

BARNEGAT LIGHT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION
 Trustees Meeting Minutes
 November 16, 2019

<u>Attending:</u>		<u>Excused:</u>	
Barbara Truncellito	Philip Kahn (by phone)		
Rich Brodman	Virginia Fitzsimons	Patty Francfort	
Bill Chnelich	Kay McDonnell		
Tom Zesk	Betsy Aras		
Mary Ann Crutchlow	Jack Byrnes (by phone)		

I. President's Opening Comments

Barbara Truncellito called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. The Trustees approved the minutes from the October 12, 2019 Trustee Meeting.

II. Reports

o Membership Report – Rich Brodman

Rich noted that we have 561 members for 2019, including 58 new members. This is an increase of 12 members over 2018. We also have 930 emails in our distribution network (including 234 nonmembers), and have been communicating with our members each month via a digital newsletter. It was noted that we have 95 former members who did not renew. Trustees, after the first general meeting, will attempt to call former members who have not renewed to determine the reason and see if they wish to join for 2020.

Trustees have heard from members that some people do not renew because it is not easy to sign up and pay. The Board agreed to add a Paypal option to pay membership dues, and a Paypal link will be added to the website so that potential members can complete the membership form and pay online.

o Treasurer's Report – Bill Chnelich

Bill updated the Board on activity since the September 30 quarterly financials, and presented interim financial statements through November 15. The fund balance is currently at \$13,886. After reflecting expected expenses for website maintenance, donations, and the Holiday Card, the year end fund balance is anticipated to be \$11,100.

As additional items, Bill noted that he had filed the NJ Annual Report Certificate for BLTA, a filing required by charitable organizations in New Jersey. The Board also approved \$400 for our annual donation to the Barnegat Light First Aid.

- BLTA Website and Social Media – Betsy Aras

Betsy Aras is the new lead for the website and social media. Betsy updated the group on website usage. Our Google Analytics report showed that we had over 1,200 user hits in October, with an average session time in excess of 1 minute. This was double the number of users as last October (which had 600 users). Most users access the website using a mobile device. Betsy also described the new system for tagging articles so that our members can search for articles by topic in the News and Events Archives on the site.

The Facebook Group now has 213 members, most of whom are active and read our posts. 187 members were active on the page in the last 10 days. Betsy will typically post 2-3 times a week.

- JCTA Meeting and School Referendum– Barbara Truncellito and Virginia Fitzsimons

Barbara attended the JCTA (Joint Committee of Taxpayer Associations) and updated the Trustees on discussions related to the LBI School Board Referendum scheduled for December 10. The JCTA completed its comparison spreadsheet to provide independent information on the LBI Grade School and the Ethel Jacobsen school properties. This document was shared with the respective memberships and was sent to the Sandpaper. It provided information, and did not advocate a position on the referendum. The Sandpaper printed an article but only posted the comparison through a link on their website and in the article. Although unbiased, the information was not complete in that it was not able to be updated for the costs of renovating the EJ School, which were based on data from 2015. It also did not include any information from an independent engineer.

Barbara also noted that the LBI School Board will have a restructuring meeting in January to determine the new officers and makeup of the Board. Marilyn Wasilewski was re-elected as the Barnegat Light representative. However, Bonnie Picaro, who was a strong advocate for the LBI School, was voted out as the LBT representative in favor of Brielle Hoffacker. James Donahower vacated his seat in Harvey Cedars and was replaced by a write-in candidate.

The Board also discussed whether there could be a misunderstanding of the impact of a Yes and No vote in the upcoming Referendum. Specifically, whether voters understood that the Referendum is binding, and that a Yes vote allocates the bond issuance funds entirely to the LBI School, and cannot be reversed by a new LBI School Board which will be seated in January. In order to promote a better understanding of the impacts, The Trustees decided to prepare a letter for our members and our email distribution, and send it to the Sandpaper. The letter would clearly present the impact of a Yes vote and a No vote. The letter would state that a Yes vote is binding and funds must be used for the LBI School, while a No vote leaves the issue open and allows the new School Board to re-evaluate and do an independent structural analysis of both schools. Note that this letter was prepared after the meeting and was sent out during the week of November 18.

Barbara also noted that the current LBI School Board will have another meeting on Tuesday, November 19, and she encouraged any Trustees who are in town to attend.

o Holiday Card – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara led a discussion of our Holiday Card. The Board approved a photo taken by VP Dr. Rich Brodman, and agreed to mail the Card in hard copy to all of our 561 members, and to send it by Constant Contact email to our 930 person email distribution. The distribution and mailing was targeted for mid-December.

o Annual Newsletter – Mary Ann Crutchlow

Mary Ann briefly discussed the timing of the newsletter, the format and potential articles. The Board agreed to include the President's letter, brief reports on membership, Treasury, Website and social media, Beaches, and the About Town segment from Dottie Reynolds. The Board also discussed having a human interest or town interest story as we have in prior years. Kay and Mary Ann were going to pursue doing a story on the Lens in the Barnegat Light Historical Museum. Other articles of interest would also be welcome. The Newsletter is targeted for mid to late February.

III. New Business – Items for Discussion

o Speakers for 2020 Summer General Meetings – Rich Brodman and Jack Byrnes

The Board discussed some potential topics for next summer's general meetings. It was expected that Mayor Larson would speak at each meeting, and the Board decided to keep the current format with only one or two speakers in addition to the Mayor. It was expected that Freeholder Ginny Haines would return for the June meeting. The July meeting would feature a local LBI issue, such as Flooding in LBI (Sean MacCotter as a potential speaker). The September meeting is typically reserved for Barnegat Light organizations, and the Board discussed having the First Aid Squad and the Fire Department make presentations, along with the Megan Keller of the LBT Police Dept .

The Trustees also wanted to feature a panel discussion on wind farms, and decided to pursue this topic as an evening informational panel discussion, with representatives from the fishing industry and Government (Congressman Van Drew if possible). The concept of an evening informational panel would introduce a new type of program for BLTA which could be a precedent for future presentations.

o Borough Council – Beaches Committee – Rich Brodman

Rich updated the Board on the topics discussed at the recent meeting of the Borough Council Beaches Committee:

- The skateboard park flooring to be renovated;
- Blue mats to be available at local beaches;
- Five new badge checkers would be hired, and salaries would be increased (from \$8.50 to \$12.50) to attract checkers;
- There would be 3 pickleball courts; and

- The full-court basketball court will be reduced to a half-court to make room for the 3rd pickleball court.
- Other Items – Barbara Truncellito

Barbara noted that we had a request from a member to provide our mailing address distribution list. The Trustees unanimously agreed NOT to provide our list to any member or organization. The distribution is strictly for our use in sending information to members and property owners.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 PM. The next meeting is the Trustee Meeting on December 14 at 10:00 AM, hosted by Virginia.

Recorded and submitted by:

Tom Zesk
Recording Secretary
December 7, 2019