

Town of South Bethany
Community Relations Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 14, 2023

In attendance: Edie Dondero, Chair; Lisi Biciocchi. Ingrid Moore attended by phone.

Absent: Robin Philipbar, Cathy Peck

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Dondero at 10:04am.

1. Approval of minutes of 5.8.2023 and 7.10.2023

Ms. Dondero informed the committee that the minutes of May 8, 2023 had not been approved at the last meeting. They were subsequently approved without changes, as were the minutes of the July 10th meeting.

2. Public comment

There were no members of the public in attendance.

3. Comments/Feedback on Movie on the Beach

The Committee discussed the Movie on the Beach held in late July. The event was well attended by more than 100 people and positive feedback was received. Though the start time was advertised as “about 8:00pm,” the actual start time was not until 8:20pm, when it finally became dark enough to see the screen. Because many families had arrived early to secure a good spot on the beach, the wait was long. For next year, the start time should be pushed back to 8:30pm.

The Committee agreed that the event was popular and liked by the community, so it should be offered on an annual basis. The idea of returning to two movies per season was discussed, but the cost of the event might prohibit that from occurring.

4. Discussion of Preparations for Autumn Bonfire on Beach

The Committee discussed the upcoming bonfire and the need to begin advertising the event ASAP. The event is scheduled for Friday evening so that Saturday can serve as a rain date, if needed. After discussion, it was decided to forego the use of the tiki torches on the lower beach as they were a hassle to set up and breakdown. Ms. Dondero will check to see if any of the solar powered holiday lights can be used to add additional lighting on the beach or the walkway.

5. Planning for December Events

Preparations for the holiday tree lighting were discussed. Mrs. Biciocchi has booked the musician for the event and Mrs. Moore will coordinate refreshments with Kristina's Kitchen. Ms. Dondero will double check that the start time of the event is listed as 5pm and confirm with members. She will also coordinate with Public Works staff on better lighting for the display tables via additional lighting or the timing of the lampposts, and on purchasing new or additional decorations for around Town Hall and on Coastal Highway.

A discussion was held about hosting another community food drive. Based on the hugely successful response last year, it was decided to repeat the activity. As the date grows closer, Ms. Dondero will reach out to the Cape Henlopen Food Basket to see if they can accept the donations and, if not, she will find another local food bank that has need. It was decided that donations would be accepted only on the day of the event, not on the days leading up to it. The committee will be better prepared to pack and transport the donations than last year, when the donation table was quickly overrun.

6. Adopt-a-Canal Program updates

Ms. Dondero reported that she began discussions with Town staff about the future of the Adopt program. Because it is getting harder to find willing adopters, and because many current adopters are not maintaining their canal ends very well, it may be time to consider other options for stewarding the canal ends going forward. Discussions have just begun and Ms. Dondero will report back to the committee any new information that arises.

7. Need for New Chairperson

Because Ms. Dondero has been named Chair of a newly formed Town committee, she will need to step down as Chair of the CRC. She will transition to the role of Council Liaison and will still participate on the committee, but a new chair will be needed. A discussion ensued and Ms. Dondero will seek answers to questions raised about Chair requirements and responsibilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55am.