

TOWN OF BETHANY BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
May 26, 2023

The public hearing could be viewed on two internet platforms:
The Town's Website at: www.townofbethanybeach.com - click on the Government Tab, then go to the left side of the page and click on Live Video Broadcast
or
Go to our YouTube page at: www.YouTube.com/BethanyBeachGov

Members present for the public hearing were: Rosemary Hardiman, Mayor, who presided, Lew Killmer, Jerry Morris, Patrick Sheplee, Scott Edmonston, Mickey Hinman and Ron Calef.

Also present were: Cliff Graviet, Town Manager; Terry Tieman, Assistant Town Manager; Molly Daisey, Town Clerk; and Will Wharton, IT Manager.

Mayor Hardiman called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. She advised that notice of the public hearing was properly posted and advertised as follows:

*TOWN OF BETHANY BEACH
PUBLIC HEARING*

The Town Council and the Planning Commission of the Town of Bethany Beach will jointly hold a public hearing at 2:15 p.m. on Friday, May 26, 2023, in the Town Meeting Room, 214 Garfield Parkway, Bethany Beach, DE.

The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments on the proposed updated Comprehensive Development Plan.

The proposed Comprehensive Development Plan is available for inspection in Town Hall, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., (except on scheduled holidays), and is also available on the town's website www.townofbethanybeach.com.

All interested persons are welcome to attend this hearing and to make comment.

Posted: 5/8/2023

Website: 5/8/2023

Advertised: The Coastal Point Newspaper – issue dated: May 12, 2023

Mayor Hardiman explained that the Planning Commission and Town Council have met several times to review the Comprehensive Development Plan. She said that the purpose of today's Public Hearing is to receive comments on the proposed updated 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The Town Council will not be voting on any issue today. According to the Protocol Manual, interaction with any speaker at a public hearing should be limited to asking questions for clarification rather than an ongoing dialogue.

Any suggested change relating to grammar or punctuation should be submitted in writing. The hearing should deal with substantive issues only.

Mayor Hardiman explained that the audience for this version of the proposed Comprehensive Plan is the Office of State Planning (OSP). Each Chapter goes to a different Department of the State, including: Natural Resources and Environmental Control; Transportation; State Housing Authority; Safety and Homeland Security. Since some goals and recommendations may apply to more than one Department, there are duplications.

The purpose of the review and certification by the state of every municipal and county comprehensive plan, according to Delaware law is to ensure that the “plan, amendment, update or revision thereto is found to be consistent with state goals, policies, and strategies, and not in conflict with plans of other jurisdictions.”

The University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration has been acting as consultants to us so that the final product the Council submits to the Office of State Planning reflects what these Departments are looking for and are presented in the format that makes it easier for them to review and hopefully approve without many questions. The format of the proposed Comprehensive Plan is not unlike those of other municipalities and follows the “State of Delaware Comprehensive Plan Checklist.”

Mayor Hardiman advised that the Town Council will hold a workshop in June to move the Comprehensive Plan forward. She requested that a list be prepared of any suggestions so that they can be considered beforehand.

Mayor Hardiman asked for audience comments.

Mr. Ron Dobes, 651 Tingle Avenue, was recognized. Mr. Dobes advised that he was the President of the Bethany Beach Landowner’s Association (BBLA). He said that the BBLA fully supports the Comprehensive Development Plan. The BBLA recognizes the importance of a long-term strategy that provides guidance to the community.

Mr. Dobes commented on Section 1.4 (h) (*Future Land Use and Annexation Goals and Recommendations*) of the proposed plan. He noted the importance of preserving and enhancing the established charter of the Town. He recommended that an executive summary be added to the plan and redefining wording for established goals. He also offered the BBLA’s assistance in communicating Town related issues to the Community.

Mr. Dobes explained that the BBLA prepared a formal statement regarding the Comprehensive Plan. For recording purposes, a copy of that statement is attached to these minutes.

Hearing no additional comments, the hearing was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Lisa A. Kail



An Association for All Bethany Beach, DE Property Owners

May 26, 2023

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

ON

THE 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
BETHANY BEACH, SUSSEX COUNTY, DE

I am Ron Dobes, President of the BBLA Board of Directors. On behalf of the Board, I thank you for the opportunity to speak at the public hearing on the 2023 Comprehensive Plan.

By the nature of its title, we view the Comprehensive Plan (CP) as an important “comprehensive” view of the Town’s 10 year “plan” for our Bethany Beach community. Since BBLA is a property owner non-profit organization, it’s imperative we keep our members apprised of what’s in store for Bethany Beach, both in the short and long-term range. BBLA stands ready to assist the Town in keeping property owners informed through targeted communications and engaged through surveys, polls, and forums.

Similarly, BBLA agrees with the CP statement in 1-4h regarding preserving the character of the Town by ensuring effective land use policies are maintained and that ordinances and policies are reviewed for necessary updates. For example, BBLA engaged in public education and data gathering in support of the Town’s efforts to update the ordinance on ground cover standards.

After reading the current DRAFT, following are overall comments:

- ❖ With a report of this size, it would be beneficial to include an Executive Summary to highlight points from each major section and explains the overall strategy.
- ❖ The CP would be more understandable and effective if the terms “mandatory,” “optional,” and “aspirational” were clearly defined in the Introduction, and if every goal and recommendation was then identified by these 3 categories.
 - Add a reference to Chapter 11 in Paragraph 1-5 to provide clarity regarding provisions in the plan that the Town is “legally required” to pursue.
 - A summary table should be generated, and identifiers should be added for each goal and recommendation in the body of the document.
- ❖ It would be helpful in future CPs to have the Goals consistent in how they appear (some are titled and some are sentences and have written objectives and/or milestones).
- ❖ When Goals are repeated in different sections, perhaps they could be cross- referenced.

Specific Comments for Consideration:

- Under “development and redevelopment” on pdf p. 55, 5-6 – consider addressing multiple permits being issued for work to be done at the same time on the same street/community.
- Under “Community Input” on pdf p. 63: add – “reaching out to property owner organizations, such as BBLA.”
- In several sections the CP mentions stormwater, standing water, and nuisance/sunny day flooding. However, the draft CP only identifies the Town’s steel/bladder dam and tide gate project as a potential solution (if funding can be found, and if State and Federal agencies approve it). We urge the Town to add text on the USACE/DNREC Coastal Storm Risk Management Study for the State of Delaware, referred to as the Back Bay Study, because it could result in a similar solution, and/or other structural and non- structural solutions, that would be implemented at Federal and State cost. Continuing to engage with USACE/DENREC on potential solutions seems like a perfect “aspirational” goal for the CP.
- Throughout the CP there is language regarding the current 50-year dune and beach project and how important it is to coordinate with USACE/DNREC on dune repair and beach renourishment activities. We recommend that the CP also note

that this authorized federal dune/beach project terminates in ca. 2057, and that after that date the Federal and State agencies will no longer have the authority or the ability to budget funds to repair the dune and renourish the beach. This is a critically important point that should be highlighted throughout the draft plan for strategic planning purposes, along

with goals and recommendations regarding what the Town might do if the dune/beach project is NOT reauthorized, or not reauthorized at the same design and funding

level. What specific actions should the Town be taking now to protect the community if a new authorization doesn't materialize? What specific actions should the Town, interested organizations, and property owners be taking NOW and up to 2057 to prepare?

- More specifics needed in how the Town is planning on improving technology and communications – references are repetitive but not very descriptive.

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