

MBA Committee Reports - Community Meeting – May 3, 2025

Beach Committee, Mark McCulloh

This time of year, the focus is on recruiting and ordering uniforms/ supplies. We are in great shape on all fronts. I have been in touch with Captain Holden Wingate all off season and can give you a rundown of where we are at the moment.

We have 18 returning guards (on a base of 24) which is an excellent carryover from last year. We are thrilled with the guards we have and happy to have them back.

We have more COLLEGE athletes this year which reverses a trend we have seen over the last several years. Housing has become too expensive for the summer employees, which has created a dependence on local and younger guards over the last couple of years. This turnaround is a welcome change. Some of our younger guards are happy to do part-time and go full time later in the season when the college kids go back to school. In short, we have a VERY healthy staff this year and the pay chatter among the beach patrols has simmered a bit.

Uniforms have been ordered and nothing to report out of the ordinary. Holden will be ordering necessary supplies soon, but these are typically small expenses and are more than accounted for in the budget.

We have a NEW Surf Ski for the patrol this year, paid for (in large part) by our T-Shirt sales. Excellent piece of equipment that has become much more common on the beach over the last couple of years.

We MAY need some refreshed AED batteries, will be checking soon. I'm not sure what they cost but we will be looking into it. They are not like regular batteries, some can cost a couple hundred bucks (we have two AEDs). Keep you posted on that.

Stand prep usually requires power washing and some painting. We have, in the past, paid some local guards to do the work. Not expensive and they are happy to have the work. We will do the same this year unless there are any objections from the board.

Planning on two hosted competitions again this year. All women comp and the Geoff Myers invitational. Big hits in the past both for the guards and the community, looking forward to the same this year.

Building Committee, Margie Cyr

This year has been a very busy one for the Building Committee. The number of large projects this year has exceeded any year in the time I have served on the Building Committee. As I write this report, there are fourteen (14) large projects in progress: three new house builds and eleven large renovations. Three of these projects have been in progress for more than a year. Quite a few of the small projects are fencing and sheds which require review of site plans and Covenants. As we close out this construction year, we are hoping to close out all the active projects.

The MBA Board has approved a revision of the "Rules & Regulations for Construction, Repairs, Tree Work, Demolition, Driveways, and Parking Lots." There are two significant changes to these Rules. One of which is the inclusion of "Timely Completion of Work." Permits will be granted for a period of fifteen (15) months with an option for renewal of the permit for an additional six (6) months upon application for the renewal and payment of a \$250 renewal permit fee. Our hope is that this will be an incentive for property owners to keep their contractors working at a steady pace.

The other significant change is the elimination of Martin Luther King and Presidents Day weekends, Juneteenth, and Veteran's Day from the list of holidays. Work will now be allowed on these weekends and days.

It is important to note that these changes take effect September 2, 2025 and not before.

The Building Committee works hard at supporting your projects and finding a balance between your property improvements and quality of life in our community. We enjoy working with you and your contractors.

Budget and Finance Committee, Bob Wood

Annual Budget – continued to follow the adopted budget process with increased transparency to the community. This past budget cycle produced no issues or pushback from community and the result was a unanimous Board approval of the budget. The process included a reserve analysis that provided forward looking projections based on proposed projects which would utilize reserves which also provided community members visibility in how reserves can be accumulated and reduced prudently.

Reserve Strategy – the Committee continued to work with MBA Investment Advisors on investing reserves for the long-term benefit of the community. Reserves are invested in CD's which continue to earn strong returns in a safe manner. The Committee also provides analysis that is shared with the Board on the long-term projections based on annual contribution levels and possible usage of reserves.

Reserve Usage – the Board utilized the Reserve Policy in funding two key projects this past year. Those projects include the completion of fencing along Route 1 and the West end of the community. Additionally, it included our continuation of improving the landscaping throughout the community in line with recommendations received from community members.

Monthly Financials – worked with the Property Management company (SPM) to streamline and implement the monthly financial package. These financial reports have been posted monthly on the community website for transparency to the community.

Commercial, Marty Shecter

Everything is going well on the commercial side of the community. The relatively new coffee shop with an expanded food menu has become a valued asset to the community, along with a frozen custard stand and souvenir shop. In early June the produce stand will return, selling a lot more than produce. The variety of stores and services provided on our commercial side is unique and helps to make Middlesex beach a more desirable place to live and visit.

For those of you who walk or ride down Beach Plum Road I'm sure you have noticed that the fencing on the east side of the road is in disrepair. The board is aware and is in the process of dealing with this issue.

Community Facilities, Don Deraska

General: Continuing to use the "MBA Work Group" text messaging list for help with CFC work throughout the year. Thanks again to all that are part of this. If you would like to be included, please text me @ 781-367-1271 or send an email to communityfacilities@middlesexbeach.org.

