

BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2019

Attending:		Excused:	
Barbara Truncellito	Philip Kahn (by phone)	Jack Byrnes	
Rich Brodman	Virginia Fitzsimons	Patty Francfort	
Bill Chernelich	Kay McDonnell		
Tom Zesk	Betsy Aras		
Mary Ann Crutchlow			

I. President's Opening Comments

Barbara Truncellito called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. The Trustees approved the minutes from the November 14, 2019 Trustee Meeting.

II. Reports

o Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted that we have 562 members for 2019, including 59 new members. This is an increase of 13 members over 2018. We also have 931 emails in our distribution network (including 234 nonmembers), and have been communicating with our members each month via a digital newsletter. It was noted that we have 95 former members who did not renew. Trustees, after the June general meeting, will attempt to call former members who have not renewed to determine the reason and see if they wish to join for 2020. Any 2019 members who have not renewed after the June meeting will be considered nonmembers for 2020 until they renew.

o Treasurer's Report – Bill Chernelich

Bill updated the Board on recent activity, and presented interim financial statements through December 14, and a forecast through year end. The fund balance is currently at \$12,660. After reflecting expected expenses for website maintenance and the Holiday Card, the year end fund balance is anticipated to be \$11,105. Recurring expenses were in line with last year, but total expenses were expected to be approximately \$600 higher than dues and contributions, resulting in a \$600 reduction in the fund balance. Income is expected to be higher next year as a result of the dues increase to \$25.

o BLTA Website and Social Media – Betsy Aras

Betsy Aras, the new lead for the website and social media, gave an update on the website and Social Media. Betsy and Kay McDonnell will be splitting up the weekly updates and other website activities. Betsy updated the group on website usage for November. Our Google Analytics report showed that



website usage was up 29% over October, with over 3,505 page views with an average session time between 1.5 and 2 minutes. This was more than double the number of users as last November. Most users access the website using a mobile device, and found our site by searching.

Over the winter, Betsy and Kay will tag some of the older archived articles so they can be searched by our readers. New articles are tagged as they are posted each week. Kay will monitor the website contact page through our gmail account, and Betsy will be the lead on Facebook.

The Facebook Group now has 214 members, most of whom are active and read our posts. 190 members were active on the page in the last 10 days. Betsy will typically post 2-3 times a week.

A new payment method needs to be added to the GoDaddy account which is up for renewal on January 12. The Board agreed to use the BLTA PayPal account and Bill was going to set that up. It was decided to renew GoDaddy while we continue to do more research on SiteGround and other host organizations.

o School Board Referendum– Barbara Truncellito and Virginia Fitzsimons

Barbara and Virginia discussed the LBI School Board Referendum held on December 10, which was a resounding defeat for the Board proposal for a bond issuance to be used exclusively to fund the LBI School renovation. The School Board will now revisit the consolidation and renovation decisions for each of the schools.

Barbara reiterated that the LBI School Board will have a restructuring meeting in January to determine the new officers and makeup of the Board.

The BLTA Board also discussed the recent results of the academic standards study, which showed that only 30% of students in the LBI district were reading at grade level, and the district is under a state of New Jersey warning to improve these results. On a positive note, 97% of students are at grade level in science. Virginia will do more research on academic standards. We then discussed the issues facing the School Board for next year, and believe that the new School Board should place a heavy focus on the quality of education and raising the results under the academic standards. They of course also will need to address the LBI school consolidation, but should factor in the strong potential for a broader consolidation of districts imposed at the State level.

o Holiday Card – Barbara Truncellito

The Holiday card was sent out and was very well received. Barbara thanked Board member Mary Ann Crutchlow for the production and VP Dr. Rich Brodman for the photo.

o Annual Newsletter – Mary Ann Crutchlow

Mary Ann discussed the timing of the newsletter, the format and current articles to be included. The Board agreed to include the President's letter, brief reports on Membership, Treasury, Website and social media, Beaches, and the About Town segment from Dottie Reynolds. The Board also discussed having a human interest or town interest story as we have in prior years. Kay and Mary Ann were going

to pursue doing a story on the Lens in the Barnegat Light Historical Museum. Articles are needed by the end of January in order to meet our target date of mid to late February for publishing the newsletter.

III. New Business – Items for Discussion

○ Speakers for 2020 Summer General Meetings – Rich Brodman and Jack Byrnes

The Board discussed the lineup of speakers for next summer's general meetings. The Mayor has agreed to speak at each meeting, and the Board decided to keep the current format with only one or two speakers in addition to the Mayor. It was expected that Freeholder Ginny Haines would return for the June 20 meeting. The July 11 meeting would feature Sean MacCotter, Flood Plain Manager, to speak on flood insurance and the potential for lower rates in Barnegat Light due to the higher elevation. The September 12 meeting is typically reserved for Barnegat Light organizations, and the Board discussed having the First Aid Squad and the Fire Department make presentations, along with Megan Keller of the LBT Police Dept. A session led by the Mayor on recycling rules is also being pursued.

The Trustees also wanted to feature a panel discussion on wind farms, with Q&A, and are considering doing this as an evening informational panel discussion on a mid-week evening, possibly at the Pavilion. One option is to have representatives from the fishing industry and Government if possible. The concept of an evening informational panel would introduce a new type of program for BLTA which could be a precedent for future presentations. Other topics could be street flooding on LBI and plans to alleviate it.

The Wine and Cheese Reception would be held on Sunday, May 24 (Memorial Day weekend).

○ Borough Council – Water Meters – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara noted that the water meter contract was going out to bid, and presumably water meters would be ordered once the bid requests were sent out and returned. The property owners would pay for installation of the water meters (using their own contractors) once the meters became available. The meters could be installed inside the house, which might be a cheaper option for some property owners.

○ Other Items – Barbara Truncellito

The Board discussed whether to have an annual survey, and decided to do surveys on an ad-hoc basis as issues come up, vs having one each year. We will include some questions on the membership mailing regarding BLTA membership and potential involvement.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next meeting is the Trustee Conference Call on January 18 at 10:00 AM.

Recorded and submitted by:

Tom Zesk
Recording Secretary
January 15, 2020