



## Middlesex Beach Association

### Candidates for the MBA Board, Fall 2020

#### **Nora Alter – 18 Addy**

I have been coming to Middlesex Beach since the early 1970s. We first purchased a house here in 1976. My mother, who is 94, still enjoys the beach. I first experienced Middlesex as a child, worked in the area during college and graduate school and later have the perspective both as a parent of two girls who have spent many summers here and as the care taker of an elderly parent. Currently both my husband and I are university Professors (Barnard/Columbia and Temple University). We live in Center City Philadelphia and come here both on and off season.

I would like to serve on the Board as a way of giving back to the community in gratitude for the many decades of enjoyment I have experienced at Middlesex. I think it is important to continue and expand on the activities initiated several years ago that sought to bring the community together--social hours, beach barbeques, little library, etc. I would be interested in organizing additional community-based groups such as a book club or film club. Of course, all of this assumes a post-Covid-19 return to normalcy. If elected to the Board I would make an effort to increase community participation amongst all home owners and to encourage everyone to express their opinions and to have their voices heard. As an educator, from a family of educators, it is very important to me that all members feel that they are included and that our community is not one marked by exclusion or divisiveness. We all want Middlesex to be the best beach community it can be and we can achieve this goal by working together and taking everyone's needs into account while at the same time balancing the overall needs of the association.

#### **Nancy Glasgow - 11 Errett**

Hi Neighbors! I am just finishing up my second stint serving on the Middlesex Board and while managing the multitude of outlooks, initiatives and priorities that exist throughout the community has been trying at times, I have determined that my work on your behalf is not yet done. I have spent the entirety of each summer since 1997 making friends and memories in Middlesex, this year offered a new perspective as I spent the spring here as well during the COVID-19 pandemic. I realized during this time how essential it is to have Board members with feet on the ground for more than a few weeks a year, individuals who walk our streets, talk to neighbors, interact with the commercial owners, and appreciate just how special this community is not just in the summer but throughout the year.

As your elected Board member, I want to help move our community forward without sacrificing the charm that makes Middlesex Beach beloved by so many. I am steadfast in my determination to bring a common sense approach to solving problems, fostering growth, and prioritizing spending. I have a love for this community and an ability to reach out to many of our knowledgeable residents. I believe in consensus building and working together. If elected, I will

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continue to push the same issues that I have always been open and outspoken about, such as a rental fee and Mobi mats at all beach walkways, always keeping in mind that we are a community not a corporation. My top priorities are: protecting our private beach, mitigating rising HOA costs, creating much needed beach accessibility for our elderly residents, investing in beautification projects with native species, planning social events to bring residents closer together and rejuvenating our sense of volunteerism, which this community was built on. But most importantly, my top priority is to LISTEN to the needs and concerns of our community members.

Middlesex Beach is the best beach on the Delmarva Peninsula; let's keep it that way! Stay well, stay safe and I'll see you on the beach. Thanks, Nancy.

### **Steve Larsen – 6 Bridge Road**

I have served on the Board for the last 6 years and hope to represent the Community for another term. I am running for the following reasons.

First, I believe I have experience that is helpful and relevant to the Board's work. Our volunteer board oversees all of the activities needed to keep things operating. Contracting with trash and landscaping companies, overseeing the common properties including the beach, ensuring staffing of beach and community patrol, overseeing building permits and related activities and managing the budget and our annual assessments, and addressing a constant range of new issues that frequently include interpreting and enforcing our Covenants and By-Laws. The work is time consuming and often more complicated than one might expect.

My background and prior experience are well-suited to service on the Board. I have managed large public agencies, including serving as Maryland Insurance Commissioner, Chairman of the Maryland Public Service Commission, and Deputy Administrator at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I have also served as the CEO of a health plan and as a senior executive of a health technology company. I am also an attorney. I think these work experiences are relevant to much of the Board's work and they have helped me in my service on the Board so far.

