



SPRING COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

Ocean View Church of Christ
55 West Avenue, Ocean View, DE
May 3, 2025

Call to Order: President Dave Wiecking called the meeting to order and welcomed members at 9:35 a.m.

Board Members Present: Dave Wiecking, Margie Cyr, Bob Wood, Kate Mounteer, Paul Bradley, Barbara Friedman, George Rayburn. Also, Cathy McCallister of Solutions Property Management. Not present: Alan Lescht

Moment of Silence: Dave called for a moment of silence in remembrance of Board Member Kerry Hall, who passed away on April 10, 2025. In accordance with our Bylaws, the Board will be electing a community member to serve the remainder of Kerry's term. Several members have offered to help in this regard, and Dave welcomed any other interested members to speak with him at the meeting's conclusion.

Board Member Introductions: Current Board members introduced themselves. Dave Wiecking acknowledged the past presidents who are still with the community including Jeff Sella, Tris Kruger, Sharon Adams, Paul Spataro, Joe Woolman, Margie Cyr and Paul Bradley. Committee Chairs, Don Deraska, Steve Larsen and Mark McCulloh were recognized.

Introduction of New Members: The community welcomed new member Tim Barila, who along with his wife Mary, has bought a home on Errett Rd.

Property Manager's Report: Cathy McCallister, Solutions Property Management (SPM), reported that our first attempt at electronic voting was a success, with 121 votes cast electronically on the assessment question. Upon approval of the assessment, invoices will be mailed, and payment will be due June 2. Community inspections are being done twice weekly by SPM staff to ensure that rules and regulations are being adhered to.

Approval of Minutes: David Liddle moved that the minutes of the August 31, 2024 End of Summer Season Community Meeting be approved. Motion seconded. All in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Wood referred us to his 2025-26 Budget Package. The proposed assessment per residential property is \$3,325, or an increase of \$125 (3.9%) compared to the 2024-25 assessment. We ended the past fiscal year with about \$78,000 excess in operating funds. Bob will recommend to the Board that these excess funds be transferred into our Beach Reserves, as we continue to build this fund to over \$1 million. This year's operating budget will decrease slightly, while still factoring in inflationary increases for staffing and other contracts. The \$125 assessment increase will go entirely into building our reserve funds, particularly the beach reserves.

Drainage, Fencing, Roads: Dave Wiecking reported on both internal and external drainage issues, as well as fencing and road work. (See President's Remarks.)

Landscaping: Barbara Friedman referred to her written report and also noted that we have a new three-year contract with Chester River Landscaping to do regular maintenance, including mowing, plantings at signage, and trimming. The pollinators' garden will soon look pretty as the flowers blossom, and is serving its purpose. Weeding is tricky as some of the desirable plants look like weeds and vice versa. A reminder was issued to please remove vines growing up trees on private properties (wear gloves!). The black pines growing mostly on the Ocean Side are being attacked and need pest control. If you have these on your private property, you are encouraged to get your trees treated. Mowing of common property will take place every two weeks, or less often in times of low rain.

David Liddle asked about getting the vines removed from trees growing on MBA common property, as well as phragmites growing in the swales. The phragmites will be treated and removed. He also noted there are trees along Addy Road on MBA common property that appear to have root rot. Dave Wiecking noted that some trees on Errett are slated for removal so that the drainage swale can be improved. There are also tree limbs over power and communication lines that need to be removed. There has also been work done at the corner of Dune Road and East Short to enable emergency vehicles to get around that corner. Some new plantings may be required there.

Beach Patrol: See President's Remarks. Jeff Sella asked about the invasive grass that was found in the dunes. Dave Wiecking explained that it is not realistic to pull it out of the dunes, and DNREC is not requiring us to do so. While it has a similarly complex root structure to Cape American Dune Grass which helps hold the dunes in place during storms, its stalks do not stick up as much, so it doesn't knock down as much wind-blown sand as Cape American.

Community Patrol: See President's Remarks.

Sand: See President's Remarks.

Commercial: Marty Shecter noted that we are a very unique community in that we have our own commercial section, which is a nice asset. He encourages us to frequent these businesses. The produce stand will open June 1. Please do not use the commercial dumpsters for your trash or for dumping furniture, etc. The commercial properties are not included in the MBA trash contract, but they pay for their own trash removal. The Board is discussing fencing behind the commercial properties along Beach Plum, much of which is in poor condition.

Building: Margie Cyr referred us to her written report, and highlighted some revisions to the rules that will take effect **in September**.

