

Minutes
Rehoboth Beach Homeowners' Association
Annual Fall Meeting
October 22, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Sharon Sherwood at 1:00 p.m. Board members in attendance included Steve Curson, John Dewey, Patrisha Davis, and Clif Hilderley.

Membership Update. Mark Saunders provided approximate numbers including over 300 new members. RBHA has about 560 households represented and a total of about 952 individual members. Mark also thanked the Board for their ongoing support with the membership project.

General Updates: A new logo has been developed and adopted. Also, Clif Hilderley has designed a new website. Patrisha Davis and John Dewey will be tracking issues important to the RBHA membership.

Treasurer report: The Treasury Report was reviewed and discussed. Checking balance is \$6263.87 and the Reserve Account balance is \$4000.29 for a total balance of \$10,263.16. Steve described that membership fees support the community as well as RBHA activities including the annual picnic. A donation of \$500 was made to the Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company. The check was presented by Steve Curson and Sharon Sherwood and accepted by Assistant Chief Kent Swarts. Assistant Chief Swarts indicated that the donation would be used towards a new ladder truck. A donation of \$250 was also made to Rehoboth in Bloom and accepted by Cindy Lovett.

General Information. Sharon Sherwood provided an update on the Spring Meeting, including the presence of Chief Banks and Jeff Giles, Beach Patrol Captain. RBHA hosted our first new member social, targeting new members and members those who joined the prior year. About 85 members attended. The annual Fall Picnic was also described, and members were encouraged to come in the future. Members were reminded that three newsletters had been published and that all were available on the RBHA website. A fourth newsletter would be distributed in November. The City Employee Appreciation Event was described and discussed including the use of gift cards and sponsorship by Rise Up Coffee.

Steve Curson discussed Wreaths Across America and requested additional volunteers so that each of the various service branches would be represented by a veteran.

Elise Burns shared information on a program to encourage homeowners to consider replacing turf lawns with landscapes that were more environmentally friendly including the use of native vegetation and plants.

Mayor's Report. Mayor Mills was in attendance and recognized the value of the work of RBHA in supporting the community. Mayor Mills discussed that labor concerns, and restaurants in particular seem to have difficulty finding sufficient staff. Mayor Mills provided a summary of the city's staffing status and proactive plans to help assure full staffing in all departments for the coming summer season. Proactive steps included increasing wages, advertising in a broader area, and bonuses for staying through the full season. Affordable housing for summer employees, city and commercial, continues to be an area of concern with some employees having to locate as far away as Milford.

Outdoor dining was discussed including COVID accommodations and impacts on city revenue. The Board of Commissioners has codified new rules for outdoor dining, including increasing allowed space on private property from 750 to 1,000 square feet.

The tree code is also in the process of being revised. Rehoboth has been recognized as a Tree City for about 20 years and the city code is being updated to help maintain this recognition.

The Budget process will start in November. No property tax increases are being considered. Parking, hotel, and rental taxes help with public needs and amenities including public restrooms, beach maintenance and other needs.

The Parking Season was extended this last summer. All meter rates across the city are a uniform \$3.00 per hour. Mayor Mills is not anticipating any changes in parking permits or other parking fees.

The remodeled Delaware Avenue Restrooms now have family restrooms and changing rooms as requested by both visitors and residents. The Baltimore Avenue Restrooms complex is scheduled for a full remodel that will include similar additional accommodations. The complex will have a full second floor which will be designed to meet the needs of the beach patrol including appropriate shower facilities and an observation deck for monitoring the beach.

Discussions and planning continue for proposed renovations for the streetscapes of the beach blocks of both Baltimore and Wilmington Avenues. Costs are estimated at \$38 to \$40 million for the total project including moving utilities underground in those blocks.

Infrastructure improvements include updates for the wastewater treatment plant, at approximately \$12 million. The city is moving forward with the replacement of water mains on Norfolk Street, as well as up to \$1 million in repaving projects.

The search for our new City Manager is ongoing and Mayor Mills anticipates a candidate for the position will be identified before the end of the year. The Comprehensive Development Plan has been completed, and the City is waiting for the final approval of the governor.

Mayor Mills reported that he had attended a regional meeting for city officials regarding offshore wind farms. Based on what Mayor Mills was hearing, it is anticipated that between 50 and 100 wind turbines may be located off the coast of Delaware and Maryland.

Mayor Mills reminded attendees that there are several variables that are coming together that will change the face of the city including the proposed streetscape projects and multiple potential commercial projects on the boardwalk, Baltimore Avenue, and Rehoboth Avenue.

Stormwater Committee Update. Commissioner Jay Lagree provided a presentation discussing the needs for stormwater management as well as impacts on the shorelines of our freshwater lakes within the city. The presentation is available on the RBHA website. It is anticipated that homeowners may be billed about \$400 annually and large commercial or condo buildings up to \$10,000 annually.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm by Vice President Sharon Sherwood.