

**The Town of Bowers**3357 Main St.
Frederica, DE 19946
(302) 572-9000
bowersbeach.delaware.gov

**MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm on June 15 by Wayne Irons. Council members present: Mayor Ada Puzzo (Zoom), and Bob McDevitt (Zoom).

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

A motion was made by Marty Manning, seconded by Bob McDevitt to amend the agenda in order to accommodate Senator Buckson and the resident concerns. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Marty Manning, seconded by Bob McDevitt to approve the April meeting minutes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Marty Manning, seconded by Bob McDevitt to approve the May meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

There was a question from Jena Vincent-Apicelli regarding a full-time accountant. Marty explained everyone on Council is volunteer and that the town does not have an accountant – he is the one who handles all of the finances.

A motion was made by Wayne Irons seconded by Ada Puzzo to approve the May 2023 Treasurer’s Report. Motion carried.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Parking Lot:** Wayne read an email from Anthony about updates regarding the parking lot:

“We received the final “blessing” from USDA to proceed with the project last week; The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Town and DNREC has been signed by the Town and has been submitted on DNREC’s end for final approval; Upon signing of the MOA, the project will be advertised for bids on the state’s website; The process from advertisement to an executed contract may take as long as 60 days; I will send Mayor Puzzo an update upon receiving the signed MOA and when the project is advertised,

Including the date of a mandatory pre-bid meeting for the contractors.

North Flack: The Division of Fish and Wildlife recently placed stone on our property at the north end of North Flack Avenue. This is the start of a small parking area being created to provide seasonal access to the beach outside the mouth of the St. Jones River. Additional improvements will include:

* Split rail fence around the parking area
* A kiosk with site-specific information
* An established entry and exit path to the beach to reduce dune and habitat disturbance
* No additional facilities are planned for the site.”
* Anyone with questions is welcome to contact Anthony at (302) 735-8673 or by email at

anthony.gonzon@delaware.gov.

There was a question regarding how many parking spots will be included in this and Wayne said the exact number is unknown, but he will look into getting that clarified.

**Watermen's Park:** Judy Martin said that they are receiving grant funding to get a bicycle fixing station and an air pump. Ada added that the funds for this can be seen in the May 2023 Treasurer’s Report as a $1,820 withdrawal, but it will show up as reimbursed in the June 2023 Treasurer’s Report. Judy said that they just needed to pick a location and Tink offered to do the install for it.

**Parks & Recreation:** Tink Tocco recommended a concrete pad about 5’ x 4’ for bike station and requested $100 from Council to complete the project.

Tink is getting around to fixing the fence that Council approved $200 for.

There was also a comment made about the wifi in the park and how people profited a lot off the ability to use it for the Buccaneer Bash. Said that this new system will work great.

Wants to bring someone out to power wash the toys. Ada Puzzo added to make sure that Marg and Judy are cued in on the bike station placement.

**Planning/Zoning Code Revisions:** Mark Puzzo talked about looking into a tax for Airbnb’s to generate income for the Town. There were some questions regarding the code for camper issues, so that is why the focus is turning more towards the Airbnb’s. The Council opened it up for public comment. Bruce Wilkerson raised a suggestion about differentiating between short- and long-term permits or taxes. Maria Keesling asked for clarification regarding when this was talked about. Ada added that this is the first time it has been brought up for discussion and nothing would happen without a hearing. Maria also asked about receiving mail notice for hearings and Ada replied that you only receive mailed notices if your property is directly affected.

**Public Water:** Joe Conlin talked about the initial survey with 37 resident responses which was a 67% response rate showing approval for the idea. He is planning to meet with Ada and do a direct mail campaign which includes 5 components: cover letter, questionnaire, FAQ sheet, the mailing envelope and the return envelope. There will be an option to complete the survey online instead of mailing the questionnaire back. Ada clarified that the 5 components will be an expense to the town as it will buy all of the materials. The Council opened it up for public comment. Bruce Wilkerson asked a question about whether the water would be treated or not. Joe said it would depend on who is contracted for the water – it would most likely be treated. There is no worry about lead pipes; the only concern is the integrity of the state’s aquifer. Bruce Wilkerson asked an additional question about piping and maintenance work – will it be included in the cost? Joe said if it passes an engineer will plan everything out

**Streets:** Jim Smith talked about switching the town over to LED lighting. It would be $1200 to change 90 lights. Looking to focus on the parking lot lighting. There is a simple application involved and that will determine which streets to start on; changing about 25 bulbs annually. DelDOT needs to give the ‘OK’ on any state maintained roads. Flood lights would be a low cost solution for the parking lot. Jim said the LED lighting is more intense, but it illuminates well.