- A building permit will be good for 15 months from the date it is issued. Any construction beyond 15 months will require a new permit and a \$250 fee. This is intended as an incentive to get projects completed in a timely manner.
- The list of holidays on which work is not permitted has been reduced. The new rules permit work on Veterans' Day, MLK Weekend, Presidents' Weekend, and Juneteenth.

Social: Currently without a chairperson, the Social Working Group announced a May 3 Happy Hour and a May 24 BBQ to welcome and greet Beach and Community Patrol staffs. The full social calendar will be included with the spring packets.

Nominating: We will be having elections for Board positions at our August 30 meeting. Please let Past President Paul Bradley know if you have any interest in running. There will be an application on the website, and we most likely will hold an online candidate's forum. We encourage new people to step forward.

Budget: Dave Wiecking invited questions about the budget prior to the assessment vote being tallied. There were no questions.

Voting: Dave Wiecking asked for volunteers from among the members to help tally and verify the vote on the assessment. Votes were received electronically and by paper ballot. Ilene Cohen and Kathy Lyons volunteered, and convened with Cathy McCallister of SPM, who served on behalf of the Secretary.

Sports Courts: See President's Remarks.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS/COMMENTS: The floor was opened to questions from the community. Some of the answers and comments were:

- The source of the medical waste that washed up on the beach last season has not been determined to our knowledge.
- We don't know more about a reported tire slashing incident, but we may wish to keep a roster of homes that have security cameras in case of future incidents.
- Chester River Landscaping received kudos for its work.
- Be aware of email phishing attacks. No one from the Association should ever be asking you for money or gift cards to cover expenses or make payments for official MBA work.
- Our website does not have all the features we would like, but our beach pass QR codes are linked through it, so we have kept it in place.
- The Board was thanked for its hard work.

VOTING RESULTS: There were 135 votes cast: 121 electronic; 14 paper. There were 123 votes in favor of the proposed assessment; 12 opposed. The assessment of \$3,325 per residential was approved. Thirty-six properties were represented in person at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Neri Cohen moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:57 a.m. Motion seconded. All were in favor.

Kate Munteer, Board Secretary

Next Community Meeting: August 30, 2025

President's Remarks and Committee Reports follow.

May 3, 2025 PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Dave Wiecking

According to the Association's governing documents, 8 members of the Board are elected to staggered 2-year terms in the annual elections each Labor Day weekend, and the ninth is a past officer, usually the immediate past President. We seek community input when we can, but we are charged with making ALL the decisions in running the community except one: the actual approval of the Board-recommended annual assessment. Without this step the Board cannot legally require that the members pay this fee.

As a reminder, our budget process is already a bit screwy due to our existence as a fundamentally resort community, and the times when most people are here. Our budget year started a bit over one month ago. We have a carryover in our Operating Account that is generally enough to fund our operations until the assessment is approved, invoices go out, and assessments start coming in.

Most of the work on the budget draft that went out in the required communication a few weeks ago was done by Bob Wood with input from the various committee members. We publicized a few of the early drafts on the website, and, as required by Delaware law, we circulated a summary of the budget prior to the February Board meeting and invited community comments on the draft. I want to thank the community members for trusting us enough that we received no comments at that meeting.

EXTERNAL DRAINAGE: Our drainage efforts continue to be 2-pronged: external and internal. For the past several years, Margie Cyr and Paul Bradley have been continuing to monitor the planning being done by DNREC and DeIDOT to make changes to the conditions between the west end of our community and the Assawoman Canal, primarily the swales along Kent Avenue. We have seen the basic plan, which includes improved buried pipes between us and the Canal and also include a one-way valve that is being designed to keep flood waters from backing up into our west end. It is an expensive plan, and even before the recent funding issues at the federal level there were questions as to how to pay for this project and whether it could be broken up in to smaller projects. Separately, I met with a company that has supplied smaller scale one-way valves to the Town of South Bethany, and am pondering ways we could possibly include those where our swales meet the swales along Kent Ave.

INTERNAL DRAINAGE: As far as internal drainage is concerned, the last time we met, I was hoping we could work on Evergreen Rd next, due to the extensive number of rusting stainless-steel culverts. This will be an involved project likely involving the removal of extensive vegetation that adjacent the swale and also retaining walls adjacent individual driveways. I'd rather do this in the fall so owners would have a chance to figure out how to adjust their landscaping to these changed conditions.

