

## Letter to Beach Haven Residents

Under the leadership of Mayor Nancy Davis, working with her Council Members and the new Borough Manager, Sherry Mason, Beach Haven has made significant progress in an attempt to make Beach Haven an even better place to live and visit. Let's review what has been accomplished over the past four years and what is currently planned.

### Sound Financial Condition

1. As indicated in the most recent Audit Report, Beach Haven has been fiscally responsible. The auditors praised the Beach Haven Finance Office as a very "proactive department" and amongst the top of the professionals they work with. Because current fund balances have continued to increase since 2012, Beach Haven is now in a position to pay down additional debt service and self-fund some capital projects.
2. In 2018 the operating budget was \$500,000 less than 2017.
3. The new Borough Hall was completed under budget with no increase in taxes because of a Federal Grant, attentive project management and good financial oversight.
4. Through the use of the Emergency Management Center on Pelham Avenue as temporary offices and not needing to rent space after Hurricane Sandy, there was a cost avoidance of an estimated \$750,000.
5. The Finance Office opted to work independently of a costly consultant and has successfully recuperated a majority of expenditures related to Superstorm from FEMA.
6. Mandated by the Ocean County Board of Taxation, a property revaluation was successfully completed.

### Borough Services

1. Beach replenishment has been completed and an ongoing maintenance program is in place to better protect homes from the damage of future hurricanes and nor'easters. Beach entrances will continue to be improved to provide better public access. Bulkheads at street ends are also being reconstructed.
2. After Hurricane Sandy, a number of homes received very high water bills as a result of broken pipes going undetected. A program was put in place by Council to offer partial relief to homeowners who were able to document the situation in an application. Assistance was given to these homeowners amounting to over \$40,000. Most importantly a monitoring system, **Aqua Hawk**, now exists where homeowners can go online to monitor their water consumption and the Borough can detect the possibility of a water leak from a broken pipe.
3. A more efficient restriping of public streets resulted in over 300 much needed parking spaces added at very little cost.
4. The Public Works Department, Police, Beach Patrol and Administrative Staff continue to provide quality services. To assist them in their duties, the following capital improvements were made or are planned for 2019: there is a new fueling station, a new garbage truck and new beach rake were purchased with a new Public Works garage scheduled to be built in 2019.
5. To improve the reliability of its services the Water Utility has purchased new pumps housed in a new building above flood levels.
6. The Borough also recognizes the importance of the volunteer fire company and will be contributing \$400,000, Beach Haven's fair share, for the purchase of a new fire vehicle. Beach Haven is also conveying a portion of Borough property for the expansion of the fire house.
7. Financial assistance, through HMGP, is being provided to nine homeowners to raise their homes.
8. To improve communications, the Borough website continues to be upgraded and is now more informative and more easily navigated by users.

9. The Borough encourages the continued use of the new municipal building by community groups and the different local art programs.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Significant improvements were made and new activities were introduced in Beach Haven's parks which are important assets that distinguish Beach Haven from the other communities on LBI.

1. The old roller rink on Nelson Avenue was converted to **Beach Haven's Pickleball Center** in 2015 at very little cost with wind screens, a water fountain and permanent nets. As the only location on LBI offering organized "Group Play" in the morning with certified pickleball attendants, nearly 2,000 players signed in to play in 2018. Because of its popularity the second annual pickleball tournament was held this year. Privately sponsored with players coming from surrounding states, the tournament positively impacts the local businesses with any profit donated to a local charity.
2. Two **volleyball** nets have been placed on the beaches with great appreciation from local players.
3. An attractive **new Pocket Park** was constructed on Bay Avenue with the assistance of the Beach Haven Board of Education and multiple community donors. In addition to being an amenity to be enjoyed, it is also representative of the streetscape standard that the Borough is introducing in the Business District.
4. The **Taylor Avenue Field**, the site for the annual Chowderfest event and many other major events, was rebuilt to address drainage problems along with an upgrade to electrical utilities and new lighting.
5. **Butler Park** on the bay at the end of Taylor Avenue received significant improvements.
  - a. The basketball court was resurfaced along with new fencing.
  - b. New children's' playground equipment purchased and sail shades installed.
  - c. A new concrete walkway along the bay was constructed.
  - d. The two small existing pavilions were repaired and new cedar shake roofs installed.
  - e. Volunteers constructed a walking garden to educate the public on native plants and fauna.
  - f. Working with the Jetty Foundation a new large pavilion is being constructed this fall to further enhance the enjoyment of this waterfront setting.
  - g. We are working with another community donor to have additional LED lighting installed at this location.
  - h. A video surveillance camera has been installed.
6. A number of improvements have been made at **Veterans Park**.
  - a. A new entertainment pavilion was constructed to support concerts and other events.
  - b. A new confections building was constructed to assist the Community Arts Program in their fund raising and running of the summer concerts in the park.
  - c. The much need public restrooms were constructed.
  - d. Landscaping improvements have been made that will continue into 2019 with more trees being added to the site.
7. At the end of **Pearl Street**, a new floating dock and ramp has been added for easy access to the bay.
8. Raised garden beds will be constructed and made available to Beach Haven residents on Nelson Avenue in 2019.

