



South Bethany Breeze

Fall/Winter 2026

[A Message from Mayor Edie Dondero](#)

Fall officially arrived last week and brought with it an early nor'easter with high winds that battered our beaches for days on end and caused widespread bayside flooding. A full moon also brought higher tides and multiple cycles of tidal flooding on the west side of town. The high tide on the afternoon of Sunday, September 27th marked the second highest recorded water levels at the Jefferson Creek tidal gage, surpassing the king tide of October 2021. Only during Hurricane Sandy in 2012 were water levels higher. Almost all streets west of Coastal Highway experienced some level of flooding. At least half of our dunes were eroded, and all the sand ramps onto the beach were washed away. All walkways and dune crossovers will remain closed until repairs can be made. However, you can access the beach via the two walkways in Sandpiper Village or at the south end of Ocean Drive at our border with Fenwick Island State Park. Walking on the beach is permitted, but please stay off and away from the dunes for your safety and to prevent further erosion. At the time of this writing, DNREC and the Army Corps of Engineers are still assessing conditions in all the affected coastal communities, and we do not have a timeline for repairs or information on the likelihood of beach renourishment.

In better news, the annual, independent audit of the Town's financial statements for Fiscal Year 2026 was completed in September. The auditors issued an unmodified opinion—the highest level of opinion a Certified Pub-

lic Accountant can issue—and found no material weaknesses in financial reporting nor any issues of noncompliance with government accounting standards. At year end, revenues exceeded budgeted amounts by \$279,000 (mostly licenses and fee income, grants received, and interest on investments) and expenses were under budget by \$55,000. A copy of the audit can be viewed on the Budget & Finance Committee page of the Town's website.

The Planning Commission has begun working on the new Comprehensive Plan, assisted by consultants from the Rossi Group. More than 500 responses to the community survey were received, and both the Coffee with the Planners in July and open house event in August were well attended. From the community input received thus far, it is clear that we South Bethany residents value highly our beaches, natural resources, small-town character and our quiet, peaceful neighborhoods, and that most of us love South Bethany just as it is but recognize the threats posed by both rising sea levels and increased tidal flooding and overdevelopment in communities to our west. The Commission will spend the winter and spring preparing the new Comprehensive Plan for Town Council's review and subsequent submission to the State for approval.

The Council and I are aware of residents' frustration with the many inconveniences, particularly during the summer months, caused by contractors and their crews that are building or renovating homes. A fellow Council member and I are working closely with the staff and police department to

identify measures that can be taken to ensure compliance with permitted work hours, enhance jobsite cleanliness, reduce the number of parking spaces that are utilized by contractors, and otherwise minimize impacts to neighboring properties. Our recommendations will be presented at a future Council meeting for discussion. We are hopeful that we can address many of the concerns raised by residents without enacting further restrictions or an outright ban on construction activities during the summer months. The Council and I encourage you to stay connected with us throughout the fall and winter. Sign up for email alerts and the Mayor's Monthly newsletter on our website, attend any Town Council meeting by Zoom, and follow @SouthBethanyTownHall on Instagram.

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SOUTH BETHANY BEACH PATROL



Another successful summer season for the South Bethany Beach Patrol!

Congratulations to our **Lifeguard of the Year, James Baffone** (pictured right). James was chosen by his peers because of his dedication and hard work.

Updates on Resiliency

By Edie Dondero, Chair

In the earliest days of South Bethany, the properties bordering our canals all had natural shorelines. Sometime in the 1980s, the Town required all properties bordering canals to construct bulkheads to prevent shoreline erosion and silting. While the primary purpose of our bulkheads is to hold the shoreline in place, they do offer some protection from bay flooding. Therefore, raising the heights of bulkheads, where needed, is another means of increasing resilience.

Currently, the maximum height of bulkheads is set by the Town's FEMA-approved floodplain ordinance. Because South Bethany is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program, no changes can be made to this ordinance until we prove to FEMA that doing so would not have unintended or adverse effects on the floodplain.

