Route 1 and along Peterson Drive on the Westside, Carol Stevenson researched the possibility of recommending more updated and clustered mailboxes. She learned a great deal from the Post Mistress and prepared a thorough report. (*See below*). The group agreed to wait until the Town learns whether the proposed storm water management project along the eastside of Route 1 received funding before

pursuing any mailbox changes. Such a project could potentially influence the placement of existing mailboxes and create an appropriate opportunity to suggest a change. In the meantime, Sue encouraged CEC members to make note of the mailboxes along Route 1 on the south side of Dewey Beach to get a better idea of what the proposed boxes would like.

Town Hall Sign

Sue updated the group on this new improvement. Sue provided resident Lori Cicero with the CEC feedback on the original design and she and her husband's company 84 Lumber will begin work on a new Town Hall directional sign (found on Russell Road) in 2013.

Adopt-A-Canal Program

Sue thanked Sharon Nonn for preparing a draft letter that would be sent to select homeowners residing adjacent to or near a targeted canal end. Once the letter receives final review from other committee members, the committee will reach out to targeted homeowners (based on the town-wide review and evaluation of canal ends conducted by the committee in the fall) to see if they are interested in adopting specific canal ends.

Conclusion

The Committee agreed to meet around February 12th. In January, Sue will notify Committee members who will not be in Florida or other warm locations of the possible dates to meet.

Adjournment

The group adjourned at 11:40 am for the holiday brunch that included Committee members and Town staff.

Rural Postal Boxes on Route1

Report Prepared by Carol Stevenson

December 12, 2012

I spoke to Winnie Martin (302-436-7311) who is Postmistress of the local postal area. She explained the options that we have for mail delivery in South Bethany.

Currently, no boxes are allowed for homes on the east side of Route 1 on any street or side street on the ocean side of the town other than on Route 1. This is because it is so difficult for the mail carrier to maneuver. Route 1 is the only option for mailbox placement for those homes that want mailboxes.

There are 27 mailboxes on the east side of Route 1. There are 6 on the west side! Of the east side boxes, a number of them are clustered together in groups of from 2 to 6 boxes. Most, however are single boxes placed at the end of a side stub street.

Options:

1. A cluster box, one that is at a central location with locked slots for each person receiving mail would require 100% permission from all the homes on the west side of Route 1. This is probably not a viable option at this time. These cluster boxes are usually only done successfully in new developments.
2. If homeowners want to change where their mailboxes are, they may do so by writing to the postmistress. We can ask them if they would give permission for their mailboxes to be placed on an attractive mailbox stand or stands in a more central location or locations. We can provide such a stand, and even ask them to help pay for such a stand. However, we cannot require them to do anything!

If we get 100% permission for such a move, we can then write a letter to the postmistress. She will approve or deny such a request and then we can begin the process. She was quite agreeable to having mailboxes in clusters as it makes things easier and safer for mail delivery.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Stevenson