We continue to implement the Litter Patrol program - the sign-up sheet will be posted on the website (under Volunteers needed). MBA caps are still available (while supplies last) to those who volunteer. Text or email me to request a cap after you've signed up & completed your tour of duty!

Still have not created a spreadsheet on our website listing tasks that need attention (either as needed or an ongoing maintenance issue) but think this is a good idea and still feel we should at least try this out.

Signs: We continue to replace old/worn signs as needed throughout the community and will be posting signage for golf cart/LSV parking.

Drainage: See website for detailed information. We performed temporary fixes for failed culverts on Evergreen & Errett Rd last year, and are planning to address culverts on Errett Road this spring (to coincide with culvert work to be done for construction projects). We will hold off on Evergreen Rd culvert work as landscaping and use of railroad ties, etc. is going to make this much more complicated & expensive. We met with Chester River Landscaping to provide a better understanding of what we need/expect in their performance of our swale maintenance. They also collected pine straw from the swales and deposited it along Beach Plum Rd for the first time and did a great job.

Guard Shack: Continued maintenance (painting trim, cleaning siding, de-winterization) is ongoing.

Beach Walkways/Dunes: Spring & Fall work groups are organized & run to attend to the preparation of the dune crossings (turning foot washes on/winterizing, placing/removing Mobi Mats, attending to trash receptacles, repair of our easternmost dune fencing, etc.). In addition, the post & rope systems at the north & south ends of our beach are removed each Fall & replaced in the Spring. New handrails will be in place at Bridge Rd, and we have purchased additional MobiMat sections for Bayberry Rd.

Fencing: We used Eastern Shore Porch & Patio to replace the remaining shadowbox fencing along route 1 (extending from just north of Bridge Rd to the south end of the community) as well as fencing at the west end of Short Rd & Errett Rd this winter. New gates with matching pushbutton locks are in the works for both Kent Ave & Rt 1. We still plan to replace the post & chain system at the west end of Addy Rd with a metal gate and have decided on the gate that we'll use.

As always, the CFC has been active at maintaining the workings & appearance of the community as reported by community members & community patrol in an ongoing manner.

Community Patrol Committee, prepared by Bob Wood and Gary Graff

Leadership: Having a supervisor available 7 days a week last year for the first time worked out very well. Should there be any issues with community patrol...please see Gary Graff, or Darren Schlott. They will work to resolve their issues, and welcome any suggestions that may help the Patrol carryout their responsibilities.

Staffing/Scheduling: All staff will be returning this year except for Chris Shockley. All night shifts are staffed, and the 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the beach with the Polaris proved very successful last year as we heard many positive comments from community members.

Security Camera: While only necessary in a few incidents, the two Security Cameras which were added in 2024 proved helpful for security reasons.

Private Beach Intrusions: There has been a notable decrease in the number of incidents this year at both the Northern and Southern borders. We believe this is at least partially due to the extension of the border fencing and the visibility of CP staff working daily at both ends of the beach.

Incident Reports: CP staff completes "Incident Reports" documenting any issues they encounter involving injury, property damage, and/or interaction with first responders. These incidents consisted of missing property, injuries on the beach where EMS were called, dogs on the beach after 5pm and other minor matters. For the second year in a row, there have been NO noise complaints reported to CP.

Post-Labor Day Staffing: We learned from our staffing in the Fall and will determine the appropriate duration for coverage past Labor Day. More to come at the Member Meeting in August.

Landscaping, Barbara Friedman

The goal of the Middlesex Beach Landscaping Committee is to maintain the beauty of our community. Projects occur throughout the year and volunteers are always welcomed. In addition to Barbara Friedman, the Chair, Committee Members include Lynn Bufka, Cindy Keller, Terry Reilly and Peggy Taylor. We welcome anyone else who would like to contribute ideas and pursue landscape-related projects.

Tree care and maintenance: MBA has worked with Coastal Plant Care and their Licensed Arborist Jeremy Hager who has examined all the trees on MBA property on the beachside, those under MBA care along the fence line on the east side of Coastal Highway and in the median, and also those along Beach Plum Road (in addition to a very few along the commercial stretch of Short Road). You can find a link on the MBA website to his report recommending some of over 100 trees for removal or trimming, fertilization, and pest management. The initial work was completed last year and continued through the 2024-25 offseason. Additional trimming was done over the course of the winter, with a primary purpose being safety and visibility, to create clear sight lines at the intersections along Beach Plum. Additionally, it is

critical to maintain the health and attractiveness of the trees. We plan to keep this up throughout 2025 and into the future, in order to maintain the health and vitality of our beautiful trees.

In addition to work MBA has undertaken, in January, Delmarva Power did a rather extreme pruning of all the trees along the power lines. Following this, we asked Jeremy Hager to have his people come back to clean up what Delmarva Power did, to preserve the integrity of the trees.