The Council opened it up for public comment.

 Jay Baker asked a question about the amount of lighting and possible light pollution. Jim encouraged everyone to look into other towns that utilize the LED lighting – Harrington for example. Said that they can be directional, so it is possible to aim the lighting at the ground.

Jena Vincent-Apicelli asked if the LED bulbs can be dimmed and Jim said no. She also asked if it would cost more for the town and Jim said it will actually save the town about 10% of what they pay now for the cobra-head lighting.

**Code Enforcement:** No Report.

**Board of Adjustments:** No Report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Drainage:** Sean Devlin talked about the archaeological study. It would cost about $40,000. There was one found from 2012, but it only included some of the area in question. The guy who did the survey no longer works there. Ada talked about the grant from FEMA and it is moving along well, just need to get the survey done.

**Town Elections:** The Town of Bowers is seeking candidates for two open seats on the Town Council. The term of office for each of these positions is two years and any eligible citizen may file and run for these offices. FILING DEADLINE: Friday, June 30, 2023 – 5:00pm.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Upcoming Museum Events:**  Judy Martin thanked everyone for a successful Memorial Day weekend. July 8th is the Museum’s birthday.

**Concert:** Tink Tocco expressed that they may need to move the concert tomorrow, June 16th due to a storm coming East. Portable bathroom was delivered. To be determined…

**RESIDENT TOPICS AND CONCERNS**

**Jay Apicelli – Speeding and Aggressive Driving:** Jay talked about incidents within the town regarding speeding and aggressive driving. He talked about tailgating, passing on a solid-double line, people being forced to pull off to the side to let people pass, a veteran falling due to someone speeding and startling him, and other related incidents. Jay expressed concern that has also been affirmed by other residents in town, regarding the amount of people who walk, bike, and children who play. He and others are afraid someone could get hit. Some people who used to ride their bikes don’t anymore due to the speeding and aggressiveness of drivers.

Senator Buckson came to speak and offered a couple solutions:

1. DSP is not the way to go, they are really short staffed.
2. DelDOT does assessments to determine particular places in town where people go over the speed limit.
3. Buckson and Postles can use CTF funds to get radar signs that calculate and gather data of the people speeding. They can also invest in speed tables which would be friendlier to larger trucks and the fire department.
4. Buckson and Postles can use CTF funds to get a transportable speed radar that can be moved around town to different areas instead of the one stationary one. This can also be accompanied by a camera that can issue citations: first offense is a warning and the second is a fine. Some people may not like the camera, but it would be up to the town to assure people it’s strictly for speeding. If CTF funds are going to be used it may take a year because it has to pass the state Legislature.

There was a question from Jay Apicelli regarding having a police officer come out and Marty talked about how it is inefficient. The Town will not make back the amount it pays the officer in the amount of citations that are issued. Buckson elaborated on police presence suggesting talking to the Mayor of Frederica – they have two part-time and one full-time cop, but they did have to raise taxes $0.25 for each officer brought on. There was additional conversation around sharing a police officer between the towns.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Wayne Irons (Vice Mayor): Special thanks to Jay, Brooks, and Jena for speaking about speeding.

Marty Manning (Treasurer): None

Shirley Pennington (Secretary): None

Bob McDevitt (Zoning Compliance Officer): Thanks to Tink and Eileen for planting a tree in memory of his daughter, Michelle.

Ada Puzzo (Mayor): Suggested an event for dedicating the tree to Michelle.

**NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Marty Manning, seconded by Ada Puzzo, adjourn at 8:28 pm. Motion Carried.

The next town meeting will be held on July 13 starting at 7:00 pm and will be in person meeting as well as Zoom.

Town Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month unless changed by the Mayor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jalen Rogers

Intern