

BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Trustees Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2020

| <u>Attending:</u> | | <u>Excused:</u> | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Barbara Truncellito | Mary Ann Crutchlow | | |
| Rich Brodman | Philip Kahn | Patty Francfort (Committee Member) | |
| Bill Chernelich | Betsy Aras | | |
| Tom Zesk | Kay McDonnell | | |
| | Jack Byrnes | | |
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I. President's Opening Comments

- o Approval of Minutes – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara Truncellito called the Trustee Conference Call meeting to order at 10:03 am and thanked everyone for an excellent year.

The Trustees approved the minutes from the August 8, 2020 Trustee Meeting.

- o Election of Officers

The Trustees approved the re-election of officers for a two-year term.

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

The Officers re-elected for 2-year terms are:

President – Barbara Truncellito

Vice-President – Dr. Rich Brodman

Treasurer – Bill Chernelich

Secretary – Tom Zesk

II. Reports

○ Treasurer's Report – Bill Chnelich

Bill presented an interim report with activity since the June 30 quarterly financials. A September 30 quarterly report will be presented at the October Trustee Meeting. Since the end of June, BLTA received \$140 of new revenues (\$115 of dues and \$25 of donations). \$700 of contributions to the JCTA fund for COVID Relief were also received and passed on to the JCTA Fund. Expenses since June were \$700 (\$200 for video support for Sean MacCotter's presentation, and \$500 for a donation to the LBI Garden Club for Barnegat Light projects). The Fund Balance is currently \$18,213.

The Board discussed additional donations to the two critical first responder organizations in Barnegat Light – the First Aid Squad and the Fire Department. The Board approved donations of \$500 each to the First Aid Squad and the Fire Department. This will be noted in the next Digital Newsletter.

The Board agreed to send acknowledgement letters to all 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.

○ Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted we have 535 members so far, including 26 new members. We are only 20 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. We also had a 15% 'click rate' on web links, and 45 readers clicked on the video from Sean MacCotter from the newsletter link.

The Constant Contact newsletter distribution list will be reviewed at year end to remove non-members. Rich noted that there are still 113 members from 2019 who have not yet renewed.

○ 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 had less new articles, focusing on those of direct relevance to Barnegat Light property owners. 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. 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.

The Facebook Group has become a key communication vehicle for the BLTA, in addition to our monthly digital newsletters. The Facebook Group now has 277 members, up 29% 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.

o Borough Council – Barbara Truncellito

The Borough Council held a live meeting on September 9 at the Firehall. Barbara and Rich attended. A number of topics were covered:

- Water Meters. 200 property owners have not yet picked up their water meters. The deadline is October 1, but it is likely (subsequently confirmed) that it will be extended until November 1.
- Communications from Borough Council on COVID and water meters.

Barbara also attended the Town Planning Board meeting. The Planning Board discussed the sale of properties next to the Liquor Store and the 16th St. Marina; and the anticipation of a new operator of the gas station. He recommended that we should be represented at the next meeting on September 16. Barbara will attend that meeting.

The BLTA has provided input on a number of issues that have been addressed by the Borough Council and Planning Board, including bicycle safety and signage, the 25th St. Bay Beach (which had no closures this year), and providing information on water meters. The Bay Beach storm catch basins were being power washed and flushed monthly this summer, and that contributed to having satisfactory bacteria counts. An additional item we intend to bring up at the next Borough Council meeting is the difficulty with vision (of oncoming traffic) at certain intersections in town.

o School Board Strategic Planning Committees– Barbara Truncellito

Barbara reported on the live LBI Consolidated School Board meeting. The following items were discussed:

- 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.
- There have been queries by potential buyers of the Ship Bottom school property. However, there will not be any actual offers until the property is formally offered for sale after the November election.

Subsequent to the meeting, the schools on LBI were closed and all instruction is done virtually.



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

Barbara reported on the meeting of the Board of the JCTA. The JCTA Board discussed the organizational rule changes and officer term limits and succession, which are now documented in the by-laws. There will be a vote for Vice President at the next meeting, and for the President position next year.

Other topics of discussion included the coyotes, which have now been seen as far south as Beach Haven; and bicycle safety rules.

Barbara will discuss the activities of the Board with the Sandpaper to see if the JCTA initiatives and some of the individual taxpayer associations can get more press coverage in the newspaper.

III. New Business – Items for Discussion

o Process for Relief Donations – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara lead a discussion regarding setting up a process to review future relief donations. The Board agreed that there should be a more formal process for determining when the BLTA should make a donation to a relief organization, eg, in the event of hurricanes or the COVID or a similar pandemic. The Board also believes that our members are very generous, and we should look for more opportunities to have the BLTA act as a conduit for member donations, as we did for the JCTA Fund. The JCTA Fund effort was very successful, as BLTA members contributed \$6,700 to the JCTA Fund.

Jack Byrnes will write up a proposed process for considering future donations, which should take into account relevant research on the recipient organization, and budget limitations.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM. The next Trustees meeting will be a Zoom meeting on October 17 at 10:00 AM.

Recorded and submitted by:

Tom Zesk
Recording Secretary
October 15, 2020