In addition, we have noticed that there are a substantial number of trees in Middlesex that are covered with vines. Invasive vines pose a significant threat to the health of our trees. As to vine covered trees on Community property, we have some volunteers who are cutting away the vines. As to trees that are on private property, there may be MBA residents who would volunteer to cut away invasive vines that are covering (and potentially destroying) many trees located on private property. Please contact Barbara Friedman - to determine if this can be handled on a volunteer basis by permitting volunteers to enter the private property to try to remove these vines.

Turf and swale care and maintenance: Following review of their proposal over the winter, MBA now has a 3-year turf maintenance contract with Chester River Landscaping, covering regular mowing of the community green spaces, grounds maintenance, periodic cleaning of the drainage swales, a spring and fall cleanup, mulching (either with pine needles or pine bark), and aeration and over-seeding in September. Chester River also will periodically trim bushes and remove weeds either manually or by using a non-chemical liquid treatment.

Over the fall months, we put out a call to neighbors to collect and bag fallen pine needles for spreading along Beach Plum. We are also experimenting with Chester River to see if pine bark mulch along one block of Beach Plum provides a measurable difference in weed control and moisture retention. If it does result in an improvement in the ground cover appearance and weed control, we will consider expanding the use of pine bark.

New Plantings: As the spring and summer season is upon us, hopefully residents will notice the lovely new plantings adjacent to the various Middlesex signage beds in the Community, two at the Bridge St. entrance, two in the highway median, and at the six street signs on the Pine Side. The planning and design for these new beds was done over the course of 2023-2024, and finally brought to fruition in late 2024. Rather than replace the existing overgrown hollies (which were mistakenly understood at the time to be boxwoods) planted behind the Middlesex signs, it was decided at the urging of a number of residents that the bushes be trimmed back this spring to see if they can be salvaged rather than replaced. Please note that with a significant trimming job, they may not look as attractive as we would like over the course of the summer. It may take another year to determine if the trimming rather than replacing efforts are successful. If they don't look good after the growing season this year, then we'll have to reassess their viability.

Recognizing that these new plantings (as well as the older plants) require significant watering over the summer months, two of our Community Facilities employees, JoAnn Pappalardo and Christina Meilly, will continue to do the regular watering, using the Community's irrigation trailer. They also will weed the beds, using a vinegar and liquid soap solution. Please note that we opted for this weeding response because it is far less toxic than chemical weed treatments, however residents should note that while the non-chemical solution kills green growth above ground, it does not kill the roots, so weeds will re-grow. JoAnn and Christina will apply the vinegar solution periodically, however the weeds likely will return. Also important to note is that utilizing our own workforce for such work significantly reduces the cost as compared with having a landscape company weed and water. JoAnn and Christina are seemingly tireless garden enthusiasts, so if you see them out and about doing their jobs, please thank them for their efforts.

In addition to the completion of these new plantings, we will soon be clearing out the west-side block between Errett Road and Bridge Road of all the volunteer trees and bushes, dead or sickly looking plants, and weeds, creating the opportunity to design a new landscape plan on this block. We welcome the input of the community in the planning and design of this new landscape opportunity.

Pollinator and native plant gardens: By now most of you are familiar with the pollinator garden along Beach Plum between Errett and Bayberry Roads. The success of the milkweed plantings (they are not weeds notwithstanding their name!) was confirmed by numerous sightings of monarch butterflies perched upon the plants! Besides monarchs, frequent visitors also include native bees, honey bees, hummingbirds, and many other types of butterflies.

Monarch butterfly populations in North America have significantly declined due to habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change. These declines are primarily attributed to the loss of milkweed, the sole food source for monarch caterpillars, and the destruction of overwintering habitats.

While Christina and JoAnn cleaned up the garden in late fall, they did not remove the plants. The seeming dead looking milkweed stalks were left because bees and other valued insects are hibernating there. So it may not be the *most* attractive garden at the moment, but we are proud to be able to do our part to provide a home and nourishment to these stunning and valuable creatures. We look forward to seeing the new growth of the milkweeds in the coming month.

Please note though that milkweed can be toxic to animals, so please keep your pets away from this area.

Phragmites: Phragmites, also known as common reed or reed grass, is an invasive plant species native to Europe and Asia, which has spread to North American. It is a perennial grass that can grow up to 15 feet tall and forms dense stands, often dominating wetlands and other disturbed areas. The invasive phragmites are flourishing and in some cases overtaking the Pine Side, mostly on Addy between 5 and 11 Addy, and at the west end of Short Rd, and to a lesser degree on Bayberry between 12 and 16 Bayberry and between 6 and 8 Errett Road.

