

TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE

December 8, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager *CSH*

SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of December 14, 2021

It is my pleasure to provide you with information related to the activities of the Town and my engagements during the past month:

OLD TOWN HOLIDAY MARKET, TREE LIGHTING AND TRAIL OF LIGHTS

The towns holiday event was met with seasonal weather and a great crowd throughout the day! This was the 2nd year that we offered the event having taken off for all but lighting up the tree and offering the trail of lights in 2020 in association with Covid-19 restrictions. We were very pleased with the attendance and our community responded well to the offerings.

The trail of lights and the other holiday decorations at John West Park will remain in place through January 2022.

In addition, this year the Town partnered with the Ocean View Historical Society's Coastal Towns Museum to hold its Hall's Store Ribbon Cutting during our event. The ribbon cutting too was well attended and added a special highlight to our park activities and hopefully made more people aware of the museum.





Up Next! Event Dates to Add to your Schedule

Fire & Ice (Jan 28-30, 2022)

Coastal Towns Chicken Festival (May 21, 2022)

Planning for both events is underway

2022 Town Event dates:

Summer Movie Wednesdays – 7:30 p.m.

June 8, 15 and 22nd - Movies TBD

Fall Concert Series – Friday Nights – 6 p.m.

September 9, 16, and 23rd – Bands TBD

Cops and Goblins – Saturday Oct 29th

1 to 4pm

Old Town Holiday Market, Tree Lighting and Trail of Lights

Saturday, November 26th

Time TBD as we consider our experience from 2019 and 2021

Municipal Street Aid (MSA) for Local Governments

Earlier this year when reviewing the data related to the towns MSA funding from the State of Delaware we noticed that the information submitted increasing the Town's miles of roadway had not been included. This required staff to provide proof of our data of its being submitted properly and on time which has now resulted in our receipt of an additional \$13,579.78 of funding for our

street improvement projects. This is in addition to the balance of the funding we will receive over the course of the States fiscal year totaling \$113,928.

Comcast

I can share that this week I have been contacted by Comcast regarding its interest to begin discussions related to a Franchise agreement with the Town of Ocean View. This is very preliminary however I am in the process of providing information related to our Town Boundaries and other pertinent information that is regular and customary to share.

Meeting with County Council Representative Hudson

This week the Mayor, Chief McLaughlin, Planning Director Cimino and I met with Representative Hudson regarding the Sussex County Councils interest in providing funding to all the Towns in Sussex County from its excess Realty Transfer Tax. Final details expected to be available in January. Ocean View may have the opportunity to fund certain projects or initiatives with the funding estimated to be approximately \$288,000 to Ocean View. There may be some level of match required.

Holiday Wreaths in Place on Atlantic and Central



American Rescue Plan Act Funding – Barnes and Thornburg Engagement

Following our workshops last month and Council support of submission of various uses for the Towns ARPA funds I turned the details over to the legal firm of Barnes and Thornburg. On

December 1st I received my first response and have a follow-up conference call scheduled for additional clarification on some items.

In advance to this call, I can advise that we will be required to identify new opportunities for use of some of the funds. This is due to Barnes and Thornburg opining that several of our projects don't currently align with the regulations. Although, I have been advised that it is possible they may in the future as the use of funds regulations continue to evolve. I expect to be able to report to you in January or February regarding our path forward.

John West Park – Bocce Court Update

I am happy to report that the Sussex Conservation District has provided its approval for our planned bocce court addition at John West Park. Natelli Communities handled all the negotiations on our behalf. We expect construction to begin by Spring of 2022.

Customer Service/Problem Solving

During the past month, like many others I was actively involved in problem solving and community engagement related to a wide range of issues impacting neighborhoods including that of property maintenance, rental property owner violations, delinquent water accounts, speeding concerns, internet connectivity issues, etc.

Accomplishments - Focused on the Needs of the Community!