Second, I believe we should have Board members who listen to the concerns of the Community and engage in fact-based deliberations to ensure the best decisions are made for the Community. Our Community is diverse, with full-time residents, those who spend just summers here, and those who rent their properties. Pine Side properties may have different concerns (such as ditch drainage) than Beach Side properties. In short, interests and priorities for different groups may vary, and it's important that the Board listen and be open to these concerns. Balancing competing requires showing respect for the concerns and positions of others. I believe I have been an effective "listener" and made decisions or set priorities after listening to interested community members.

Finally, I believe have demonstrated I am willing to put the time and effort in to serve on the Board. I currently serve as Chairman of the MBA Budget Committee and as Treasurer, and have done so for the last two years. This is a time-consuming task especially in the preparation of the

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annual budget, with the Budget Committee, in the winter and spring in advance of the annual meeting. I previously chaired the Community Patrol Committee and was actively involved in the day to day management of the Patrol. I also serve on the Legal Committee, and previously served as Secretary.

In the past two years, through a lot of time and effort the Budget Committee and the Board have, I believe, met the priorities of the community while keeping Annual Assessments to single digit increases. We also established a multiyear projection for the rate of growth of our assessments, and pushed for more funding to put into our Beach and Capital reserves. We are currently in the process of seeking the necessary permits for possibly participating in future beach replenishment projects should we have a catastrophic storm that wipes out our beach.

### Emerging Issues:

I think it's helpful for MBA members to have a sense of where candidates for the Board stand on some issues in the Community. For me, there are several important issues to address in the coming years.

I support a more rapid deployment of the "Mobi Mats" – the blue ramps which currently cover the Addy Road Dune crossing. These mats improve access to the beach for a range of residents and families. I supported the addition of an additional mat this year, which I believe could be done in a fiscally responsible manner. I hope the full Board will approve the deployment of these Mats more quickly.

I support consistent enforcement of our Covenants and building regulations. Not enforcing our basic rules and building regulations undermines people's confidence in the Board and in the governance of the Community.

I believe the Community needs to have an open, calm, respectful and fact-based discussion on new revenue sources for the MBA budget. While our annual assessment has been held to single digits the last few years, it will continue to rise. Surrounding communities, both private and public, almost universally require outside renters to contribute to community costs through renter fees of some type – MBA is an outlier by not having such a fee. An MBA survey in 2018 shows that 2/3 of the membership are open to the idea: 40% of MBA owners supported implementing such a fee and another 26% wanted more information about how such a fee might work before deciding whether they would support it. In light of these results from our survey, I think the Board, with Community input, should explore the pros and cons of implementing such a fee on non-member renters (not the MBA owners). These fees could help offset the costs of providing services (trash and recycling, Community Patrols, etc.) and could reduce or at least help to keep stable our annual assessment on owners.

Ultimately and most importantly, the MBA membership would have to approve any proposed authorization for a fee with a vote changing our Covenants, which means the membership, not the Board or any individual Board member, would make any final decisions on this issue. Contrary to some material that has been circulated on this issue, there is currently no specific proposal for the renters' fee or its uses or amount before the Board or the Community. It is

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unfortunate that some material distributed by one of the candidates has mischaracterized this situation and the positions of several Board members.

I will continue to support bolstering our reserve funds to help ensure we are better positioned for a large and unanticipated expense, which could include replenishing our beach.

Finally, I believe it's important for the Board and its actions to be transparent to the Community. I have suggested our meetings be recorded so community members who can't attend in-person or virtual meetings could have access to Board deliberations and discussion. On the issue of transparency, I (along with Board members Marty Shecter and Nancy Glasgow) opposed the recent appointment made by a majority of Board members to fill the vacancy that existed, because I believed it deprived the Community of a basic right to elect members of the Board. I was relieved to see that this decision was reversed and now the position will be duly elected.

Thank you for your consideration.

### **Bill LeConte – 21 Bridge**

I have owned the property at 21 Bridge Rd with my wife and daughters for 21 years. I have rented that property in the summer for about 15 years. I understand that some neighbors have concerns about their neighbors renting their property but I also know that what people do with their property is their business especially when it causes little to no additional expenses to those that do not rent. I bring to the table a strong systems and accounting background, management, willingness to work on whatever is needed to get the job done right and a strong background in hiring subcontractors. I am also interested in protecting the resources of Middlesex Beach from avoidable lawsuits and other legal action as a result of misguided attempts to overwhelm a minority's right to use their property.