The Town has hired coastal engineers

at the consulting group Verdantas to begin an analysis that can be presented to FEMA. They will model various scenarios based on current conditions and projected future water levels, to determine what height(s) our bulkheads can be safely raised without affecting the floodplain. Their final report is due to the town later this fall.

Completing this analysis is just a first step, however. The Town will have to file the necessary permits and formally request FEMA's approval to amend our floodplain ordinance. Pending FEMA approval, the proposed changes will be reviewed and discussed at multiple Council meetings to permit ample time for comments from residents. Overall, this will be a lengthy, multi-step process that will need to be completed before any property owner can be permitted to raise the height of an existing bulkhead.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE: BIRDS & BOOKS ABOUND!

By Chairwoman Cindy Van Horn



The CRC committee held several "Coffee With" events, sponsoring a variety of speakers, including local Realtors, MERR Institute, Center for the Inland Bays, our Chief of Police, and our Mayor. The CRC also sponsored America's 250th Anniversary Summer Festival which featured live steel drum music, food trucks and lots of activities for kids. The unveiling of our new children's play area also occurred

at this event. The "rocking croc" and tic tac toe board are big hits with the kids and are situated next to the adult fitness area by Town Hall. CRC also got the word out on Boating and Kayak Safety, urging our residents to get their certificates and review safety protocols.

Our first Coffee with the Birds was held Sept. 18. It was a huge success! Everyone enjoyed and learned a lot about birds from our local bird experts, Sandy and John Janowski. Just a few birds sighted were Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, a European Starling, and Common Yellowthroats, among others! Here are a few pictures! We hope to have a spring Coffee with the Birds on the beach. Hope you can join us!

Photos by Dennis Roberts



Our latest Little Free Library was donated by Peter Monaghan, who will keep it filled with mostly children's books. It is located at the canal end of Bayshore Drive.



From the Desk of the Code Enforcement Officer

As the fall and winter season approaches, here are some reminders about our Town Code:

Recycle carts – Many people are unaware of the proper storage and placement of their carts, so for simplicity here is the Town Code: 114-6A (5-7) [\(5\)](#) Trash containers and recycle carts not stored in a bin should be placed at curbside the day before pickup and removed after collection on pickup day. The property owner or occupant shall place recycling carts and all protective containers of solid waste at curbside, but not on the public right-of-way, in order that the recyclable materials and solid waste may be conveniently removed by the collector. [\(6\)](#) Except for pickup, the owner or occupant of any property shall not keep trash cans containers or recycle carts at curbside unless stored in a suitable bin. Bins for storage of waste containers larger than 55 gallons shall be open on one or two sides and should have no floor or a low floor to facilitate the removal of containers. [\(7\)](#) Waste containers that are not stored in bins shall be kept at or under the house.

Vegetation - It has been a great year for the plants and grasses but we need to be ever aware not to create a safety hazard for our town. Please take time to look over your property to see if your plants or trees might be unsafe or creating a traffic hazard for you or your neighbors. The code for these items is included here for convenience. 104-12 states the following:

Vision clearances. The owner of a corner property shall maintain adequate vision clearance at corners by not allowing plantings, shrubbery, bushes, or other vegetation or beautification mounds, including their vegetation, to exceed three feet in height above the grade of the street surface within 10 feet of the intersection of the right-of-way lines of

the two streets in accordance with the provisions of [§ 145-9](#) and [145-13](#).

Encroachments. No property owner shall allow any bush, shrub, tree, planting or other vegetation to encroach onto or into the streets, alleys, canals, or other Town rights-of-way in accordance with [§ 125-2](#) of this Code.

Underbrush; dead wood. All lots shall be kept free of dead trees and accumulations of invasive or noxious vegetation. All lots shall be kept free of unreasonable accumulations of underbrush, limbs, and branches as would constitute a fire or health hazard.

Some wintertime tips:

Keep gutters clean of tree debris to promote proper roof drainage. If gutters are clogged damage to the fascia boards, interior leaks in walls and the growth of mold and mildew can occur in a very short time.