The owners of the new house being constructed at 25 Errett wanted their driveway relocated, and since this was one of two culverts that we were completely unable to clear recently I jumped at the chance to plan additional work along the middle portion of Errett. The above-

mentioned Kent Ave plan will replace some of the existing culverts at lower elevations so that water draining from Errett can do so at a lower elevation. The west end of Errett was reworked many years ago, and any changes along Kent Ave might have an effect on what's best for this stretch, so we're going to leave it alone for now. Those along Errett may have noticed not only some orange splotches on about 21 trees that were put there by our drainage contractor Lyndon Hitchens, and also some white spray-painted numbers and question marks I put on the street in front of various driveways. The question marks mean "it's probably not fiscally reasonable to tear this up; is it at a decent elevation?" Lyndon hopes to stop by and start taking elevation readings so we can figure this out for certain.

However, despite these physical shortcomings of the system, every time this offseason we've had a large storm, the majority of the water gets to the downhill end of our community and drains away as fast as the external piping allows. It's not always easy to see, because usually the surface of the water is pretty still, but underneath, it's definitely moving. The external work that we hope DNREC and DelDOT can do in the next few years will help during large storms. But it's not going to affect those last few inches that frequently stick around until it infiltrates into the soil, or evaporates.

And just let me point out that this problem is going to get harder and harder to solve as sea levels continue to rise and Delaware continues to sink. Margie and I have attended meetings of Bethany Beach and South Bethany's Resiliency Committees, and they're moving ahead with obtaining grants to start elevating some of their streets-in particular York Road, which is at the traffic light just south of York beach Mall and is directly adjacent Jefferson Creek. In fact, they mentioned something in their discussions that I hadn't considered before: the fact that more fill or asphalt they bring in to elevate the road raises the weight on the road and makes it sink quicker. South Bethany is talking about raising the height of their canal bulkheads.

EVERGREEN TRAFFIC LIGHT: Speaking of the traffic light at Evergreen, you may have noticed some off and on work there over the past year. When I first spoke with an onsite crew doing initial surveying work about a year ago, they told me the plan was to replace the current span-wire traffic lights with ones mounted on what are called mast arms. The past few weeks have seen all of this project completed, including new pedestrian signals, call buttons, road sensors, etc. except for the actual mast arms. I asked the onsite crew chief earlier this week why this was the case, and he revealed what should not come as a surprise to anyone who has done any digging in the community: they hit ground water less than 2' down. If you can imagine the forces that act on the poles that hold up the mast arms, and then add in the wind speeds in this area that need to be taken into account, it may come as no surprise that the foundation is as much as 20' deep. They are calling in a special crew from Pennsylvania to do this work, but hope to wrap it up by Memorial Day.

SWALE CLEANUP: One last item on this topic: our new landscaping company has as part of their contract clearing debris out all of our swales. Because this is folded into the Landscaping contract, it doesn't show up on the Budget handout under "Drainage Maintenance". But it is and will be done.

FENCING: We replaced the balance of our highway fencing in January, and also 2 sections at the west end of the community. I distinctly remember standing in front of this body last August

and making a bold promise of some sort related to when replacement gates would be installed. I think it was by this weekend. I'm now hoping it's by Memorial Day weekend. Let's just say I'm glad that whatever I said didn't make it into the Minutes. The one at the back end of Short is the first of the new ones; George Rayburn and I worked on this last weekend. Although it's based on a design I came up with about 20 years ago, let's just say I'd forgotten about some of the intricacies of the design that need to be replicated.

ROADS: Our roads are the next big part of our infrastructure. East Evergreen Rd was on my list of "roads that should be repaved soon" when I rolled off the Board in 2016, but I didn't tell anybody that. Its surface is basically early 1990's tar and chip. The cost of paving projects varies with the price of crude oil. Our 2023 Reserve Replacement study notes that some portions of our roadways are at the point where seal coating is not as effective, and the asphalt shows signs of what's called "alligatoring", which is essentially the surface breaking up into small pieces. In my mind, pineside Errett and Addy are our two worst roads at the moment.

BEACH PATROL: We also have people during the season running around known as "employees". We have great employees. Despite the challenges faced up and down the coast by other patrols to become fully staffed, we are absolutely thrilled to have all of our full-time beach patrol members returning this year. We believe this is partially due to the fact that we're an awesome community who show them great respect and admiration. We believe our pay is very competitive with other patrols. And they have great leaders. Holden Wingate is returning to Captain the patrol, and Beach Chair Mark McCulloh has been working behind the scenes with Holden and Treasurer Bob Wood to get things ready.