Thank you, Bill LeConte

### **Carol Paul - 21 Errett**

We (my husband, four children, daughter-in-law and new grandson come September 2020!) have been coming to MXB since 1986. We started by using my aunt & uncle's place at 12 Short Rd, then became regular summer renters (2000-2007) - (we've probably stayed in many of your gorgeous homes!); and then finally bought a place with my parents (8 Errett Rd) in 2007. We loved working on the old MXB home so much that we bought our own place in 2012 (21 Errett Rd). We traded in our bathing suits for paint clothes!

I live here 70% of the time in the off-season. I am a dual resident of Maryland (Bowie) and Delaware. My new grandson will spend his first four months of life here (yay!)

I have served one month on the board to fulfill the vacant position. I am in awe of the amount of work the volunteers put in. I would like to offer what I can to help them and the community. We also have thoughts of retiring part time in MXB and we would like to get to know our neighbors better. I was a part owner in Coach Wootten's Basketball Camp for 24 years where I fulfilled the

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role of marketing, camp administrator, accounts receivable/ payable, registrations, teaming, rooming (by request), and customer service. I was also responsible for new income generating ideas.

I sold my part in the company in late 2013. I opened MD Corn Maze in 2017 and currently operate MD Corn Maze in Gambrills, MD. I have served on School Boards, held positions for Home and School Associations, founded a youth group and love to run fundraisers! (spaghetti dinners, silent auctions, golf tournaments, etc.) I thrive on teamwork (I even made my husband and kids write a book with me about it lol!), building community and creating new ideas! It is important to me to keep the value of the MXB homes/properties. Our private beach is our biggest asset and I believe this should be at the forefront of all decisions. It must be safe guarded. We are a community. Divisions hurt us. If asked to serve, I would love to hear from members that have needs/concerns so that I can help better MXB!

### **Gregory Pichler - 20 Dune Road**

My name is Greg Pichler. I own the property at 20 Dune Road. I am a third-generation owner of a property in Middlesex Beach, Delaware. My maternal grandparents, Dr. William Stecher and Erna Stecher acquired the property at 20 Dune Road from the original developers, including Charles and Martha Addy, on June 20, 1960. My family and I have vacationed in Middlesex Beach for over sixty years.

Professionally, I am self-employed. I maintain residences in the Washington, D.C. area as well as Toronto, Ontario, Canada. I have experience serving on the board of directors on behalf of a number of organizations, including the Tau Alpha Kappa chapter of the Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity (TEΦ) as well as the alumni of Walt Whitman High School (Bethesda, Maryland) class of 1978. In the case of the Tau Alpha Kappa chapter of TEΦ, I serve as web administrator, overseeing the alumni group's web site at the URL, <https://www.teptak.org>. In the case of the alumni of Walt Whitman High School class of 1978, I manage the alumni group's web site at the URL, <https://www.wwhs1978.org>.

I earned a master's degree in Business Administration from the School of Business Administration of George Washington University in 1989.

On July 25, 2019 I launched the MXB Wire at the URL, <http://www.mxbwire.com>. The MXB Wire is an independent news and information service, covering the goings on at the Middlesex Beach Association. Since its inception I have published eight articles and five, youtube.com videos. I spend considerable time in Middlesex Beach. I have been regularly attending the board meetings and have been reporting on these meetings over the course of the past two years.

As you may be aware from watching my installments on the MXB Wire I am opposed to a Rental Tax as advanced by Marty Shecter, Nancy Glasgow and Steve Larsen. The laws governing homeowners' associations in Delaware clearly preclude HOAs from the jurisdictional authority to tax its members.

Any covenant change in support of a rental tax will expose the Middlesex Beach association to

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class action litigation on the part of the 20% of the members who offer their properties as vacation rental properties. Even a rental fee per rental incident would require a cost justification, like the reimbursement of a key service or a property management service. MXB does not operate an office to provide any of these rental specific services, like a small number of the HOAs in the area do. I am puzzled why Shecter, Glasgow and Larsen are making the rental tax a key campaign promise as they have been advised a number of times by the resident lawyer as I have been advised by litigation specialist, Dean Campbell, who practices out of Sussex County, that any rental fee requires a cost justification. Like Ellen Throop I pride myself on seeking the advice of the experts in the area and abiding by their judgement, which is otherwise known as “responsible stewardship”.