## A New Master Plan

As the result of three years of very hard work by a group of volunteers, the **New Beach Haven Master Plan** was approved by the Land Use Board in 2018. This important report provides an assessment of current conditions along with a vision and a statement of objectives. The following elements make up the body of the report: Introduction; Land Use; Housing; Recreation; Circulation; Community Facilities; Historic Preservation; Economic; Utilities; Sustainability; Relationship to other Plans. The following are consistent with the Master Plan recommendations:

1. Beach Haven reached a favorable settlement in a court of law for its mandated “**COAH**” **affordable housing** obligation.
2. **A \$3 million bond ordinance to reduce nuisance flooding** has been approved. The project includes installing 6,000 feet of new storm drains, back flow preventers to restrict bay water from flooding the streets and three new pumping stations. Mirrored after the successful projects in Ocean City, it is believed this project will reduce the flooding on Bay Avenue and the properties west of Bay Avenue. Beach Haven will be seeking a NJ State grant to cover 50 % of the cost and additional funding will be requested from Ocean County which shares ownership of the storm drains. Design is underway, with construction targeted for the Fall of 2019.
3. Beach Haven is participating along with Long Beach Township to have **Stockton University** further study the flooding that is occurring.
4. Energy efficient **LED street lighting** has been installed by Atlantic City Electric in 110 street lighting fixtures on Bay Avenue, resulting in significant cost savings.
5. To address environmental concerns, Beach Haven has passed an ordinance **banning plastic bags** to better protect the environment and the ocean habitat.
6. Beach Haven will be entering into an agreement with the NJDOT. The DOT will expend \$1 million to **redge the bay**, taking the spoils to rebuild Parker Island to its original size.
7. The Historic District continues to see young families moving to Beach Haven, bringing new life to these housing gems.
8. To the delight of residents, visitors and businesses the Surflight Theatre is again operational.
9. The Council supports the Master Plan recommended establishment of an Architectural Advisory Committee to further enhance the Business District and is currently working with community leaders to define the committee’s roles and responsibilities.

## ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

At the urging of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission and citizens concerned with the deterioration of the Business District, **an Economic Revitalization Team**, comprised of Council members, local residents and business owners, the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce and outside consultants, was established in January 2017 to make recommendations to Council for their consideration.

To identify the preferences of residents, visitors and local business, Beach Haven in conjunction with the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce and Stockton University conducted in-depth surveys over the summer of 2017. With over 2,000 responses and interviews with 30 business owners, the survey results were presented at a public meeting in December 2017 and is available on the Borough’s website. Based upon the survey feedback the following strategies are being undertaken:

1. The Chamber of Commerce, businesses and non-profit organizations are being invited to participate with the Beach Haven Economic Revitalization Team. A direct result of this

collaboration has been the implementation of a **free ferry service between Beach Haven and Tuckerton.**

2. Prioritize and implement the recommendations of the Beach Haven Master Plan.
3. Establish Economic Redevelopment areas in the Business and Marine Commercial Districts.
  - A. The **Surflight Theatre** has been designated a Redevelopment Property to better assure the continued use of this site as a theatre and to provide assistance to its current management.
  - B. **Four abandoned mold damaged properties were designated as in need of Rehabilitation on Bay Avenue and were purchased** by investors with new construction projects underway.
  - C. A number of properties were designated areas in need of Rehabilitation in the **Marine Commercial District** to stimulate future investment. Plans are being considered for the rebuilding of Morrison's Restaurant, with a new hotel, while preserving the public marina operations.

Because of the higher property values that will be realized from these efforts there will be significant intermediate and long term higher tax revenues from these properties thereby reducing the tax burden on homeowners. Beach Haven is pro-active in reducing the number of empty stores. With new buildings replacing abandoned structures, the attractiveness of these locations will be greatly enhanced.

**Faced with the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, we have strived to provide strong leadership combined with a prudent financial strategy and sound decision making to move forward a vision of an "Even Better Beach Haven". For some of us, our terms will be ending or responsibilities changing at year end. We thank you for the trust you have given us.**

**THANK YOU**