



**End of Summer Season
COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES
Ocean View Presbyterian Church
August 31, 2024**

President Dave Wiecking called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Dave Wiecking, Margie Cyr, Kate Munteer, Don Deraska, Holly Fluty Dempsey, Kerry Hall, George Rayburn, and Cathy McCallister, Solutions Property Management (SPM). **Not Present:** Bob Wood, Paul Bradley

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members: President Wiecking presented gift cards to two outgoing board members, Holly Fluty Dempsey and Don Deraska, and thanked them for their service.

Property Manager's Report: Cathy McCallister reported on the many services provided by Solutions Property Management. (See report.)

Meeting Minutes: Neri Cohen moved and John Wiecking seconded approval of the May 4, 2024 Community Meeting minutes. All were in favor.

President's Report: Dave Wiecking reported.

- The Covenants Amendment to prohibit marijuana-related businesses has passed with more than 60% of members voting in favor. This has been filed with the county.
- Revisions to our Bylaws are being considered. These include timing of document distribution, methods of providing notifications of meetings, number of standing committee members required/permitted, changing the name of the Security Committee, and other items. The Bylaws were last updated in 2009. The community will be informed.
- A reminder that dogs must always be on leash.
- Projects to be tackled in the upcoming offseason include: finish fencing along Coastal Highway and where needed along Kent Avenue; replacing gate locks at west end with push button locks; drainage work along Evergreen; installation of more Mobi-mats; plantings and landscape work; consideration of beachside parking guidelines for golf carts, low speed vehicles (LSVs), bicycles and cars; speed humps; seal coating of roads.

Treasurer's Report: Dave Wiecking reported for Bob Wood that all assessments have been collected; there have been no financial surprises.

Committee Reports: Please see the written reports that were submitted prior to the meeting.

Building: Margie Cyr thanked committee members Alvin Ross, Mark Reilly, and John Eckrich. There will be a very busy building season ahead. Most complaints received by the committee are about contractors working outside permitted hours. Owners are reminded

that they are responsible for contractor compliance. Please reach out to the Building Committee for help and guidance for any building projects.

Community Facilities: Don Deraska will be leaving the Board, but is willing to continue as chair of the Community Facilities Committee (CFC). The CFC is responsible for roads, dunes, swales, culverts, signage, fencing, guard shack, and more. Don has been impressed by the level of volunteer effort in the community, and has a group of volunteers that he contacts when help is needed. Contact Don if you'd like to be added to this group. He hopes to be able to post jobs to the website in the future.

Landscaping: Holly Fluty Dempsey noted that she found 8 monarch caterpillars on the milkweed in the pollinator garden. Although these plants may not look great, they are doing their job. She thanked all who completed the landscape survey which identified the four top areas of importance for community members: the Bridge Rd entrance to the oceanside, the Rt. 1 median strips, the Pine Side road entrances, and the planted areas along Beach Plum, which need considerable work in the coming year. Going forward, Holly advised on four areas for concern:

- Deer overpopulation: these destroy the understory and spread Lyme disease.
- Delmarva Power Substation: great disappointment that they will not maintain their property along our roads, despite our best efforts
- Spraying: does not control adult mosquitos; better to dump water from pots, etc.; let neighbors know if spraying is happening. These are toxic pesticides.
- Electric bug lights: these kill moths, which are nocturnal butterflies and also important for pollination.

Holly is leaving our Board to take a position on the Delaware Botanic Gardens Board. She thanked the TWIG members, especially Ed and Carol Szkudlapski, and other volunteers.

Social: Kate Mounter thanked this season's Happy Hour hosts: David Burgess, John and Wendy Thiede, Cory and Kevin Clarke, and Jeff and Mickie Rivest. She announced two more Happy Hours: Sept. 7 hosted by Ed and Mary Beth Hendrick, and October 5 hosted by Tim and Patti Sheffey. She reported on the 65 Summers events happening this weekend, and she thanked her fantastic committee members: Jane Certo, Ilene Cohen, Nancy Glasgow, Mary Beth Hendrick, Kathy Lyons, Val Peizer, Linda Uhas and Toni Wood.

