

Town of Highland Beach

MARYLAND



Summer 2012 Newsletter

Welcome to spring/summer at The Beach. You may have noticed that our beach chairs have been out for a while now this season, and are already being used by residents and their guests. We are looking forward to the labor day weekend as the unofficial start of summer, kicked off as well by the annual budget and town meeting, and the first Citizen's Association meeting.

There is a lot happening to ensure continued enjoyment of our community, including work at the Douglass Museum and Cultural Center; sale of property that the town owns in Venice Beach; an ongoing process to condemn and purchase the vacant lot at 1313 Douglass Ave. to benefit the community; completion of a survey of our roads; a shoreline erosion/road stabilization project; and renovation planning for the town hall.

While town officials have been busy on these initiatives and others, you may have noticed new and renovated homes being worked on in our community, including new construction on Douglass Ave.; essentially new construction on Bay Ave. with extensive renovation of a long vacant home; another major renovation on Bay Ave; and new construction about to commence on Bay Ave., and on Lake Ave. Wow! That is a huge amount of housing activity in our small community and, given the fragile state of the economy--and the housing industry in particular--this is a vote of confidence for the value of living in Highland Beach.

We look forward to sharing the summer with you and taking advantage of the environment we are blessed with to enjoy. Welcome back family, friends, and visitors.

Beach Road Stabilization Project

The beach-front restoration project noted in last summer's newsletter has been a partial success, but more work is necessary to halt shoreline erosion that threatens Wayman Ave. near the pier. Consequently, the Board of Commissioners has hired a contractor to install boulders around the



pier to lessen the erosion caused by wave action from the bay. Installation is expected to start soon.

2012-13 Fiscal Year Budget

The Board considered a draft budget for fiscal year 2012-13 that would see a drop in revenues due to a decrease in the property tax base. The Board continues to be fiscally prudent, and, noting the town maintains a funds reserve, the Board elected to maintain the current county community benefit tax of 0.416 per \$100 assessment. Together with additional, smaller revenue streams, the estimate of income available for operations is \$125,619. Treasurer Linda Aikens will present details at the

annual budget meeting. The proposed budget is also downloadable on the web site.

Roads Survey



An extensive survey of roads in the community was completed recently. According to the survey, there are places in the community where the road encroaches upon residential properties, as well as areas where private residential structures are located (partially) in the roads right-of-way. The Board anticipates taking no actions at this time. All property owners have been notified.

Sale of Property in Venice Beach

The Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance to sale two parcels that the town now owns in Venice Beach, in response to an offer to purchase from a resident of Venice Beach. In accordance with our Charter, a petition to put the sale up

for a vote was submitted, and that vote is being planned. More details of the sale of lot 7 and Parcel 1 will be provided to citizens with the notification of the date for voting.

Condemnation of 1313 Douglass Ave

For the first time in the history of the town, the Board voted to condemn this property in order to use the

lot for a public purpose to benefit all of the residents of the community.

The property is to be used as a RainScaping Park and overflow parking lot for the town, especially for meetings at our town hall. The RainScaping Park will add additional beauty to the community, while serving an additional functional use to alleviate parking congestion.



Douglass Museum and Cultural Center: Energy Efficiency Project



The energy efficiency project completed last summer has resulted in significant savings each month on our electric bill for the facility. You probably have not noticed the new storm windows, if you have seen the museum recently--that is by design: the use of non-prominent storm windows to reflect the historic character of the

building. Other major improvements include spray foam insulation beneath the structure and in the ceiling; a recent replacement of the refrigerator with a highly energy efficient model, and replacement of all incandescent lamps with energy efficient LEDs.

Town Hall Sixth Year Energy Report

We are pleased to note that the energy performance of the town hall--attributed to the design of the structure, high insulation, photovoltaics generating electricity and other factors--has exceeded design specifications. The building was designed to reflect a 78.3 percent reduction of 13,000 kwh/year to 2,821 kwh/year design use. Actual use over the six years has been 13,686 kwh, which gives the ***actual annual use at 2,281 kwh/yr, 82.5 percent less energy than a similarly sized facility.***

Second Floor Town Hall Build-Out Update

As noted in our last newsletter, we have a very large unfinished second floor in our Town Hall. The area could be built-out for use by residents, for example, to accommodate additional community activities, and could be used during summer months for activities such as yoga classes for adults, or activities for our youth.

We now have a more informed estimate of costs for major components of a renovation, including installation of a residential style elevator to accommodate wheel chairs, and a high efficiency “mini-



split” HVAC system. A stair case would be installed in the existing file room. Spray foam insulation, electrical wiring, drywall, and bamboo flooring would complete the project. The Board has received positive comments thus far, and continues the planning phase of the second floor upgrade.

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**CONTACT
INFORMATION**

Town of Highland Beach

3243 Walnut Drive

Highland Beach, MD 21403

Quotable Quote

"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as impossible tasks."

—Chuck Swindall

Phone: 410 268-2956

e-mail: hbmayorbill@comcast.net

Web Site: <http://www.highlandbeachmd.org>



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3243 Walnut Drive

Highland Beach, MD 21403