

Minutes from South Bethany B&PSC meeting 8/20/2025

Meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

Attendees: Bob Shields, Beth Rosso, Mark O'Brien. Ed Kelchner, Kathy Wood, Rob Herb (zoom), Dennis Roberts (zoom), Chief Jason Lovins

Public Comment from (Gary Smerdzinski) Resident of 121 Petherton:

Evergreen hedges on corner of Petherton at Coastal Hwy obscure the view of southbound cars turning right on to Petherton and are also a visibility hazard to pedestrians and bikers approaching Coastal Hwy from Petherton.

Minutes from June 13, 2025 meeting approved.

Discussion of lessons learned from July 12 Bike Rodeo:

Bike safety gear and helmets were popular items. Bike rodeo was well-attended but numbers uncertain.

Request Town Council to thank Mariners Bethel ABC group officially for their participation.

Chief Lovins suggested moving/improving the bike obstacle course during the next rodeo so that the snack vendor can access supplies for the beach buggy snack vehicle.

Discussion of DE DMV Safety Regulations:

Public education regarding DE bike and vehicle regulations is critical. Topics should include bike behavior (walking) in crosswalks, bike lights at night, signaling and yielding to pedestrians, use of helmets, correct side of road to ride bike, etc.

Discussion of Education vs. Enforcement:

Begin with education using current communication venues and investigate other opportunities for safety communication. There is a decision point to be made between education and enforcement. Safety is a 3-point topic: environment-education-enforcement

Traffic is increasing everywhere, challenging the interaction between motor vehicles, pedestrians, bikers, and others.

Suggest including bike and pedestrian safety info, regulations, and laws in packets to renters, via real estate agencies and homeowners renting through VRBO and Air BnB.

Is another DelDOT engineering study warranted to study potential reduction of speed limit on Coastal Hwy?

Is a seasonal reduction in speed limit possible during peak season?

Per DelDOT, the primary purpose of Coastal Hwy is vehicular traffic. Pedestrian and bike movement are secondary considerations. This impacts the type and frequency of lighting at pedestrian crosswalks.

Dewey Beach uses a rope system down the median of Coastal Hwy to discourage pedestrians from crossing mid-street and encourage use of crosswalks. Is this a potential here in SB?

There are currently 3 speed limits in town: 35 mph on Coastal Hwy; 15 mph on Evergreen, Canal, and Tamarack to Black Gum; all other streets are 20 mph. There has been some discrepancy in communication about speed limits.

There are a few times each Summer when there is a mass exodus from the beach in a short time period, usually during approaching storms when lifeguards whistle everyone off the beach. Recommend that the lifeguards communicate with police dept when clearing the beach so that police can help manage significant numbers crossing Coastal Hwy at once.

Discussion of temporary seasonal officers. Bethany Beach has 11 full time officers and expands to 25 from May 15 – October 31. There are training and liability issues to consider with this strategy.

E-bikes and Safety

E-bikes are increasing in numbers and have issues both similar and different (speed) from other bikes.

Need to assess rules/regs and enforcement of e-bike issues.

We need to develop educational materials and policies for South Bethany

Impediments to Visibility at Intersections

Tree/Shrub trimming by town usually occurs during off-season. Notify town if concerns about code enforcement, setbacks, etc affecting visibility. Evergreen Rd was noted as an issue.

Crosswalk safety

Crosswalks are an ongoing safety concern at Coastal Hwy. There have been 5 accidents at Crosswalks this summer, 3 at Anchorage Dr crosswalk. Crosswalk issues were discussed throughout the meeting.

Crosswalk lines have been re-painted, but many stencils (guiding pedestrians and bikers) need to be refreshed also.

Chief Lovins Report

Town has acquired new speed data collection devices to help develop data to make informed decisions.

The town owns 4 speed signs that are solar powered to help driver awareness.

SB police have issued 752 tickets YTD in 2025. There are 6 officers including the Chief.

Speed enforcement and red-light cameras ARE legal in DE.

Next Meeting

Proposed for third or fourth week in September

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.