Community Patrol (CP) / Security: Kerry Hall noted that the CP is tasked with protecting our most valuable asset, our private beach. Gary Graff has been a great supervisor for the staff. Staffing has been stable, and the night shift has been working well. See his written report. The CP staff asks community members to

- Be mindful of the stop signs, especially at the Dune & Bridge Roads intersection. There have been a number of close calls here.
- If one day you forget your beach pass, just apologize and give the CP your address. You don't need to explain how long you've been an owner in MXB.

Beach Patrol: Mark McCulloh provided a written report. Three of our lifeguards went to Nationals, where a combined Sussex County team won first place. Our team tied for first in

the Geoff Myers Invitational. Middlesex Lifeguard Declan Burke was awarded the prestigious Ben Carlson Foundation college scholarship.

Sand: Steve Larsen chairs this committee which is exploring getting the necessary permits in place in case beach replenishment becomes necessary.

Commercial: Marty Shecter reminds us to support the businesses in our community.

Nominating/Election: Solutions Property Management collected final ballots, and reported the election results: Bob Wood – 102 votes; Kerry Hall – 101 votes; Barbara Friedman – 98 votes; Alan Lescht – 93 votes; Steve Larsen – 1 vote.

Adjournment: Chuck Taylor moved, Richard Certo seconded that the meeting be adjourned. There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Kate Munteer, Board Secretary

Approved May 3, 2025

Committee Reports follow.

August 2024 Committee Reports

Budget, Finance and Audit Committee: Bob Wood

Annual Budget - executed an efficient budget process with increased transparency to the community. Little to no issues surfaced throughout the process 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 Policy – the Board approved a proposal that provides a policy governing the appropriate uses of Reserves for the community. This will allow greater segregation and delineation of operating and non-operating expenses to align recurring operating activities and long-term reserve contributions.

Reserve Study – worked with MillerDodson (independent consultant) to complete an analysis of our Infrastructure/Capital Asset requirements which helped the Board determine target reserves.

Compilation/Tax Return - worked with outside accountants who completed their compilation and report with no issues raised

Monthly Financials – worked with the new Property Management company (SPM) to streamline and implement monthly financial package

Building Committee: Margie Cyr

Many, many thanks go to my fellow committee members, Mark Reilly, Alvin Ross, and John Eckrich for their hard work, deep knowledge, good eyes, thoughtful approach, and support.

The past year has been an extremely busy construction and building project time in Middlesex Beach. The Building Committee has worked very hard to make sure projects are approved and also finished in a timely manner. Over the past year, 18 Large Building Projects were begun. Of these, five have not yet been completed. Three new Large Construction Projects have been approved and will begin shortly after Labor Day.

The revised Rules and Regulations for Construction and Other Work approved by the Board take effect September 3, 2024. There a couple of changes to be aware of:

- Exterior repairs require an approved permit before work has begun. Interior repairs will not now require an approved permit. Painting has been identified as a “repair.” Interior repairs requires that all the work being done will be inside, behind closed doors and windows so as not to create noise and disturbance. With or without a permit, the allowed times for work must be followed. The Chart that identifies these can be found in the MBA Directory and also on the MBA website.
- The screening requirement has been clarified. HVAC units, generators, and above-ground propane tanks must be screened if they will be visible from the street looking from the front of the property.
- Drainage must be designed to comply with all codes and regulations and surface water may not be unreasonably diverted onto neighboring properties. Stormwater run-off must be directed into the existing drainage system such as swales, culverts, ditches.

The Building Committee’s purpose is to ensure that community rules and regulations are complied with and followed. Equally important is helping you get your project done as efficiently and quickly as possible. We are here to help you. Please reach out to us if you are considering starting a project or if you need support during a project.

