

**TOWN OF OCEAN VIEW**  
**DELAWARE**

August 5, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Carol S. Houck, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Town Manager Report for the Council Meeting of August 11, 2020

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

COVID-19 Response Update - As of writing the State remains in Phase II of its reopening plan. The Administrative offices at 201 Central have remained closed to the public except for pre-arranged meetings and of course Police operations. Currently, since Monday July 27<sup>th</sup>, all staff are reporting daily for our regular work hours except for 2 employees that have been afforded continued work from home accommodations. They both are reporting to work 3 days a week and working from home 2 days a week. One accommodation is likely to extend past the next 30-day period and one is set to expire in 30 day or the end of August. Any work from home accommodations will be reviewed every 30 days. We continue to wear masks when in the office, have ensured staff work areas are separated, have established a circular traffic plan, closed the use of the kitchen for meal preparations, continue to stress handwashing and wiping down of copiers/other equipment and our enhanced facility cleaning schedules continue. In addition:

- Planning and Codes are meeting with by appointment and reception activities are taking place via the call box with engagement, as necessary.
- Financial and other obligations/workload is moving along with little to no interruption.
- Public Works and maintenance operations are as usual (taking precautions when meeting with contractors/vendors) and mosquito spraying operations are occurring during the early morning hours several days a week, weather permitting.
- Spraying of play equipment and restrooms at the park (also increased cleaning) began July 15<sup>th</sup> with the opening of the playground and our first outdoor movie that evening. The usage of the playground is less than this time under normal circumstances but seems to be working with most families appreciative and taking the steps to social distance and sanitize hands.

It should be noted that much time has been dedicated to navigating the personnel aspects of the Covid-19 response and work from home accommodations. All decisions have been approached

with fairness in mind and to manage risk for the organization while continuing to deliver services and be responsive to our community.

FY2021 Community Events – Our first Classic Movie was held July 15<sup>th</sup> in John West Park featuring Jail House Rock and Elvis Impersonator Bob Lougheed! The crowd was smaller than experienced last year, but we received favorable comments from those in attendance.

The second movie night was cancelled due to bad weather conditions and it was scheduled to be held on our rain date of Aug 5<sup>th</sup> however at time of writing we have decided we will need to cancel the showing of Grease again in association with the impact from the tropical storm on John West Park. Clean up to the park will take several days. I do not plan to reschedule the movie a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. We will receive a credit for the movie rights purchase and use it next year.

We were able to hold our Honey I Shrank the Kids classic movie night on July 29<sup>th</sup> again for a reduced but socially distance and appreciative crowd.

We are now still currently scheduled to begin our socially distanced Fall Concert Series on Sept 11<sup>th</sup> with the Over Time Band at 6pm in John West Park.

**Cancelation of the Cops and Goblins and Old Town Holiday Market and Tree Lighting events –**

At this time, and with the current continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic response, it is recommended that we cancel these two events which are difficult to deliver in a socially distanced and responsible way. We held off until now to make this recommendation however feel it is in the best interest of the events, their participants, and the Town to do so at this time. We will look forward to bringing the events back in their full potential in 2021.

If agreed however, we will proceed with planning a socially distanced tree lighting ceremony for Saturday November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mediacom Cable Franchise Agreement – I am finalizing our review of the negotiated Franchise Agreement document with Mediacom. We missed the posting deadline to include a public hearing for this August meeting, so we are planning to post the public hearing by next week for the Sept 8<sup>th</sup> council meeting. As shared in the past a highlight to the new agreement will be the Town's Government Access Channel. We also continue to share the attached fact sheet on the Cable Franchise agreement related to misunderstandings by some in thinking it covered internet and or that we were blocking others from coming in town to offer internet or cable tv.

201 Central Ave Exterior Improvements – The exterior improvement project continues to move ahead well. It should be substantially completed by the end of August. The final product looks very nice and again the project is expected to result in a more efficient and attractive facility. Here are a few photo's, taken on August 3<sup>rd</sup>.



Additionally, I would like to propose we eliminate the reinstallation of the former railings that sat above the horizontal beam. Please see a photo below of the original installation for comparison. The railings serve no structural purpose and the above photos show a nice clean and more modern appearance. Maybe a ride by will also assist in your consideration of this option. I request some direction from Council regarding this proposal.