When ice and snow cover concrete driveways and sidewalks avoid using salt based ice melting products. Salt is very damaging to concrete and toxic to plants. Instead try using a calcium or magnesium based ice melt product. These products melt ice and snow very quickly and are less hazardous to the environment.

Consider using a home energy checklist. For more information about how this can save you money visit this handy website : <https://www.energy.gov/cmei/femp/home-energy-checklist>

Now is a good time to check your smoke detectors. Smoke detectors like most things require maintenance and it is recommended to test them monthly. Did you know that having working smoke detectors properly installed increase your chances of surviving a fire by almost 50%?

Have all fuel burning equipment tested and serviced by a professional.

Make sure your dryer vents are clear of lint. Blocked vents can often lead to fires in the house.

Consider installing a CO detector. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, tasteless and toxic gas. CO can kill you before you are aware of it in your home. At lower levels CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure. CO originates from many sources such as but not limited to: leaking chimneys and furnaces, gas water heaters, wood stoves and fireplaces to name just a few.

Do you have an emergency supply kit? If not now is a good time to put one together. Don't know what to include? No problem, just go online to this link <http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>.

Do you have an emergency financial kit? Don't know what that is? Look at this valuable link to have your valuable financial information ready in case of a disaster. <http://www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness>.

Last but not least keep all important phone numbers in a place easily accessible in case of emergency.

Wishing you a safe and warm winter season! If you need to contact me the phone number is 302-539-3653 x102.



Every Drop Matters

Water is one of South Bethany's greatest treasures. Our canals, bays, and nearby beaches are part of what makes living here so enjoyable. Protecting those waterways starts with something many of us don't think about very often—stormwater.

When it rains, water runs off rooftops, driveways, streets, and lawns before entering the Town's storm drains. From there, it flows directly into our canals and surrounding waterways. Unlike the water that goes down a sink or toilet, stormwater is not cleaned or treated first. That means anything left on the ground can be carried along with it.

Leaves, grass clippings, pet waste, fertilizer, litter, and even small amounts of motor oil can all affect water quality once they reach our canals and bays. The good news is that preventing pollution doesn't require major changes. Small actions by many people can make a lasting difference.

Here are a few simple ways you can help:

- Keep leaves and grass clippings out of streets, storm drains, and drainage swales.
- Pick up after your pets.
- Use lawn fertilizers only as directed and avoid applying them before heavy rain.
- Sweep driveways and sidewalks instead of rinsing debris into the street. Never pour paint, oil, or household chemicals into a storm drain.

Our stormwater system is designed to carry rainwater away from roads and homes, helping reduce flooding during storms. When storm drains become clogged with debris, that system can't do its job as effectively, increasing the chance of standing water after heavy rainfall.

Did You Know?

Just one inch of rain falling on the roof of an average-sized home can cre-

ate hundreds of gallons of runoff.

Everything that enters a storm drain in South Bethany flows directly to our canals and nearby waterways—there is no treatment process along the way.

Keeping storm drains clear is something we can all help with. Every leaf picked up, every bit of litter removed, and every small effort to keep debris out of our drainage system helps protect the water that surrounds our com-

munity.

Together, we can continue to protect the places that make South Bethany special. Thank you for doing your part to care for our town and support your Public Works Department. See you around town!

— Your South Bethany Public Works Team

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Chris Keefe, B&F Chair

It's all good news regarding the financial health of the Town of South Bethany! A financial Audit was just completed at the end of this Summer which concluded that there was "no material weakness in internal controls over financial reporting" and that the Town remains financially stable. This was an unmodified or "clean" audit and is the highest level of opinion that CPAs can give. The Town is fiscally sound.

This Fall, the B&F Committee has begun working on updating and forecasting the Town's capital needs/ infrastructure plan and assisting the Town Council with funding solutions for specific infrastructure projects.

In the upcoming meetings we will prepare for the next budget, with emphasis not only on the main revenue sources, some of which are challenging to predict, but also on expenditures.

The public has access to the Treasurer's Report on a monthly basis on the Town's website and is welcome to attend our monthly meetings.

South Bethany Community Relations Committee (CRC) or SBPOA?