Community Facilities Committee: Don Deraska

General: We've implemented the "MBA Work Group" text messaging list for mustering volunteers to help with CFC work throughout the year. Many thanks to the 30 people 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.

The Litter Patrol program got off to a late start this year but the sign up sheet IS posted - thanks to Paul & Solange Mintz for signing up in addition to me & Dave Wiecking (DAW)! The feedback from last year was that many people have always done (and continue to do) this whenever they are around. This is understood & appreciated but never hurts to have a program in place as well. Coveted MBA caps are available (while supplies last) to those who volunteer. See the MBA website to sign up & text or email me to request a cap!

I still think that posting a spreadsheet on our website listing tasks that need attention is a good idea (this way folks can see what needs to be done, sign up & we can track time spent more easily). There are issues that need to be worked out (supervision for certain tasks, etc.) but we should at least try this out.

Roads: East Errett parking was restriped. Sinkhole @ 32 East Addy was repaired. The Route 1 signage on the north & south ends of the Community were installed. We are replacing old/worn signs as needed throughout the community, will install an additional "no left turn" sign on the south entrance to Dollar General and will plan to standardize the "no outlet signage" along Beach Plum Road.

Drainage: All Culverts under driveways & underground pipes along the west end of pine side streets were jetted by Harry Caswell in April. This led to some failures of the oldest (corrugated steel) culverts causing sinkholes of driveways @ 8 Errett, 121 Evergreen & 125 Evergreen Rd. These have been repaired temporarily by using a smaller diameter (8 inch) pipe to stent the culvert & backfill the sinkhole. We'll plan to systematically replace culverts with the most recent/durable material (plastic); most of the ones in this condition are along Evergreen Rd, and this will be the main focus this coming offseason. We have started evaluating each individual driveway culvert, and will circulate many details related to each one in September. We've relied on our landscaping contract to include mowing & cleaning out of the pine side swales this year and will monitor this for additional cleaning & maintenance as needed in addition to this and in the off season. Part of this includes organizing work groups for pine needle reclamation from the pine side roads & swales.

Guard Shack: The Guard shack was updated over the past year: a donated portable air conditioner was installed, security camera system installed for monitoring ingress & egress from the ocean side of the community, ceiling hatch installed for access/storage & door locks updated. Continued maintenance (painting trim, cleaning siding) is ongoing.

Beach Walkways/Dunes: Cape American dune grass was planted in bare areas of our dunes (totaling 14,695 square feet) by Aquatic Marine. We are in the process of deciding how best to control the invasive Japanese Sedge grass that is thriving & spreading onto the pathways. Pavers were fixed on Bayberry, Bridge & Evergreen Rd walkways (smaller jobs done by us & larger work by Greenworld Landscaping). Spring & Fall work groups were 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.). The post & rope system at the north & south ends of our beach were extended as a means to help Community Patrol enforce the privacy of our beach (since the perpendicular dunes were removed).

Fencing: We replaced 775' of shadowbox fencing along route 1 (extending from just north of Bridge Rd to the North end of the community) & 100' of fencing on the west end of Bridge Rd in February. We are

in the process of replacing each of the gates & locks (starting with the gate at the west end of Bridge Road which is currently a temporary fixture). We have the metal frames for this but need to build the gates. We'll be standardizing all locks to the push button locks used along route 1 (some gates to Kent Avenue use combination locks). We planned to replace the post & chain system at the west end of Addy Rd to a gate but have not yet gotten around to this — it WILL be done!

General Maintenance: In addition to the above, the CFC has been active at maintaining the workings & appearance of the community as reported by community members & community patrol - many thanks to all for these alerts & the patience shown in my response. A great deal of thanks is owed to Dave Wiecking, George Rayburn, Chuck Taylor & Marty Schecter for their expertise, time & effort that they've contributed. This report is already too long, otherwise I would list the entire MBA work group list, but you all know who you are and I am deeply appreciative and proud of your help. A very CONSERVATIVE tally of the number of hours contributed by our volunteers for the year to date is now at 266 hours — kudos to all!

