

MAYOR'S REPORT

I want to thank the Property Owners of South Bethany for the opportunity to serve the Town as Mayor over the past 6 years. It has been quite a ride. I also want to thank the 6 different Town Councils and all of the individual Council members I worked with over the years. Each were a pleasure to work with and together we accomplished a lot of good things for this Town. We had our differences and knew how to leave the disagreement in the room. Also, I would be remiss to not thank the Town Hall staff, Public Works and the Police department for all of their support. Nothing would get done without them. The Town is blessed to have such a high-quality staff.

Over the 6 years I am proud to say I governed with the view the Town always came first, not my personal feelings. I can say that every area of Town received my attention. I addressed the issues as they arose and always worried that no one are felt left out and treated fairly.

I enjoyed every day of the 6 years of service, well at least 99% of the time. Even the difficult times were a learning experience. I always felt every day was a new civics lesson. In the Spring Breeze I outlined some of the projects we accomplished together so I will not repeat that lengthy laundry list. I do want to mention a few of the biggest challenges we faced and overcame. First, we had to re-build a Police Department. Thank you Chief Lovins for all the work you did to build a highly professional well-trained police department. Second, all of the challenges and changes required through the COVID pandemic. Thank you to Maureen for all the work you did to keep the office running smoothly and efficiently through those two years. Also, for assisting me with keeping an efficient Town Council so we could continue to make progress. Your effort was extraordinary. Third, all the work needed to improve our infrastructure for cable and internet service. The pandemic pointed out our serious need to upgrade and improve

service as many property owners worked from home here in South Bethany and the Town received many many complaints. Thank you to Sue Callaway and Maureen for working with me to bring Comcast to the Town and improving Media Com service.

Over the 6 years I am proud to have established effective professional relationships with important agencies and individuals required to support the needs of South Bethany. A short list is DNREC, Del Dot, Comcast, Media Com, Sharp, BBFD EMS, Sen. Hocker, Rep. Gray, Sen. Carpers office and the Army Corp Philadelphia office. In addition, I have worked with the ACT Mayors to share ideas and thoughts. My hope is the next Mayor can build on what has been accomplished to date with these relationships.

As a group we accomplished an enormous amount. We have made significant progress and commitment to improve our flooding issues here in Town. I firmly believe this will continue to move forward now that the wheels have been set in motion. The long-range plan we adopted will continue to move along all issues identified within it. I honestly wish I had more time to continue to push these efforts forward but the Town Charter says my time is up.

One message I would like to leave for the next Mayor and Town Council. It comes from my mentor, John Fields, "The wheels of government turn slowly for a reason, the hopes of getting it right". We have a prime example with this very group here today. Let's take the York Road Project.

1. We began the Resiliency study in October of 2021, a presentation was given on a preliminary report in May 2022 and the final report was delivered in March of 2023.
2. TC accepted the identification of York road as the first project for flood mitigation

3. In December 2022, the Town Manager at the request of the CWQ Chair, wrote and submitted for a grant to study the York Road area and develop a shovel ready plan
4. In September 2023 South Bethany was awarded the grant and began work to hire an engineering firm.
5. In February 2024 the contract for AECOM was awarded by Town Council. The report is not expected until December 2024/January 2025.
6. Evaluation and identification of a construction firm will begin and most likely will take 6 months. If any permits are required it could take longer.
7. Funding will need to be determined and most likely will need support with a grant.
8. The most optimistic shovel in the ground start is mid 2026.

So, it will have taken a minimum of 5 years. The wheels of government turn slow when dealing with multiple agencies and attorneys.

Lastly, you cannot be a successful Mayor without an excellent Town Manager. I want to thank Maureen for all the hard work you have done and the counsel and advice you provided me over the years. I may not have always taken your advice but hearing a different point of view was always helpful. We worked together and always had a strategy on how to deal with issues, vendors and outside agencies. It was an absolute pleasure to work with you for the past 6 years.

Remember I have always popped back up somewhere as I love this Town. Don't be surprised if I serve in some capacity again.