CRC	SBPOA
 An official committee of the Town of South Bethany; members appointed by Council.	 Private, membership organization of property owners that acts independently of Town.
 Hosts events funded by the Town budget (bonfires, holiday tree lighting)	 Operates the Neighborhood Watch Program.
 Holds monthly "Coffee & Conversation"	 Organizes the July 4th Boat Parade and the Summer Kickoff Party.
 Plans amenities for Town (fitness area, bicycle repair station, free libraries)	 Encourages community pride and efficient Town management.

Just the Facts

A FRIENDLY REMINDER IF YOU RENT

If you have rented your property, you must pay rental tax. The rental tax is 8% of your gross rental income and is due by October 31, 2026. The Town mailed out rental tax forms in early September to all the properties who paid their Application for Rental License Declaration.

REMINDER: CONTACT ARTESIAN FOR WATER EMERGENCIES

Our yearly reminder to property owners.....the Public Works Department is not permitted to enter on, or in, properties to turn off or repair broken water pipes. Property owners, or concerned neighbors who notice a broken pipe, must call Artesian at **302-453-6930**. Please be prepared to provide the street address of the property to Artesian's customer service.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 5, when the Community Relations Committee will host the fifth annual Holiday Tree Lighting at Town Hall at 5 p.m. Join us for live music, snacks, and good cheer. We will once again be accepting donations at the event to benefit a local food pantry. More details about acceptable donations and start time will be shared as the date draws closer.

CONSTRUCTION HOURS FOR FALL/WINTER 2026/27

From September 16 to May 14:

- Construction work – Monday-Saturday from 8am – 5pm ONLY
- Construction work is NOT allowed on Sundays or Holidays (Mon. Oct. 12, Columbus Day; Wed. Nov. 11, Veterans Day; Thurs. Nov. 26, Thanksgiving; Fri. Dec. 25, Christmas; Fri. Jan. 1, New Year's Day; Mon. Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day; and Mon. Feb. 15, Presidents Day).

PLASTIC BAGS AND RECYCLING

Note that putting your recyclables in plastic bags actually backfires — it's one of the most common recycling mistakes people make with good intentions.

What happens at the sorting facility: Most recycling facilities use automated sorting — conveyor belts, spinning screens, and optical scanners designed to sort loose materials by type (paper, cardboard, bottles, etc.). When recyclables arrive inside a plastic bag:

- **Workers or machines usually can't tell what's inside.** Since the facility can't see or safely sort what's bagged, and doesn't know if anything hazardous is inside, the entire bag typically gets pulled off the line and sent straight to the landfill — bag, recyclables, and all. Your actual recyclables never even get sorted.
- **The bag itself becomes a "tangler."** Thin plastic film wraps around the rotating gears, shafts, and screens of the sorting

equipment. It doesn't cut or tear cleanly — it wraps and jams, sometimes bringing the whole line to a stop. **This causes real operational damage.** Facilities have to shut down, and workers must physically climb into the machinery to cut the tangled plastic free — sometimes multiple times a day. That's lost time, added labor cost, and a real safety hazard for the workers doing it. **The bottom line:** the right move is to **empty your recyclables loose into the bin**, not bagged. If you used a bag just to carry them out to the curb, dump the contents out and either reuse the bag or put it in the trash.



Congratulations to former Councilmen Randall Bartholomew and Robert Biciocchi, who were respectively presented with Resolution 5



-26 and Resolution 6 -26, recognizing their service to the Town.



Welcome Sarah Long to Town Council! Sarah was appointed in May.

Congrats to the returning and new appointees to the following Town committees:

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety: Bob Shields (Chair), Rick Braid, Rob Herb, Ed Kelchner, Mark O'Brien, Dennis Roberts, and Kathy Wood.

Budget & Finance: Chris Keefe (Chair), Don Boteler, Linda Bowers, Joe Mormando, and Tim Saxton.

Charter & Code: Mark Giler (Chair), Tom Barletta, Carl Bittenbender, Eric Compton, Scott Gentilucci, Ronald Jaicks, and Maria Vershel.