Community Patrol Committee: Kerry Hall

Leadership: Gary Graff was promoted to Supervisor over the winter and made an immediate positive impact on staffing, training and overall organization. Gary has also maintained a very good working relationship with Holden Wingate, our Beach Patrol Captain, and they coordinate daily on routine matters but more importantly when emergency situations arise and EMS are needed on the Beach. Also we promoted Darren Schlott to Assistant Supervisor and the current plan would be for Darren to succeed Gary at some point in the future.

Staffing/Scheduling: Unlike previous years, between Gary and Darren, we now have a supervisor on duty 7 days a week. The night shift, which historically has been difficult to staff, has been fully scheduled this summer. The 10% night differential pay was well received by the staff as well as the change in their duties noted below.

Security Camera: Two Security Cameras are now operational at the guard shack recording 24/7 on a continuous loop. This has been helpful with a few minor incidents this summer and we will consider whether to add additional cameras in the future, including a possible Beach Cam that would be accessible by community members.

Night Shift Change: This year we changed the scope of the night shift to focus on the Beach from 5pm-8pm. This was suggested by one of our vocal community members and recognizes the fact that our beach remains in use and relatively crowded after the Lifeguards leave at 5pm. CP utilizes the Polaris to maintain a visible presence on the beach, pick up trash, and redirect visitors that often bring dogs from Sea Colony to Middlesex after 5pm.

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 completed by Don and other CFC members over the winter.

Incident Reports: CP staff completes "Incident Reports" documenting any issues they encounter involving injury, property damage, and/or interaction with first responders. Through the date of this report (8/11/24) there were 12 such reports completed. 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. Not sure what conclusions can be drawn from that.

Post-Labor Day Staffing: In the past we have scheduled 4 guards for the Friday-Sunday 2 weekends after Labor Day. This year we will go with flexible scheduling for daily coverage through September 30. Days staffed as well as number of staff will vary based on weather conditions.

Year-End Bonuses: CP Staff are eligible for year-end bonuses subject to performance evaluations prepared by supervisors as well as board approval of any bonus recommendations made by the CP Chair. Historically our payment (both amounts and timing) of bonuses has been inconsistent and not based on any established performance criteria. Starting last year we communicated the criteria to the staff so they were fully aware of our expectations and what would be required to meet and exceed those expectations and maximize their bonus potential. We believe this has led to improved overall performance this year. Any feedback on individual staff members is welcome and should be directed to Gary or Darren. If you have any input on Supervisors Gary and/or Darren please share with me.

Landscaping Committee: Holly Fluty Dempsey

In the fall of 2023, landscaping work by volunteers on Beach Plum Road included collecting pine needles, removal of bamboo, and ground preparation for the Pollinator's Garden through the soil solarization process. Early in 2024, results from the landscaping survey sent to all property owner determined priorities for landscaping time, attention, and financial resources. The four areas receiving the most votes for the community areas were:

- 1) our entrance to the beach side on Bridge Road;
- 2) the two median strip signage areas;
- 3) the six road entrances on the Pine Side; and,
- 4) Beach Plum Road.

Following a competitive bid process, a contract was signed in the spring with Chester River Landscaping for grass mowing and trimming throughout Middlesex on common property and the Route 1 median strip. Swale cleanup on the Pine Side was also included in the scope of work, which will occur four times a year. The fall cleanup also contains additional work for pine needle collection and distribution on Beach Plum Road. As time elapsed over the summer, Chester River Landscaping became more familiar with the areas to be mowed and trimmed throughout the community.