We are working with our property manager to engage a stormwater management company licensed to treat and eliminate the phragmites. We currently have two proposals under consideration. The only effective treatment to eliminate phragmites is a combination of physically cutting down the stalks in the springtime and then in early fall, spraying the new growth with a chemical pesticide. While the Board is hesitant to use chemical pesticides, we recognize there are no other known effective treatments to eliminate the invasive phragmites.

Japanese Black Pines: Japanese Black Pines are the pine trees on the Oceanside, mostly on private property. They were originally planted on the oceanside because they can withstand the salt coming off of the ocean. However, they are being destroyed by disease and pests along the Delaware Coast. Owners on the Oceanside are encouraged to consult with an arborist for ways to treat and maintain these trees.

Potential issue on the Ocean Side with Emergency Vehicles: Last September we received an email request from the Bethany Beach Fire Department regarding difficulty accessing East Short Road with fire apparatus. At that time, they were called to respond to automatic fire alarms twice in the past week on East Short Road, where they encountered difficulty turning onto East Short Road with one of their vehicles. They noted that the tower truck would not be able to access 32 or 34 East Short Road, presenting a serious safety concern. There is a short section of fence on the front corner of 53 Dune Road that inhibits the Fire Department from turning onto Short Rd. The Fire Department proposed that the fence and sign post at 53 Dune Road be removed, and the Leyland Cypress trees along the fence line that hang over the road be trimmed to avoid hitting the trucks. Many of these trees are in rather poor shape and might be removed entirely for safety reasons before we have a plan involving shorter plantings.

Sand, Steve Larsen

Currently our beach and dunes are in good shape. This is in significant part to the placement of fencing across the dunes parallel to the water, which has the effect of trapping and depositing blowing sand and widening the dune.

However, there always exists the risk of a direct hit from a hurricane or a stalled nor'easter that could either severely compromise or wipe out the beach completely. The risk is now increased with the effects of climate change, with the potential for more frequent, and intense, storms.

Beach replenishment projects, which have become a staple in the surrounding public beaches like Bethany and South Bethany every few years, require that participating communities have a series of permits from both Army Corp of Engineers and various divisions of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC).

Such a project would be the most viable way for MBA to rebuild its beach should we sustain major damage, and we would essentially be piggy backing on a project for the surrounding towns. The alternative for us, trucking sand in, has many practical difficulties associated with it.

We last had a permit in the early 2000s, and several years ago, the Board initiated an effort to again obtain the necessary permits. During that permitting process, we learned that DNREC would impose conditions on MBA that would make using the permit unreasonably onerous and expensive (such as MBA having to identify a new borrow area from which sand is taken, and the risk our beach could be subject to public use if public sand is used), and so the Board decided to terminate the application process without receiving approval.

More recently, we learned last year that Sea Colony had initiated a permit application, and it appeared that DNREC would not be imposing the burdensome conditions on their permit. Sea Colony's has received approvals from the Army Corp, and so far their permit application appears to be moving successfully through the process at the state level.

In light of the progress Sea Colony appeared to be making, the Board decided to consider re-initiating a permit application for MBA, using the same consulting firm we had retained in the first process, Gahagan & Bryant Associates (GBA). GBA is also the consultant Sea Colony is using for their current application.

In March 2025, we requested and received from GBA an updated proposal to serve as the consultant to MBA for the purpose of obtaining the necessary permits from DNREC and the Army Corp to allow us to participate in future beach replenishment projects should the need arise.

The Sand Committee met with GBA on their proposal in April. We received an update on the permitting process, which is lengthy (likely over a year) and complicated because of the involvement of, and need for coordination among, the federal government and several offices within DNREC. We have attempted to ensure that GBA utilizes any prior work prepared for our last application, as well as any applicable work they have done for Sea Colony, in order to keep the consulting costs as low as possible.

The Board voted to move forward with the GBA proposal and submit a new permit application with DNREC and the Army Corp in the coming months. A permit is simply permission to participate in a replenishment project, and we would expect to participate in a project only in the extreme case of a major loss to the beach, and not the periodic replenishments we see every few years in Bethany and South Bethany. Sea Colony's permit is for a beach replenishment including a flat beach, and not full dune reconstruction. MBA would follow this process and attempt to rebuild our beach so that it would be similar to the profile that it had shortly after the 2008-09 replenishment. Rough estimates are that it would take about twice as much sand to completely rebuild our dunes and beach as it would just to rebuild the beach. Any further dune work would follow the successful process of installing successive rows of snow fencing over a few years.

While the cost of such projects varies significantly due to several factors, including time of year, availability of dredging equipment, sand availability and the amount of sand deposited on the beach (costs are based on cubic yards of sand deposited), a ballpark figure estimated by GBA to replenish our flat beach could range from \$1M to \$3M.