

# **COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **SUMMARY**

**TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012**

### **TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

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The Community Enhancement Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at the Town Hall meeting room from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. The following individuals were in attendance: Sue Callaway, Chair; Kathy Jankowski; Diann Nazarian; Sharon Nonn; Bobbe Stephan; Kent Stephan; John Speer; and Carol Stevenson. Peter Brockstedt, South Bethany Code Enforcement Constable was in attendance.

Sue Callaway welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted that since no property owners were in attendance there were no public comments. She also noted that several items on the agenda would be rearranged to accommodate the schedule of several Committee members. Sue also welcomed Peter Brockstedt and introduced him to the group. She hoped that he would gain a better understanding of the CEC's efforts and goals and how they can work together. Highlights of the discussion with Peter are listed in the final section of the summary.

#### **Update on the Route 1 Bioretention Project**

Sue Callaway confirmed that the final planting of 4000 herbaceous plant plugs took place on Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> and thus the bioretention landscaping initiative is complete. All plants survived the winter except for six plants in the North 8 bed. Lord's will replace them. In addition, Sue mentioned that a followup onsite meeting with CIB's Sally Boswell would take place on May 24<sup>th</sup> regarding community education signage for the Anchorage Storm Water Management project (as discussed at the previous CEC meeting). Diann Nazarian asked the group about the parking/idling of police cars on the Route 1 Median strip and the impact it has on the grass and landscaping efforts. Sue stated that she had recently approached Chief DeLoach about that very issue and they agreed to follow some alternative ideas such as rotating police car locations; parking on turn lanes during non-busy hours; occasionally parking on east or west side streets (although radar equipment can then only detect traffic speeders going north or south). Sue commented that this is a difficult situation as the Chief and the Town want to reduce speeding but understand CEC concerns as well. They will continue to monitor the results.

## **DeIDOT's Transportation Enhancements Program Grant**

Sue announced that DeIDOT's Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) grant is well underway. Lord's Landscaping has completed the York Beach Mall landscaping and has begun work on the rain gardens along the Route 1 walkway. Sue noted that the Town and owner of the shopping Center have already received many compliments about the improvements. There was some discussion among the group about the Smooth Sumac plants in the rain gardens and their resemblance to other Sumac plants. Sue noted that she would talk to Mike Lord to learn more about the plants and see if there could be some changes. Sue reminded the group that the *Specifications and Construction Plans* document that provides design details about the initiative is available on the CEC section of the town website. Diann Nazarian asked about maintenance plans for all these new projects and Sue informed the group that she is planning to schedule a walk-through of the Bio-Retention and the TEP projects with Mike Lord and Don Chrobot to establish an organized maintenance plan once all work is completed. Sue also commented that the watering of all the new plants was particularly important during this initial planting time and the Maintenance Department had to commit substantial time to watering. When asked about followup to Kent Stephan's previous suggestion that York Beach Mall be approached about placing colorful potted plants in front of the shops to create a more visually pleasing look, Sue acknowledged that she had not done that yet. Sue agreed to followup with Richard Mais about this suggestion. Sue reminded everyone that an article about the TEP project appeared in the May issue of the *Zephyr*.

## **Ocean Drive Improvement**

Sue announced that the Town is also receiving compliments about the trash/planter bins. The colorful "wave" petunias were purchased from Vines Creek Nursery and thanks to Don and Ron all were planted in mid May. Sue thanked Kent and Bobbe Stephan for painting the top rim of the trash can/planters bright blue as it adds a unique design element and makes them stand out more. John Speer suggested placing CEC's "*Beautifying SB Makes Dollars and Sense*" flyer in real estate sale boxes along Ocean Drive for further distribution and impact. The group liked the idea and John agreed to follow-up. Sue pointed out that the Ocean Drive street signs have been ordered and once received will be gradually installed. Most of the work will take place at the Maintenance shop and will require several steps, removing old signs, assessing the condition of the existing post, wrapping the new/old post with vinyl and then installing new brackets and signs. With multiple preparations underway for the summer season, Don Chrobot said they would focus initially on preparing the Ocean Drive promenade signs and then adjacent cross street signs. Don will discuss future planned sign changes

with Chief DeLoach and John Speers to re-review which signs can be combined to help eliminate the excessive number of posts. Previous estimates noted eliminating 20 posts and an additional 3 on the east side of the road.