Community Relations: Cindy Van Horn (Chair), Carolyn Bell, Maureen Flaherty, Barbara Gill, Laura Larson, Linda Murray and Peggy Pasquarella.

Resiliency: Edie Dondero (Chair), Larry Budd, Arthur Burritt, Colin Chasler, Catherine Hughes, Gerry Injaian, Joan Marini, and Michael Powell.

A Little Maintenance Goes a Long Way

One of the things that makes South Bethany so special is the care residents put into their homes and neighborhoods. That same care can also help keep our streets safer, improve drainage, and make it easier for everyone to enjoy our community.

The area along the edge of the road—known as the public right-of-way—serves many purposes. It provides room for people to walk and ride bicycles, allows emergency vehicles to travel safely, and gives Public Works access to maintain roads, storm drains, and other Town infrastructure. During heavy rain, it also helps move water away from streets and homes.

As the growing season continues, shrubs, trees, ornamental grasses, and vines can gradually spread into these areas. While it may not seem like much, overgrown landscaping can block sight lines at intersections, make it harder for pedestrians to get by, slow

the flow of stormwater, and create challenges for maintenance crews.

Fortunately, a little routine upkeep makes a big difference. You can help by:

- Trimming trees and shrubs that extend into the roadway or public right-of-way.
- Keeping storm drains and drainage swales free of leaves, grass clippings, and other yard debris.
- Avoiding the storage of boats, trailers, construction materials, or other items within the public right-of-way.

Taking an occasional walk along the edge of your property to make sure the area remains clear and safe.

South Bethany Town Code, Chapter 125, reminds us:

"No person shall obstruct any of the streets, street rights-of-way, beach access rights-of-way or waterways of the Town by placing thereon any barrier or impediment to the free flow of pedestrian, vehicular or boat traffic."

The Code also applies to vegetation, including trees, shrubs, vines, ornamental grasses, and other landscaping that extends into the public right-of-way.

Did You Know?

The Town's right-of-way often extends beyond the edge of the pavement and may not match your property line. Even though homeowners help maintain these areas, they are still part of the Town's public space and play an important role in keeping South Bethany safe and functioning properly.

A few minutes of maintenance throughout the year helps improve visibility, supports proper drainage, and keeps our streets welcoming for residents and visitors alike.

Together, we can continue to protect the places that make South Bethany special. Thank you for doing your part to care for our town and support your Public Works Department. See you around town!

— Your South Bethany Public Works Team

SAFETY CORNER

by Councilman Bob Shields

As we head into Autumn, we can be thankful for a very safe Summer season in South Bethany. The rest of the state has not been so fortunate. Delaware ranks 9th nationwide in pedestrian fatalities and 4th in bicycle fatalities. Three of our surrounding communities had bike fatalities over the Summer. At least one other death was prevented by the proper use of a bike helmet. E-Bikes can be very dangerous when not used properly. Two pedestrians were also killed in Sussex County this Summer. We must be ever vigilant to avoid similar tragedies in South Bethany.

With shorter days ahead, we need to ensure we all wear light colored clothing and reflectors when cycling or walking at dusk and into the evening. Bike lights are critical to maintain adequate visibility, and we all need to be careful

of pedestrians and cyclists while driving.

Some highlights of our safety program:

- South Bethany Police conducted a Bike Rodeo in July supported by DELDOT and Mariners Bethel Assisting Bicycle Commuters (ABC). ~200 residents and guests attended. We had a bike safety training course and provided safety literature and bike helmets, bike lights and reflective vests. ABC conducted safety checks and performed minor repairs.
- Enforcement has been stepped up to ensure better compliance at stop signs and crosswalks. We are installing new digital speed indicators in Cat Hill and on Anchorage Dr to remind motorists to maintain the speed limit.
- Chief Lovins conducted an electronic survey of traffic through Cat Hill on Labor Day weekend using a portable system that does not record identifying

data -- just direction and speed: 1,451 vehicles traveled on Black Gum Dr. with an average speed of 16 MPH -- highest recorded speed was 25 MPH. This capability will be moved around Town to better determine areas of concern.