FY21 Municipal Street Aid - We received confirmation that the Town of Ocean View will receive \$114,751 in MSA funding this fiscal year. This amount is in line with our budgeted level of \$115,000 and was based on our 23/07 miles of Town maintained roadway. Thankfully, we budgeted conservatively as going into budget we anticipated a higher level of overall MSA funding by the state which was of course modified once the Covid-19 pandemic impacted state revenues.

Completion of FY20 Audit – Our FY20 audit has been completed and we await final reports from the auditing firm. Much appreciation is due Finance Director Dawn Parks and Accountant Carol Lebedz for their work to prepare for and respond to all inquiries of the auditors. I was advised of a high level of cooperation and professionalism by the firm in working with our Town. Our staff are to be commended for staying on schedule during less than ideal Covid-19 inconveniences to our operations.

Kudos to the Ocean View Police Department! – I would like to express my appreciation to Chief McLaughlin and his staff for their continued efforts to apply for and receive grant funds to assist with various areas of the department’s operations. Here are details of recent awards from the Chief:

*Carol - Recently, I submitted a request for funding to the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) to cover costs associated with the purchase of two police radar units. I received notice today from the OHS that my grant request was approved. The total award for this grant will be **\$4,596.48**. Chief*

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*Carol – OVPD received **\$5,720** from the Office of Highway Safety for pedestrian and bike safety enforcement. The OHS established two 4-hour blocks of OT weekly. An officer working the OT focuses on enforcing bike and pedestrian laws. They also target motor vehicle violations which endanger pedestrians and bicyclists. OVPD has also purchased bike lights and routinely supplies them to bicyclists operating without lights. Finally, the OVPD is holding a road-side bike safety check point in July. Chief*

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*Carol – I am happy to report that the Department of Justice has awarded the OVPD **\$125,000** to be used to hire an additional police officer. A copy of the DOJ Awards Notice is attached. Chief*

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John West Park – Our well failed at John West Park late last week resulting in our inability to water the grass. Thankfully, we had a wet period since then and plans are underway to install a new irrigation well. We are working with R & L irrigation to facilitate the necessary permits and installation.

**The Following represents accomplishments of our Public Works Manager – Jerrad Steele:**

1. Daily playground check for trash and playground equipment for safety

2. Daily building checks at 32 West and 201 Central
3. Weekly grass cutting oversight – completed by R & L landscaping
4. Planted flowering bushes at 32 West and mulched the area at the parking lot entrance – will plant trees in fall.
5. Oversight and engagement with Apple Electric for the installation of new lights in the new parking lot at 32 West.
6. Setting up for movies in park and breaking down after movies and placed signs out as necessary.
7. Completed the flushing of town water system in cooperation with Tidewater.
8. Installed to 2 new solar speed signs on Ogre Drive
9. Continue mosquito spraying around town in early am weekly/or twice weekly.
10. Cleaned out Catch basin that was blocked by mulch in Bear Trap – causing flooding.
11. Painted posts of 2 town signs on Atlantic Ave as they were becoming unsightly.
12. Watering of certain plants at town park and town sign areas.
13. Installation of cigarette butt canisters at John West Park.
14. Daily rounds through town checking for trash and damage to street signs.
15. Directed Collins landscaping in the trimming of bushes at 32 West and John West Park.
16. Pulling of weeds at 32 West and John West Park and spraying of weeds various locations.
17. Mowing grass at DPW Maintenance shop.
18. Worked throughout the storm event Tuesday, Aug 4<sup>th</sup> – hauling trees and branches from the roadway, sawing branches, disposal of same.
19. Worked the am of the 5<sup>th</sup> gathering a large amount of tree branches and debris from all over John West Park.
20. Arranged for Local Tree Expert to come to John West Park to assist with large pine tree that was damaged in storm and conduct a review of our large trees to determine if any trimming is necessary after the storm. Thankfully, we had the trees dead wooded early this spring, or we may have had more damage in the park.
21. Repaired the mosquito sprayers as they failed this week.
22. Town Sign at Lord Baltimore school was damaged during the storm and efforts are underway to repair.