### **Update on the Adopt-A-Canal/Road End Program**

Sue acknowledged Kathy Jankowski for her role as Chair of the Adopt Sub-Committee, and how instrumental she was in the program's success. Sue pointed out that while CEC was losing a sub-committee chair the town was gaining a wonderful newly appointed mayor. Sue announced that all Adopt renewal applications have been received. Sue also announced that Councilmember Pat Voveris's adoption of the Petherton Canal end will be completed around June 2 and the Committee is hoping that this canal's Route 1 location will inspire other adoptions along the main thoroughfare. Carol Stevenson's adoption of the first canal on Bayshore Drive will be completed in mid-June. In addition, led by Lynn Marseillo, the canal end between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> along Canal Road is set and will proceed once the bulkhead repairs are completed. Sue noted that the sub-committee was finalizing the design for the Adopt signs and should be ready mid-June. Sue stated that the May issue of the *Zephyr* included an article about the Adopt program as well as the spring distribution of the *Beautifying South Bethany Makes Dollars and Sense* flyer.

### **Highlights of discussion with Peter Brockstedt**

When asked about his observations thus far, Peter offered the following comments:

- The provisions in the town code are the extent of his authority;
- Awareness and cooperation of permits is important;
- Has noticed the differences in appearances of properties on the east and west sides of town;
- Has noticed that property owners on the west side appear to be more receptive to comments from Code Enforcement – reaction may be due to full-time home owners or those who spend more time here versus rental property owners;
- The east side challenge appears to be whether homes and/or lots are to be left in their "natural" state vs more kept – some confusion over what are grasses and what are weeds?;
- With the passage of the new dead tree ordinance, Peter is sending out notifications to property owners with dead trees and dead underbrush – some

difficulty in the wording of "invasive or noxious vegetation" and the challenge in determining what and where they may be.

- When asked, Peter said codes may address houses that are in dilapidated state or may not;
- Peter believes that CEC's vision and goals are best handled through **strong** encouragement as we do not necessarily have codes that enforce many issues – the group reviewed the CEC flyer "*Beautifying South Bethany Makes Dollars and Sense*" with Peter and he found the items on the list very appropriate;
- During the discussion about the placement of recycle containers which are placed at curb side for pick up, Peter noted that some residents would like to see the container returned to or under the house, however, he indicated that the Town can only make sure that they are removed from the Town right-of way area (at or adjacent to the trash container bin.) Peter reminded the group that the front property line is the same as the street right-of-way line (Town property ends at the same line where private property begins);
- Peter noted that after recycle day pickup, the company drops off a list of who did not follow the appropriate rules i.e. yard waste in paper vs. plastic bags. Peter then tapes a notice to the house regarding the mistake;
- Peter stated that he keeps a list of problem areas that are not part of an ordinance – the group endorsed the idea of Peter being involved with the writing of proposed ordinances and the modifications of others.
- When asked, realtors are not involved with property condition, communication is only with home owner;
- When asked by John Speer what more can we do to help you do your job, Peter responded by saying the education is very important and an understanding of what the town expects – he sees a diverse interest between homeowners and some owners who rent – who appear to have less interest and do the minimal maintenance necessary to keep obtaining the rent;
- Initiated by Kathy Jankowski, group discussion then focused on how to better engage the realtors in addressing some of the "rental house maintenance issues." It was suggested that the CEC prepare a letter/flyer targeting renters that highlights ways they can improve their properties – head-lined "Do You Want to Increase Your Rental Income?" Points would include such items as weeds; removing excessive clutter under the house; trash bin condition; trash

can supply; repair broken mailboxes. It was also suggested that the CEC meet with realtors to begin to communicate how to best address some rental (or sale) properties in distressful appearance; and

- Peter agreed to work closely with the CEC, particularly in mutual areas of concern.

### **Conclusion**

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, June 27th, 2012 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Town Hall Meeting Room.

### **Addendum**

Sue discussed the Smooth Sumac plants planted in the rain gardens with Mike Lord and they agreed that most will be re-planted in the bio-retention areas and replaced with red hearty hibiscus (perennial). A plant is needed that is tall enough to tolerate being in water up to 14 inches. This work will all be completed the week of June 6<sup>th</sup>. In addition, Don, Sue and Mike Lord and staff conducted a walk-through of all bio-retention areas, circle beds, rain gardens and York Beach Mall on June 4<sup>th</sup> and developed a maintenance plan. Don and Sue will prepare a document detailing the tasks and appropriate time of year to conduct the tasks.