Regarding the prospect of purchasing additional MobiMats, had I been a board member on July 18, 2020, I would have voted with HOA president Margie Cyr, Geoff Sella, Alex Sella, and Ellen Throop to oppose the expenditure. Although I see the appeal of MobiMats, the budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal period had been decided in May, 2020 and during that meeting the board decided to allocate funds for one and only one MobiMat. Facilities committee chair, Alex Sella, said and I verily believe that the appropriation of two additional MobiMats that Marty Shecter and Steve Larson were seeking on July 18, 2020, would cost over \$200.00 per resident per year. I am not clear that the membership would want to pay a special assessment to pay for the mats.

The membership has been very clear in recent years that the membership sees the assessment as being overly expensive. Further, given the fall out of the COVID-19 pandemic a number of residents are struggling to pay their assessment as is. As of the end of July, 2020 10% of the community are delinquent in settling their assessment. Rather than apply yet more pressure on the operating budget, I suggest as an affordable alternative that we change the common walkway that has the one MobiMat, the one at Addy Road, from a unidirectional walkway to a bi-directional walkway, allowing for people with mobility issues to use that walkway in both directions. The width of the common walkway at Addy Road currently exceeds six feet which can easily accommodate social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also suggest we designate additional parking spaces on the East side of Addy Road for handicap parking to accommodate our community members, who have mobility issues.

### **Marty Shecter - 19 Bayberry Rd**

It's approaching 30 years since we bought our house on Bayberry Rd. We already loved this community when we moved in. We never considered the house an investment. We had no intent of selling, ever. We hoped our children and their children would continue to enjoy the house long after we were gone.

As I age, now there are days when our 1 and ½ block walk to the beach is too oppressive and we find we must drive and then cross a dune without Mobi mats or for our more disabled friends there is no beach wheelchair. I have and will continue to advocate for mobi mats across our dunes to make it easier for seniors, families with children, disabled and others to more easily access the beach.

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I have shared my life with a dog for more than 65 years (not the same dog). I am canine dependent. I would like owners like myself to be given the opportunity to prove that we can be responsible pet owners (I think we all know what that means) and liberalize our current dog restrictions on the beach.

The members need to decide whether a rental fee (lodging fee) as almost all the surrounding communities have, should be implemented by covenant change, to enrich our beach reserves, capital reserves, stabilize our HOA, and provide funds for needed improvements to our community. I support a rental fee.

Finally, my two years on this Board have been a learning experience. I feel that many issues that this Board deals with need to be treated with greater empathy, compassion and understanding. Volunteerism has long been an important factor in bringing our community together. It should be fostered.

We do not represent a corporation with stockholders. We are a corporate entity representing people who, I believe, simply wish to enjoy their lives in this little carved out piece of paradise on the Delaware shore. Thanks, Marty

### **Ellen Throop - 14 Errett Road**

Greetings Neighbors! My name is Ellen Throop. I am a second-generation owner and own a cottage in the Pines at 14 Errett Road. My parents finished building the house about a month before I was born. Lucky me! Since that time, I have been fortunate enough to create wonderful and amazing memories at all times of the year, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. We used to play tennis at Sea Colony and Bethany Beach Tennis Club, crab with string and chicken necks in the various local waterways, and play in the surf and sand for long hours on our grand beach. The house has been the one true constant in my life. Currently, I own the house with my sister, Kate. Our desire and plan is to pass the house on to a third generation - her three boys and my son – so they too can continue to experience all the wonders of the community, its people and of course the beach!

