***STRATHMERE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION***

**Minutes of the General Meeting**

**Saturday, August 13, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Janice Connell, President, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag led by Rosemarie Whelan. Attending the 10:30 a.m. meeting were

Janice Connell, President; Juliette Schlucter, Vice-President; Donna Diefenderfer, Member-at-Large; and Rosemarie Whelan, Secretary.

Also present were guests of honor Curtis Corson, Mayor of Upper Township and

Gary Demarzo, Township Administrator.

Mayor Corson is “thirteenth among his family’s fifteen generations here” in Upper Township. He was first elected in the early 1990’s. Gary Demarzo was a former Mayor of Wildwood and a former city police officer.

Approximately sixty-five people were also present at the meeting.

**Bicycle Raffle**

As a fundraiser, a bicycle with SIA and beach logos was raffled off. The winner was

Paul Trumbull. Congratulations!

**Bergus-Lawrence Honor Roll Award**

The date of the presentation of the award to John Pond has been rescheduled. It will take place on Friday, August 26, at 10:30 a.m. in front of the Rita C. Schiavo Library.

**Secretary’s Report**

Ed Tettemer made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2022 general meeting. This was seconded by Elaine Holsomback. The motion carried.

**Treasurer’s Report**

In the absence of Terence Buckley, Donna Diefenderfer presented the Treasurer’s Report. Financials included Profit and Loss, January through July 2022 and Balance Sheet as of

July 31, 2022. Donna requested that attendees please contact Terence for information or copies of the financials. Copies of Profit and Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet are attached.

A motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report was made by John Miller and seconded by Elaine Holsomback. The motion carried.

**Strathmere Vision Update – To Improve the Quality of Life in Strathmere**

Janice Connell presented a summary of the many accomplishments and recommendations of the six Focus Groups that have been actively working on the ideas generated at the brainstorming session led by Victoria Green last August.

The six Focus Groups are organized around the following topics:

1. Quality of Life
2. Noise and Dark Skies
3. Conservation and Environment/Flood Mitigation
4. Ordinance Enforcement
5. Playground
6. Bylaws

Janice shared that the Focus Groups have been meeting via Zoom and in-person over the winter and spring. Combined, they have made 58 recommendations; 20 have been completed, 6 are expected to be completed by the end of the year, 2 are in the planning stages and the remaining 30 will be prioritized for 2023 and onward.

The details of Janice’s presentation, including the accomplishments and next steps for each of the Focus Groups, can be reviewed in the SIA August slide deck on the SIA website or linked in the August newsletter.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Gary Demarzo and Mayor Corson responded to questions from the audience on a variety of concerns and issues.

Parking – Parking violations have significantly decreased; however, the encroachment of driveways continues to be problematic for some residents. Mr. Demarzo requested pictures to document the problem, and ways to address the concern will be explored. A warning ticket system was initiated, and a ticket tracing system was implemented that can be tracked, analyzed and trends can be identified. The SIA will follow up with Mr. Demarzo on the parking enforcement details and will outline information on the SIA website with steps on how to report parking violations, contact information with UT parking enforcement and the State Police and how the parking violation tracking system works.

Parking on both sides of the road on Route 619 from Willard Ave. to the Corson’s Inlet Bridge was brought up as a safety issue due to traffic, narrowness of the road, bicyclists, beachgoers and people leaving the Deauville Inn parking lot. Mayor Corson explained that they are working with the County on a solution and are considering moving the guardrail for extra road room. Parking spots were eliminated from the intersection, and parking lot exits and the curbs were painted yellow.

Beach Tags – A vote was taken at an Upper Township Committee meeting where two were in favor, and three were opposed. Mayor Corson stated that this was still an on-going topic of discussion.

Beach Erosion and Replenishment – The beaches are planned for replenishment in 2023. The timing depends on several things including the nesting season and the schedule of the Corps of Engineers. Pursuing grant monies to fund beach replenishment and for maintenance was raised.

Taxes and Upper Township Budget - The Mayor explained the tax structure and that a majority of residents’ taxes are school taxes. He also shared that the cost of the UT Beach Patrol was significant. When a question was raised about the significant tax increase, a discussion ensued concerning assessments and ratables as well as the Twp. budget process. Mr. Demarzo informed the audience that the budget will be accessible on the Twp. website. It was urged that everyone become familiar with it and be prepared to attend and speak at the Twp. Budget Planning meeting normally held the fourth quarter of the year and/or the first quarter of the next year.

Dune Issues – People have been observed walking around beach accesses that are closed due to erosion and walking over the dunes and have been observed driving over the dunes. In response to this, Mr. Demarzo said the vehicles were traveling horizontally to the beach and the path is between the primary and secondary dunes.

Flood Mitigation – Storm water pumps are scheduled to be installed in designated locations on Putnam, Sumner and Webster Avenues.

Beach Accesses – It was expressed that beach accesses in Whale Beach are not well maintained. This will be assessed and addressed appropriately. Installation and maintenance of Mobi mats was discussed. While there is no money currently allocated for Mobi mats in the current budget, a private donation was made to the Twp. to purchase additional mats. It was suggested that Public Works develop a routine maintenance schedule for them.

Dark Skies – Concern about safety and security was discussed in the event a light ordinance is put into place. Safety and security will not be compromised and will be studied as the potential for the ordinance is considered.

Landscaping and Noise Ordinance – The Twp. is considering a landscaping ordinance as a flood mitigation method and for preserving the natural habitat. An ordinance limiting contractor hours for construction and landscaping is also under consideration.

Beach Raking – A question was raised about why we do not rake our beaches like the other beach towns. The response was that we are a “natural” beach and raking would be detrimental. Raking the beach would be costly and create a noxious odor.

Township Committee and other Twp. Meetings - Residents have requested that these meetings be able to be accessed remotely as they were during the pandemic. This item is not in the budget. Live streaming is being considered by the Twp.

Lack of a Crosswalk Stop Sign – There is no sign on Webster Ave. in front of the playground, but there is such signage on the streets directly north and south. Mr. Demarzo indicated that would be addressed.

Additional issues raised by Strathmere residents that have yet to be addressed included the following:

Progress on the Living Shoreline Project.

The following topics will be covered in future meetings:

Lack of enforcement and questions regarding the State Police

Speeding, inconsistent speed limits and seasonal changes of speed limits on Commonwealth Ave.

Status of septic systems vs. municipal sewers

Lack of mercantile license, rental fees, occupancy tax, occupancy limits, CO type inspection for rental properties

Free parking vs. charging for parking

Status of Planning Board Sub-Committee topics such as new/revised ordinances, and review of Conservation Plans, Habitat Conservation Plans, Tree Protection Plans and Sustainability Plans in which our Focus Groups can provide input

Parking on both sides of the street on Taylor Ave.

The SIA will conduct Zoom meetings over the winter to address these topics and get updates on open items.

Rosemarie Whelan

Secretary