- DELDOT approved our application for the **Grab A Flag Pilot Project**. We will have the project installed at two Rt. One crosswalks (Anchorage and Bay Shore) for the month of October 2026. It consists of a canister of orange flags on both sides of the road. Pedestrians will use the orange flags to signify their intention to cross the road. They will then deposit the flag in the container on the opposite side of the road. We hope to expand the project over the winter to include all 10 crosswalks that are not protected by traffic lights. We will be looking for volunteers to donate an hour per week to help maintain the project. Other localities have had great success with this program. More to follow.

Thanks and stay safe through the Fall!



TOWN HALL INFORMATION PAGE

402 Evergreen Road | South Bethany, DE 19930
Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, closed weekends & holidays
Visit the Town Website: <https://southbethany.delaware.gov/>
Get Connected! Visit our website to sign up for email notifications
Find us on Instagram @southbethanytownhall



TOWN HALL 302-539-3653

STAFF

	<u>NAME</u>
Town Manager	Maureen Hartman
Finance Director/HR	Renee McDorman
Code Enforcement Officer	Joe Hinks
Town Clerk	Matt Amerling
Admin. Assistant	Brittany Hollis
Public Works Lead	Nick Donatoni
Public Works	Greg DeMarco
	William Peckholdt
	Robert Conway
Beach Patrol Captain	Ryan Dacey

POLICE DEPARTMENT 302-539-3996 (non-emergency)

Chief of Police	Jason Lovins
Lieutenant	Shaun Baldasano
Corporal	Tyler Bare
Police Officer/PIO	Matt Boyd
Police Officer	Chase Morris
Police Officer	Alex Pszczola
PD Admin Assistant	Coleen Meyer
Parking Enforcement	Dee Ramsay

TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor	Edith Dondero
Mayor Pro Tem	Christine Keefe
Treasurer	Cindy Van Horn
Secretary	Robert Shields
Councilmember	Steve Gallagher
Councilmember	Mark Giler
Councilmember	Sarah Long

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS 2026/2027

Meeting dates/times are subject to change; meetings can be attended in person or accessed via the virtual link provided on all agendas.

Town Council meetings are normally held the 2nd Fri at 9:00 am.

Town Workshops, if necessary, are normally held the 4th Fri at 9:00 am. (unless otherwise noted)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>MEETING</u>
Oct 9	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Oct 23	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
Nov 11	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Veterans Day)	
Nov 13	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Nov 26-27	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Thanksgiving)	
Dec 11	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Dec 24-25	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Christmas)	
January	TBD	TBD
Jan 1	TOWN HALL CLOSED (New Year's Day)	
Jan 18	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Martin Luther King)	
Feb 12	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
Feb 15	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Presidents Day)	
Feb 26	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
March 12	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
March 25 (Thursday)	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
March 26	TOWN HALL CLOSED (Good Friday)	
April 9	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
April 23	9:00 AM	Town Council Workshop
May 7	9:00 AM	Town Council Regular Meeting
May 8 (Saturday)	9 AM to 3 PM	Town Election
May 17 (Monday)	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting

New to the Neighborhood? Stop by Town Hall to pick up a "Welcome Bag," which provides information about the Town.

Questions? Call Town Hall at (302) 539-3653, extension 101.

NOTE: The **South Bethany Property Owner's Association (SBPOA)** is not affiliated with the Town. All questions/comments for SBPOA should be directed to the SBPOA President. For more information, visit southbethany-poa.com.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

State Police Non-Emergency	302-855-2980
DNREC (Boating complaints outside of Town limits)	800-523-3336
U.S. Coast Guard	800-424-8802
Casella Waste Systems (Trash, Recycling, Yard Waste)	302-934-1364
DE Solid Waste Authority (Landfill)	800-404-7080
Artesian (Water and broken pipes)	302-453-6930 *
Sharp Energy (Emergency)	302-856-6648
(Complaint)	302-539-7898

***Reminder: Property owners or concerned neighbors must call Artesian, not Town Hall, regarding broken water pipes.**