A separate contract was awarded to Chester River Landscaping for the three top priority areas of Middlesex Beach property to be pruned and planted with annuals in time for Memorial Day weekend. Due to heavy spring rains, the fourth area, Beach Plum Road, was trimmed and weeded at the beginning of June. All four areas were mulched by the end of the first week of June through volunteer effort.

Our contract with Coastal Plant Care ensures specialized pruning, Integrated Pest Management, fertilization, and technical assessments for tree care on community property. Ed and Carol Szkudlapski worked assiduously to eliminate climbing vines strangling MBA trees. In the fall, we also visually inspected the trees on Pine Side's personal properties. It appears 53 Pine Side properties contain trees with vines that threaten their health and could cause their eventual demise. The number is not definitive as the trees were identified from the roads. The Board expressed concern about any volunteer offers of assistance to help neighbors by cutting their vines. Such work remains within the purview of property owners.

The Pollinator's Garden was completed in June. Wildflower seeds were broadcast in the new bed when the soil reached a consistent temperature of 50 degrees. When the ambient temperatures were warmer, milkweed (*Danaus plexippus*) was planted because the endangered Monarch butterfly caterpillars exclusively eat milkweed leaves. Educational signage about native plants and the stages of Monarch butterflies were placed throughout the Pollinator's Garden to inform and engage with everyone passing by the beds. The charming fence was painstakingly designed, constructed, and installed by Chuck Taylor and Dave Wiecking in time for the 4th of July Family Party.

Watering remains a concern for new plants before they are well established and for most plants throughout Middlesex in the event of excessive heat and/or drought. In addition to their Community Patrol duties, two Community Patrol members undertook daily watering. A huge round of applause for Christina Hartman-Meily and Jo Ann Pappalardo's early morning dedication and commitment, which have been instrumental in overcoming this challenge! We plan to have each of them continue some of this work into the fall.

To the north of the Pollinator's Garden on Beach Plum, bamboo was removed, and buckwheat seeds were sown to serve as a fast-growing cover crop. The blooms provided a nectar source for pollinators and the scheduled harvest in early August revealed well-seeded grass.

Chester River Landscaping designed plant material updates and renovations for the three top-priority areas. At the time of this report's submission, the plan is to approve a new contract at the August Board meeting to install the latest designs in the fall when it is time to plant after the heat of summer. For the incoming 2024-2025 MBA Board, landscaping MBA property will continue to require attention. Among other areas to address, a new landscaping contract needs a revised scope of work to reflect the experience to date and additional tasks, e.g., maintenance, including weeding, meadow seeding, shrub pruning, and mulching.

Middlesex is on the cutting edge of the widespread change in landscaping practices throughout the United States. Sustainable horticulture is based on native plants due to their critical role in supporting many forms of wildlife and the massive reduction in water and pesticides necessary for the survival of ornamental plants and lawns. It has been quite the experience being on the Board of Directors for two years and Chair of Landscaping for three years. Thank you.

Social Committee: Kate Munteer

Middlesex Beach, "Where Fun Never Ends". With huge thanks to the Social Committee and community members who have made these events happen, our calendar has included:

- Memorial Day Lifeguard/Community Patrol Meet and Greet BBQ party
- Monthly Happy Hours at Members' homes.
- 4th of July Happy Birthday America Family Block Party
- . . . and Labor Day weekend, the 65 Summers of Middlesex Celebration

I will be stepping down as committee chair after this season, but want to remind the community of my philosophy that social activities should not be funded from Association assessments, other than for some small amount of "seed" money. While I believe social activities help build a strong community, many members are never able to attend social functions, or have no interest in them. I believe those of us who like to socialize can find the funding to do so, or pay as we go. With that said, let me thank our very generous committee members: Jane Certo, Ilene Cohen, Nancy Glasgow, Mary Beth Hendrick, Kathy Lyons, Val Peizer, Linda Uhas, Toni Wood. Also thanks to our "Men's Auxiliary" – the husbands who do so much to support our efforts.