

BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION
 Trustees Meeting Minutes
 August 8, 2020

<u>Attending:</u>		<u>Excused:</u>	
Barbara Truncellito	Mary Ann Crutchlow	Jack Byrnes	
Rich Brodman	Philip Kahn	Patty Francfort (Committee Member)	
Bill Chnelich	Betsy Aras		
Tom Zesk	Kay McDonnell		

I. President's Opening Comments

Barbara Truncellito called the Trustee Conference Call meeting to order at 10:04 am.

The Trustees approved the minutes from the June 20, 2020 Trustee Meeting.

II. Reports

o Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted we have 530 members so far, including 26 new members. We are only 22 behind last year at this time, a very good result given the COVID environment. We ended up with 564 members for the full year 2019. The online membership and payment link on the website is now fully operational.

Rich also noted that our digital newsletters have been very well received, with over 78% being opened. This is much better than typical digital newsletters, which on average get about a 40% open rate.

o Treasurer's Report – Bill Chnelich

Bill presented the second quarter financial statements as of June 30. BLTA Income year-to-date is \$12,190 (\$11,050 of dues and \$1,140 of contributions) and expenses were \$6,650 for an increase in the fund balance of \$5,540. The current fund balance stands at \$17,773 as of June 30.

Bill noted that the amount of dues and contributions exceeded last year at this time, and expenses (other than donations) are down from last year. The fund balance therefore increased by \$2,282 over last year at June 30.



BLTA has transmitted \$7,000 to the fund established by the JCTA at Bank of America to provide gift cards for food to the St. Francis Food Pantry, and meals for medical workers at the Southern Ocean Medical Center. \$6,000 were contributed by our members and \$1,000 was from the BLTA.

o BLTA Website and Social Media – Betsy Aras and Kay McDonnell

Betsy updated the group on the website and social media, and reiterated that since many more property owners are present during the summer, the website will have less articles, focusing on those of direct relevance to Barnegat Light property owners. She also noted that the website went down for a short period of time but is now back up and fully operational.

The Facebook Group has become a key communication vehicle for the BLTA, in addition to our monthly digital newsletters. The Facebook Group now has 270 members, most of whom (over 250) are active and read our posts. Each of our posts typically gets read by 200+ members, and the replies and reactions are up 94% over last year.

Kay McDonnell lead a discussion about moving to a new interactive platform for communicating with our members. It would be integrated with our website and Facebook Group, and would be the vehicle for transmitting our messaging to the membership. One possibility is to use the Wild Apricot platform. Kay and Betsy will pursue this in the Fall and present options to the Board. The goal would be to have this up and running before the Spring annual newsletter.

o August Newsletter – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara discussed the August digital newsletter. The format will be similar to prior newsletters, with one major addition. Since we were not able to have a live general meeting this summer, one of our featured speakers, Sean MacCotter (Construction Official, CRS Coordinator, and Flood Plain Administrator in Barnegat Light), will record a presentation with a group of trustees, and we will attach a link to his presentation in the August newsletter. It will then be available to members on the website.

The presentation will be produced by two members of the St. Francis parish who produce the Church virtual masses and other virtual events. The cost to produce the video is \$200, which was approved by the Board.

o Borough Council – Barbara Truncellito

The Borough Council will hold a live meeting on August 12 at the Firehall. Barbara and Rich plan to attend, and will bring up a number of topics of interest to our members:

- The coyotes who have been sighted numerous times around Barnegat Light.



- Enforcement (or lack thereof) of the town ordinance prohibiting dog walking at the bay and kayak beaches. This is critical to avoid beach contamination. Rich will also mention signage to remind residents of the issue.
- Enforcement of bicycle and walking rules on the street.
- Possibility of live recording of Council meetings via Zoom so that more property owners would be able to attend.

o School Board Strategic Planning Committees– Barbara Truncellito

Barbara reported on the LBI Consolidated School Board meeting held on July 24. The meeting was live and had very low attendance. The following items were discussed:

- The final report of the independent engineer was issued and the report stated that the Ship Bottom grade school was essentially uninhabitable due to rot and mold issues.
- The School Board will meet again in August and will discuss a potential sale of the Ship Bottom building and property. Real estate has done very well this year on LBI so the expectation is that there will be significant interest in the property.
- The School Board discussed options for the schools this Fall. The LBI elementary schools will likely be online only. Beach Haven (governed by a separate School Board) will have in-person classes. Southern Regional High School is expected to be a hybrid mix of online and in-person.

o Joint Committee of Taxpayer Associations (JCTA)– Barbara Truncellito

Barbara attended a live meeting of the Board of the JCTA. The Board discussed a number of organizational rule changes and officer succession, to be documented in by-law changes.

Two new towns between Brant Beach and Beach Haven will be covered by taxpayer associations and will be added to the JCTA.

The Board also discussed the fund established by the JCTA at Bank of America to provide gift cards for food to the St. Francis Food Pantry, and meals for medical workers at the Southern Ocean Medical Center. The JCTA (together with the separate Taxpayer Associations) raised \$14,000. \$7,000 of that total came from the BLTA (\$1,000) and BLTA members (\$6,000). The hospital has a smaller number of current COVID cases, but St. Francis will have needs for the next 3-6 months, and donations will continue to be solicited for St. Francis going forward.

III. New Business – Items for Discussion

o September General Meeting Cancellation – Barbara Truncellito and Rich Brodman

Barbara and Rich recommended that the September general meeting be cancelled due to the COVID restrictions, and that the Board have a virtual Trustee meeting in lieu of a general meeting. The Board agreed. As noted above, the August newsletter will feature a presentation by one of our scheduled speakers, Sean MacCotter.

Officers up for re-election are normally approved by the BLTA membership at the September general meeting. Since the meeting is cancelled, the Board agreed that the August newsletter will present the slate of officers up for re-election to the full membership, in order to get input from the members. The Board will then vote on the officers at the September Trustee meeting, reflecting any input received from members.

Garden Club Donation – Rich Brodman

Rich discussed the financial issues being faced by the LBI Garden Club as a result of the cancellation of their major fundraiser (the House Tour), and the role of The Garden Club in maintaining the Barnegat Light Museum gardens and the monarch butterfly preserve at the Pavilion. The Board discussed making a donation earmarked for the work being done at the Pavilion and Museum gardens in order to insure that this work could continue. The Board agreed to make a \$500 contribution if the donation could be restricted to funding the maintenance and upkeep of the Museum gardens and the monarch butterfly preserve. The President of the Garden Club subsequently confirmed that the donation would be specifically earmarked for the Barnegat Light Museum and butterfly gardens, and the donation was made.

o Little Free Library – Mary Ann Crutchlow

Mary Ann discussed the procedures in place to insure safe use of the Little Free Library (LFL) at the Post Office. All users are required to wear a mask when using the LFL. In addition, the doors will be cleaned, and books will be organized. Users will be responsible for cleaning the books they donate or remove.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next Trustees meeting will be a Zoom meeting on September 12 at 10:00 AM.

Recorded and submitted by:

Tom Zesk
Recording Secretary
September 9, 2020