As 2021 comes to an end this month it seemed appropriate to share detail related to some of our accomplishments as an organization-

Commitment to Community is something that we have been focusing on in recent years, and this past year includes the completion of our 10 year Comprehensive Plan update which has since received a 2020 American Planning Association Small Town Award. The award is presented to an outstanding Comprehensive Plan that addressed the development of a neighborhood, community, county, or region. Ocean View's success in receiving the award was its high level of community engagement opportunities provided to get feedback and input as well as the Town's commitment to the Plan, having already begun work on its recommendations.

This accomplishment was followed in November by the announcement that the State of Delaware's local chapter of the National Planning Association awarded Ocean View's 2020 Comprehensive Plan update its 2021 Outstanding Planning Project.

Ocean View also earned an Unmodified Opinion for its year end 4/30/2021 Internal Audit performed by an independent audit firm. An unmodified opinion is the highest level a Town can achieve. In addition, the Ocean View Police Department was honored to receive 2020 Gold Level Recognition for Excellence in Policy Development and Training while Chief Kenneth McLaughlin

was recently voted the Best Public Safety Official in Sussex County by the readers of Coastal Style Magazine!

Additional engagement achievements relate to Ocean View's focus on improving and expanding its communication options. Between 2020 and 2021 the Town upgraded its website to provide a more attractive and user friendly option, it changed its domain from .com to .gov to provide improved awareness and security for the site, and Ocean View launched a government access channel for residents named OVTV to provide ease of awareness of Town initiatives and information.

All of this was accomplished amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while remaining fully responsive to our citizens. Like many other Towns, Ocean View has had to determine how best to conduct meetings, and other programs while keeping an eye on infection levels here in Sussex County, managing varied levels of concern and fear, taking necessary precautions, and looking forward to when we can resume meetings in person as well as virtually.

Also of note is the Town's record of being named the safest place to live in Delaware, highlighting the Town's commitment to public safety and remaining a favorable place to do business, vacation and live!

The Town has also been effective in partnership building over the past year including its recent effort to develop a home bocce court for Special Olympics Delaware's Sussex County team. This partnership is now in final design and being funded by Natelli Communities, LP. The project and the Natelli company interest in supporting it stem from the long term engagement and support provided to Special Olympics Delaware by the Ocean View Police Department.

I would be remiss not to mention the long term partnership the Town of Ocean View has maintained with the Ocean View Historic Society and now the Coastal Town's Museum, making available to the public many of the historic structures adjacent our park including the recently opened replica of Hall's store. Likewise, 2021 partnerships with DelDOT and the Salt Air Gardeners Club will translate in 2022 into a memorial site along Atlantic Avenue for placement of a Blue Star Memorial.

Our Town has also exhibited a strong commitment to infrastructure improvements such as the annual street and stormwater improvement programs, increased sidewalk connectivity, bike lane additions and improvements, and spearheading the installation of lights along extremely dark sections of Muddy Neck Road and Ogre Drive in direct relationship to safety concerns expressed by residents and confirmed by the Town.

Lastly, as we wrapped up all our community events for the year, we can share that in 2021 Ocean View's events were all very well-attended, and certainly, from the feedback received had a positive impact on the quality of life in our Town!

I commend our Town employees for their commitment to service excellence!

Public Works Division Report

1. Daily playground safety checks and playground inspection
2. Checking and emptying dog waste stations 2 times a week
3. Completion of water blow offs around town as required
4. Assisting with the Holiday lights installation with Apple Electric on Central and Atlantic Avenues
5. Replacing speed limit signs in Country Village & replacing signposts with breakaway posts to meet standards
6. Preparation of holiday equipment and materials for the Old Town Holiday event as well as set up and break down afterwards & supervision of help for the day
7. Started work on 2022/2023 Public Works operating budget
8. Began the replacement of speed limit signs in Hunters Run
9. Trimmed West and in John West Park.
10. Completing rounds weekly checking for trash, damaged street signs, and catch basins throughout town
11. Oversight of Collins's landscaping for grass cutting, and leaf clean up at John West Park and 32 West
12. Attended the DFOT Safety training meeting in November.
13. Loaded and transported the holiday lights for the Trail of Lights at the north end of park
14. Placed 2 new Bear Trap Dunes signs on Central Avenue to replace faded signs
15. Cleaning up of shop and office area