COMMUNITY PATROL: We also have our Community Patrol, which was overhauled in the past few years by the late Kerry Hall. He and our Community Patrol leader Gary Graff worked extensively on policies and procedures mostly for enforcing the privacy of our beach, and we expect that to continue without missing a beat. For this summer, George Rayburn, Marty Shecter and I will be sharing what little oversight we believe this needs. Cathy McCallister at Solutions has been working with Gary to make sure all their supplies and equipment is ready to go.

SAND: And now to our most important asset-our Beach, which as usual is in pretty decent shape compared to our neighbors. After spending a significant amount of money with the Gahagan, Bryant and Associates engineering firm that does this kind of work, MBA was told a few years ago that getting an actual permit to participate in a dredging project was unlikely. There was a requirement about 10 years ago that any sand dredged from DE owned offshore borrow sites and placed oceanward of our beach would need to be marked as open to the public. This alarmed us, but we realized that the best way to grow our beach was to install row upon row of dune fencing, which has done an incredible job of building up the amount of sand in our dunes. MBA has trapped a phenomenal amount of sand by this system, and we should all thank those who worked on this during what I still call my "seven-year vacation" from 2016-2023.

Then we were told that a condition of such a permit would be that MBA would need to do the engineering necessary to find a new offshore borrow site that we could conceivably use in the

future. Not having anywhere near the resources to do that, MBA abandoned its efforts to obtain these permits.

DNREC has changed its tune, and we learned that GBA seems to have been a major influence on this as they worked with Sea Colony. DNREC worked on a formula to charge communities such as ours for the use of this sand. Our recent information from GBA is that, depending on which offshore borrow site is used, this will be in the ballpark of 45 to 90 cents per cubic yard. When you compare this with the cost to actually place any sand of ballpark \$10-20 per cy, it's rather insignificant. The board approved a contract with GBA last month, and they have already started work on our behalf.

Quick show of hands: how many of you were owners, or at least familiar with how our beach looked immediately before and after we participated in the 2007-8 area replenishment?

Our estimates at this time are that, depending of course on how bad things are, we would need a bare minimum of \$1 million to return our beach to a condition similar to how it looked after that replenishment. A nice wide, flat beach but not including the extensive 200' wide dune we currently have in place, and that took many year to create.

And of course, one giant unknown in all of this is the extent to which the Army Corps of Engineers will continue to do projects on our neighboring public beaches. We certainly benefit from the sand placed for those projects. At the moment, those projects are funded by a combination of federal and state money. DNREC recently commissioned a study that tried to quantify how much various portions of the state benefit from the DNREC spending, and concluded they wanted local towns to pay for some of it directly. They also tried to quantify how much other coastal communities, such as ours, benefitted from these projects. One of the report's conclusions was that MBA, with its shorter beach, benefits more than does Sea Colony. The logic behind this was that the sand mostly protects the infrastructure closer to the water. Middlesex Beach has expensive oceanfront homes that are more valuable than Sea Colony's swimming pools, and are more likely to be damaged than the high-rises. This study was commissioned by the outgoing DNREC administration, and we currently have no information as to whether this study will eventually turn into policy. There is a meeting in Bethany on Monday afternoon that will discuss this.

SPORTS COURTS: The Board spent time this offseason discussing the potential benefits and annoyances of sports courts on members' properties. This includes pickleball and basketball, and not just the actual sounds of such activities, but also the exuberant cries of its participants. Once that became part of the discussion, I felt I had to point out that 15 Dune Road has one of the two shuffleboard courts in the community and that we could be pretty vocal at times. While our governing documents say that the board MAY adopt rules and regulations governing existing or potential nuisances, we ran some community surveys this offseason, which only revealed that no matter what we did or didn't do, we'd annoy many people. There have been no changes to our rules and regulations in this regard, but I would advise community members in all cases to remember that you may find running around in your yard to be your form of relaxation and recreation, that may not be the feeling of your neighbors. An expert we consulted on this gave us information about how to test both the background noise in the community, and the added noise from some of these activities. There is a concept called

“customary and ordinary use of a property” which among other things means “you should expect people to gather on their back porch or patio and talk or listen to music”. We have quiet hours from 11 p.m. – 8 a.m., but that doesn’t mean you should feel free to make as much noise as possible during those times. There are sound deadening pickleballs and paddles available, and we certainly encourage anyone wishing to play to make use of these not only to be considerate, but to keep us from trying to quantify exactly what is a “nuisance”.

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 Committee, 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 Committee, 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 Mobi-mat 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 Committee, 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 Committee, 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.

~ End ~