

TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW
DELAWARE

January 4, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of January 12, 2021

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

201 Central Ave Exterior Improvement Project:

Since my last report in October the exterior improvement project has been completed. Awnings have been added over the four side doors. They look attractive while serving the purpose of keeping water from seeping in and wetting the carpet. The overall project went very smoothly.

New landscaping around the new sign at 201 Central has also been completed. A low stone boarder wall will be placed around the planting area soon.

The Vestibule addition will likely be brought to Council at it's February 2021 meeting.

John West Park/32 West – Town Hall:

Spraying of the play equipment and extra cleaning of the restrooms has been halted and will be reconsidered before next spring in relationship to the need and COVID restrictions.

We have installed new reminder signs at the park walking trail regarding picking up after pets. Feedback so far has been good – we will advise as to improvement to the concern after a few months.

We are researching the cost and options for replacement of the fan in the gazebo at John West Park due to blade breakage.

Miscellaneous maintenance efforts have taken place at Town Hall including the installation of gutter guards. Various other improvements are planned to include additional plantings and downspout extension replacements.

The South Coastal Village Volunteers have settled into its rented space in Town Hall. The space seems to be working well for them so far and our engagement/communication with its leadership has been positive. Rental payments begin this month.

2020 Holiday Offerings

As you are aware, we cancelled our formal tree lighting ceremony due to COVID restrictions and offered some self-distanced/guided and masked outdoor options at John West Park.

The new tree received great feedback! We had some timers and GFI tripping issues (due to the seasons wetness) and a few instances where it appeared someone (maybe a child had been under the tree) unplugged some cords. We have some plans to address these issues for next year.

The Santa photo and other Holiday photo areas got a lot of use and we were able to share photo's over social media. Again – feedback was good.

The Holiday Light trail was well used as well and again – good feedback. We had wetness issues with its power as well and again – will address.

Overall, I was pleased with the outcome and feel good about Ocean View providing families this option during the 2020 Holiday season.

2021 Community Events - Consideration:

Preliminary thoughts regarding our 2021 Community Events Schedule are to move our former Spring Concerts once again to the Fall of 2021 to allow for more time to see how the COVID-19 restrictions play out. All other events would be planned in the manner which they were held during 2019 with the addition of the lit trail, pending budget discussions for FY22.

Covid-19 and Office Operations Update:

As of writing our offices remain closed to the public except for planned appointments and handling walk up business with mask and distancing outside or in the first-floor lobby area. This way of operating has, to my knowledge, not presented a hardship to anyone as we have remained responsive. It is my understanding this remains the practice of other local governments in our area however I will put out an inquiry for updates and we will continue to seek guidance from the State.

As you are aware several of our staff did contract Covid-19 between the end of November and mid-December. I am happy to say all are recovered, back to work and no one required hospitalization. Staff continued to work from home when not feeling too poorly and we have observed the Center for Disease control guidelines for return to work – 14 days after start of symptoms and/or positive test with at least 24 hours free of fever or other symptoms.

I am happy to share that members of our Police Department began getting their first vaccines the week of December 28, 2020.

I would like to express my thankfulness to all our employees for their continued efforts to keep our work current and moving forward as able during a very different and difficult year. I feel we have navigated the restrictions and new rules for engagement well while remaining responsive and helpful to our residents. Additionally, our employees have demonstrated great cooperation in taking over duties/being flexible while others were quarantining and when all were working from home at the start of the pandemic.

2nd Floor Flooring Installation:

The installation of new carpet and planking on our 2nd floor was completed Thanksgiving week. Staff spent a good deal of time cleaning out files and desks to allow for the necessary furniture moving. The outcome of the floor covering replacement is very nice and our office areas are neater following the file cleaning that was required.

I am currently considering the flooring replacement options for 32 West – Town Hall. This was budgeted for and I am awaiting updated estimates. If we move forward, I will place the item on a future meeting agenda.

Pilot Street Scape Project/Excess Parcels/Transit and or Shuttle:

As you know we have been working on the pilot street scape project approved in the FY21 Capital Budget. The intent is for the pilot location (close to the entry of Ocean View after coming over the Assawoman Canal bridge) to include a bench, large planter, refuse and recycling units and a decorative light fixture. Just prior to the Holiday's we had a conference call with DELDOT and DART to discuss options/process for streetscaping along Atlantic as well as the excess parcels, transit in general and a shuttle. Additional engagement is underway, and guidance is being provided. I expect that Ken Cimino and I will be able to provide more information/path forward recommendations in the months ahead.