During this past two-year term, in addition to being a Board Member, I served as your Acting President, Vice-President, chaired the Legal Committee, served on the COVID Beach Task Force and Community Patrol Committees and assisted the Building Committee. My service can best be described as **Sensible Stewardship** – helping to supervise what we deeply care about - Middlesex Beach Association. **Sensible Stewardship** is a responsibility and privilege I treat with enormous respect. I have had conversations with many neighbors regarding a number of topics and the possible effects on the neighborhood. While I may have an individual opinion on any given topic and I might agree or disagree with the community member, it is my duty to present the topic to the Board to consider what is in the best interests of the community. No single Board member has a right to make unilateral decisions on behalf of the Board or community members.

Given my background with associations in Maryland for the past 20+ years, I can relay a



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significant amount of perspective to the Board with respect to an extensive variety of community issues. I intend to continue protecting the property values, private beach, and the lifestyle that is the living essence of Middlesex Beach Association. Our community is always active and the Board is constantly looking for ways to improve what already exists and conserve all that is so spectacular about our community for all community members. In order to treat all members equally, an objective review of the facts and law is required as well as consistently following our covenants and processes established therein. I wish to be a continuing part of that process going forward.

In order to help effectuate the **Sensible Stewardship** premise, I advocated, often drafted and voted for such aspects as a Code of Conduct for all Board and Committee Members, a collection policy, a fining policy, COVID and liability releases, and assisted with numerous other legal writings. These processes and many others were implemented to preserve and protect the operations of Middlesex Beach Association which thereby protects the interests of each and every Member. Admittedly, sometimes the decisions are difficult because it may mean saying “no” to a Member, but as a Board Member, I am compelled to follow my duty of loyalty and duty of care to all Members collectively so as to avoid selective enforcement or playing favorites.

I am amply qualified to serve as one of the members of the Board in that: as an attorney with my law partner and staff we represent over 250 community associations throughout the State of Maryland, I have served as President for the Chesapeake Chapter of Community Associations Institute, and I regularly teach seminars on community association topics. From this exposure, I have seen the spectrum of how to handle and more often critically, not to handle, the very basic to complex issues that often confront and sometimes divide a community. You will find that I am a reasonable, analytical, and level-minded person who also possesses the ability to amicably, creatively, legally and ethically resolve problems which serve all community members.

Our community is continuing to grow and evolve. Our community needs strong, dedicated, ethical and well-qualified leaders on the Board. I have the personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and experience to do so and also the time and desire to serve all community members fairly and equally. On a brief note and looking forward, I suspect the rental fee issue will again be discussed. For those of you that don't know my position – based upon my 20+ years of experience, the facts, the physical set up of our community and the related law, there is no verifiable impact which would legally justify the imposition of such a fee. I am also very concerned that any such attempt will horrendously pit neighbor against neighbor in an “us versus them” situation and will almost assuredly lead to a lengthy and costly law suit. I do not wish that upon us. The appropriate way to handle the structuring of assessments is to meet the “needs” of the community, consider and blend in the “wants” as appropriate and once a budget is crafted as such, then to abide by same. This too is part of **Sensible Stewardship**.

I thank you for considering me for the opportunity to serve again on your behalf. Be well.

**Amy Witcover-Sandford – 34 Bayberry**



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Amy Witcover-Sandford is the daughter of Jules Witcover, 34 Bayberry Road. The Witcovers built their house in 1972 and have been a continual presence in Middlesex Beach. Amy grew up running through the dunes (where Sea Colony now resides) and climbing the fire towers with her siblings (Paul and Julie) and the rest of the “gang” from the Bayberry beach-side of Middlesex. Amy lived a number of summers in Middlesex working in Ocean City and Bethany during and directly after college. She later brought her own family to Middlesex where her children participated in the junior guard program and also became part of the summer “gang” of the 1990s. Currently, Amy is the Coordinator of SAME – So All May Eat, a lunch program in downtown Hampton, Virginia (a food desert), where 17% of the population suffers from food insecurity. Amy also is the Volunteer Chairperson for the Fresh Air Fund’s Hampton/Williamsburg Friendlytown, where she finds families to host NYC children for free one-week vacations during the summer. Along with the rest of her family, Amy has a heartfelt devotion to the community that has given her and her family a place for rest, relaxation and community over these past 48 years. She is interested in keeping the family flavor of MXB while recognizing the necessity to change and grow in order to appeal to today’s families looking for a relaxing vacation and, maybe, a home away from home.