

**BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION**  
Trustees Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2020

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

I. President's Opening Comments

Barbara Truncellito called the Trustee Zoom Conference Call meeting to order at 10:00 am. The October meeting is normally an organization meeting for roles and responsibilities for the coming year. All Trustees agreed to continue in their roles for the next year.

The Trustees approved the minutes from the September 12, 2020 Trustee Meeting.

Tom Zesk announced that this would be his last year as a BLTA Trustee, due to his increasing roles on two other nonprofit Boards. Tom will continue on as a Trustee and Board Secretary through the September 2021 meeting.

The Board discussed ways to get new Board members in the current environment.

II. Reports

o Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted we have 540 members, with 5 additional members joining since September (2 new members and 3 renewals). We ended up with 564 members for the full year 2019, so are 24 members behind last year, a very good result given the COVID environment. 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 76% being opened. This is much better than typical digital newsletters, which on average get about a 40% open rate. We also had a 15% 'click rate' on web links.



The Constant Contact subscription is up for renewal and Rich recommended that we renew the subscription for another year so we have a backup while we move to a new digital platform. The Constant Contact digital newsletters and emails have been very well received as noted above. The Board approved the renewal for one more year.

○ Treasurer's Report – Bill Chmelich

Bill presented the September 30 quarterly financial report. Dues were up \$1,700 over last year and contributions were up \$110. Certain expenses were higher than last year (primarily IT costs and donations) but this was expected. The increase in IT costs was more than offset by significant reductions in expenses, primarily printing and postage costs, insurance, and meetings costs. The increase in donations was approved by the Board and was primarily due to contributions to the COVID Fund and local organizations in need of assistance. The Fund Balance is currently \$15,575, up \$1,242 over last year.

The BLTA New Jersey Tax Exempt Organization filings were completed and submitted to the State.

The Board sent acknowledgement letters to all Barnegat Light contributors to the JCTA Fund for COVID Relief, with appropriate language to support the tax deduction. BLTA members have contributed \$6,700 to the fund, which was 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.

○ Process for Approving Donations – Jack Byrnes

Jack presented a preliminary proposal for a process for the BLTA Board to follow in approving donations going forward. The primary recommendations in the proposal are to institute a time frame for presenting and discussing donation opportunities, and to evaluate potential donation recipients based on their connection to Barnegat Light and LBI. The Board also discussed implementing a budget for donations, which could be exceeded in unusual circumstances.

The Board decided to wait until Bill presents a 2021 budget/financial plan at the November meeting and continue the discussion of an appropriate budget for donations and a process for considering donations at that meeting.

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

Betsy updated the group on the website and social media. She presented a proposal to reorganize the website to move away from the focus on links to Sandpaper articles, and include more direct information on our home page, including timely updates on Barnegat Light as well as links to information sites and upcoming events. Our readership has spent less time on articles in recent months and often do not realize the amount of important information located in other areas of the site. This

proposal would place critical links and updates on the home page. This would also be integrated with our new digital platform as it is developed.

Betsy reminded the group that we will be looking to move 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. Kay has been working with the Wild Apricot platform, which is the leading candidate for our future platform. The goal would be to have this up and running next Spring. The Board approved the renewal of the Wild Apricot subscription so that Kay could continue to work with that platform in designing our approach. The Wild Apricot platform could be used as the vehicle for managing our membership database, our communications, and our website.

The Facebook Group has become a key communication vehicle for the BLTA, in addition to our monthly digital newsletters. The Facebook Group now has 283 members, up 32% since January. Most of them (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.

○ Borough Council and Town Planning Board – Barbara Truncellito

The Borough Council held a live meeting in October. A number of topics were covered:

- Water Meters. The deadline for picking up water meters was extended until December 1. Approximately 200 property owners still have not picked up their water meters and this generated a lot of discussion regarding communicating the urgency.
- Coyotes – there were a number of sightings and one attack on a resident's pet. It appears that the coyotes are increasing. The Council will work with Wildlife Control to limit future growth of the coyote population.
- A new Lifeguard house will be moved from another resident site and will replace the current lifeguard barracks, which are deemed inappropriate for today's environment.
- A sign up for pickleball court usage will be instituted after an ordinance is introduced and approved. Pickleball has become very popular in Barnegat Light and LBI.

Barbara also attended the Town Planning Board meeting. The Planning Board discussed the sale of the 16<sup>th</sup> St. Marina. The property will not remain a marina but it is not certain what will go into that location. It was noted that there has been flooding on that street and site.

Planning Board meetings are recorded and the notes are on the Borough website (Departments and Planning/Zoning Board), as is the schedule of future meetings. The next meeting of the Planning Board is October 22, and the next meeting of the Zoning Board is October 19.

○ LBI School Board – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara reported on the following topics being considered by the LBI Consolidated School Board:

- There are 3 Board positions up for election in November. 2 members are up for re-election and 1 new spot is up for election.
- The School Board is working on the plan to consolidate the elementary schools, and is expected to issue their report in November. Beach Haven is not going to be included in the consolidation.
- There have been queries by potential buyers of the Ship Bottom school property, and consideration is being given to selling the property and using the proceeds to make the necessary additions and improvements at the Ethel Jacobson School. However, there will not be any actual offers until the property is formally offered for sale after the November election.

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

Barbara reported on the meeting of the Board of the JCTA. The JCTA Board elected John Halperin as Vice-President and Katherine Grace as Treasurer. The JCTA Board also discussed whether they should be structured as a section 501 (c)(3) charitable organization or a section 501 (c)(4) social welfare organization. This topic will be decided at the next JCTA Board meeting on November 2.

III. New Business – Items for Discussion

○ Holiday Card and Survey – Barbara Truncellito

The Board decided to do a holiday greeting card and send it out digitally this year using our Constant Contact distribution.

The Board also discussed doing a survey this winter. Suggested topics would be the water meter process, coyotes, and other topics of interest in Barnegat Light. This will be added to the agenda for the November meeting.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM. The next Trustees meeting will be a Zoom meeting on November 14 at 10:00 AM. This will be the last BLTA meeting this year; the next meeting after November will be in January.

Recorded and submitted by:

**Tom Zesk**  
**Recording Secretary**  
**November 13, 2020**