Property Ownership Items:

The two property ownership items are still moving along slowly. They relate to the Tingle Street boat dock and ramp and Town Road.

Tingle Street-

I had a conversation with DNREC just prior to the holiday during which I again provided detail of the matter. There was to have been outreach to our Solicitor which had not taken place at time of writing which we have inquired about. As you know, from our perspective the Tingle Street ramp and dock ownership has been determined. DNREC paused our efforts in the fall and we are hopeful they will give final guidelines soon so that we can make the owners/residents aware of the path forward.

Town Road-

The Town Road matter still needs more effort before bringing the item back to Council. At this time engagement with all businesses/owners of property on Town Road will likely be necessary. Records show that the Town intended to take over this road but never did. It is now in need of repairs. A record plan was developed under the name Ocean View Centre in 1983 and the existing businesses do not appear to have ownership of the road either. I have enlisted the assistance of the Town Engineer and hope to bring additional information to you soon.

Outreach to Millville – Partnership Opportunities:

As you know, we received a response from Millville, and we provided some clarification prior to the Holidays. Further, I reported to you that Millville contracts 80 hours a week for Delaware State police coverage. I apologize as the actual number is 40 hours a week. We will continue to evaluate impact on Ocean View (through improved tracking of Millville calls and our ability to report same) and will provide additional information or make recommendations as are deemed appropriate based on our findings.

For now, my discussions with the Millville Town Manager continue and our Police Department continues to respond to calls in Millville when dispatched.

All other engagement areas shared seemed to meet with support.

Government Access Channel:

We are currently awaiting final installation of necessary lines/equipment from Mediacom although the exterior connections were completed just prior to the Holiday. Once this is completed the equipment and connections to allow for programming of the channel will be installed. I am hopeful to receive the channel number information the first week in January. Once we are activated and get a chance to become familiar with the programming, I will update you on the plan for launch/etc.

Report of Activity – Public Works Division:

Our part-time maintenance employee has now been with the Town for a little over 3 months and his transition has been smooth. We are pleased with his level of engagement and interest in learning/offering suggestions. To allow for him to be in the position during an additional season (hopefully under more normal circumstances), I have extended his probationary period another 90 days – through March. This provides both he and the Town the opportunity to understand expectations and for him to be exposed to another season of duties.

Work of the Public Works Division over the past months:

1. Daily playground inspection and picking up trash in John West Park

2. Weekly rounds around town picking up trash and checking ditches
3. Attended DFIT meetings in November and December by zoom
4. Jerrad and Tyler attended DFIT Snowplow Rodeo in November
5. Took our trucks and trailers to the inspection lane
6. Went to Dover to pick up street signs and post
7. Assisted with furniture moving and moved boxes/put office areas back together after new carpet was installed
8. Oversaw Apple Electric putting up Christmas lights on Atlantic avenue and electricity to north end of the park for the Holiday Trail.
9. Oversaw the contract with Collins Lawncare for the removal of old plant, sod installation and new plant install around new sign as well as bed mulching at 201 Central
10. Replace water stained ceiling tiles and changing out old light bulbs to LED bulbs in cell block at police department
11. Arranged for Collins Lawncare final leaf clean-up at John West Park/Completed some in-house clean-up as the leaves fell late this year.
12. Emptying trash cans and dog waste stations as needed at John West Park
13. Completed the power washing of sidewalks and other areas at 32 West and the sidewalk in front of 201 Central
14. Built new desk areas for the Public Works office and cleaned show area
15. Shuttled Truck 6 to Atlantic Auto for new battery and a repair to snowplow in advance to winter season.
16. Oversaw R and L Irrigation's overseed of turf and other areas and their winterization of the irrigation systems at 32 West and 201 Central
17. Completed a trimming of the bushes and removal of seasonal flowers around porch area and in front of 32 West.
18. Transplanted several bushes and evergreens from 201 Central to 32 West
19. Began working on the FY22 Budget for Public Works submission to the Town Manager