

RBHA BOARD MEETING

Although the Saturday, March 21, 2009 Board meeting was shortened so that members could participate in the annual dune grass planting, a number of significant actions were taken. First, Marcia Maldeis reported that there is \$14, 085 in bank accounts and a total of 382 members at this juncture. Greg Gause reported the latest information concerning a tree and memorial plaque for former President Jay Smith.

In an effort to become more engaged in the community the Board voted to join the Chamber of Commerce and Camp Rehoboth. There was also discussion of joining the Rehoboth Beach Historical Society and the VIA. It is not clear whether or not the RBHA is eligible to join the 50 year-old women's organization. The Board also voted to realign budgeted funds for Newsletter and website administration that will permit the Homeowners to do a mass membership promotional mailing.

DUNE GRASS PLANTING AND BEACH CLEANUP

Eight to ten RBHA members were part of a group of more than 40 interested persons who came to the beach on a blustery March 21st morning to plant dune grass. Then, six hardy members braved the March winds to sweep the beach of debris including, a wood pallet, a dead sea gull, and other assorted refuse as part of its Adopt-a-Beach responsibilities. Both programs are sponsored by DNREC. Thousands of dune grass cuttings were placed in two areas, at Olive Street and just north of the breakwater at the Henlopen Hotel. Here are some pictures.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/36097062@N08/sets/72157615633815683/>

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners held its regular meeting on March 16, 2009. A Permit of Compliance was granted to the owners of new restaurant, Rigby's Bar and Grill, at the previous location of Partners Restaurant. After a lengthy Public Hearing the Commissioners voted to refer the issue of discontinuous sidewalks to the Street and Light Committee for further clarification before considering the matter further. "Discontinuous sidewalks" refers to the gaps in blocks where more than 50% of properties have existing sidewalks, which current City Code requires to be completed. Some in the audience, including some property owners identified to fill in the missing gaps, supported the concept of filling in the missing sections. However, the issue involves a number of complex questions. Some speakers participating in the hearing challenged the City's enforcing sidewalk construction in the 21 cases in contention here. They argued that individual and unique conditions affected the ability to complete construction; they also asserted that the City should be responsible for the expense, especially during these difficult economic times. The Street & Light Committee will report back to the Commissioners in two to three months.

Information about the cost of the Ocean Outfall option of wastewater disposal was given. The approximate figure was thirty-four million dollars, resulting in a 110% increase for

taxpayers. Information on a separate cost study underway for a City/County partnership is not as yet available.

The current Boardwalk construction is proceeding on schedule. Lighting has been chosen which is similar in design to that used in the Streetscape and a low bid contract was awarded to Eastern Shore Services.

Adoption of the City Budget was tabled until the Commissioners meet at a Special Meeting at 9:00 am on March 28. The action was taken because Commissioners (and the public) did not have adequate time for perusal and input on several related ordinances, which were only delivered to the Board earlier that afternoon. A copy of the five proposed ordinances will be put on the city website.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Former City Commissioner Ron Paterson questioned the current Board about the status of the school rezoning issue at the end of the Commission's March 16th meeting. Mr. Paterson reminded the Board that this matter has been in play for more than a decade! Mr. Paterson, a retired teacher, offered a brief history lesson, pointing out that the Panama Canal was constructed in less time. He also provided a history of the issue, noting that there has always been strong citizen support for the City's position. And that position is, simply, maintain the open space character of the property. Mr. Paterson went on to caution that inaction could have serious consequences. There could be 1-2 new School Board members; also, there appears to be a rift developing in the current Board. Funding shortages could affect the School Board's position and the recent referendum defeat could bode ill. Mr. Paterson indicated he thought the City had great momentum when this was last presented, a year ago April. Mr. Paterson urged the City Commission to get the matter back on the agenda and get it moving along again.

Mayor Cooper replied, "This lays in my court." He went on to say that the School Board "offered a super-simplistic change to the zoning code, which was wholly inadequate." He said that the City Solicitor had drafted a response and the Mayor has had it. The Mayor then said, "I promise to move it forward." Commissioner Mills asked, "What do we need to do to move it forward." He offered to lend a hand, if the Mayor wanted help.

CLARIFICATION

Preston Littleton, Chair of the City's Planning Commission, will make a presentation of the CDP at our General Membership meeting on April 18th and we urge ALL members to attend. The plan has far reaching implications for many things that affect our way of life in Rehoboth. However, we did slip up in our last report about the most recent Planning Commission meeting. Dr. Littleton told us, "Your report of the Planning Commission meeting is correct but an essential item/explanation was left off. The entire street discussion and action was limited to only short dead-end streets in residential zoned areas that are 250 feet or less in length and that have no more than 10 houses/lots abutting the short dead-end street, and the proposed change would only apply if the developer could justify it on the basis of saving natural features, i.e., trees. As written in your report—I

think it could easily be misinterpreted to mean that it applies to all streets in all areas—
which is clearly not the case.”

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RBHA members huddle together after completing sweep of beach. Wood pallets, dead sea gulls, and other assorted debris were removed from the homeowners section of the beach front , from Rehoboth Avenue to Prospect Street. Board member Greg Gause uses an implement of his own design to retrieve debris from the sensitive dune grass area. JC Branner, DNREC Staffer. Some of the more than 40 interested persons, including 8-10 RBHA members, who came to the beach on a blustery March morning to plant dune grass.

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