

# TOWN CRIER

**This is the 13th issue of what will be a periodic communication to the citizens of Cape Charles. John Burdiss is solely responsible for the content.**

**In this issue (May 9, 2008) are items from the 5/8/08 agenda**

My "council light" comment resonated with several readers, including one who pointed out my error - I should have said "council lite". (Over the past year I have had many editorial comments, especially when I make mistakes. Also thanks to many of you who have told me that you actually read these epistles.)

In contrast to what I continue to believe has become council lite and unlike what I thought our council retreats were intended for (long term planning, big picture and strategic thinking), the Council Retreat April 16 - 18<sup>th</sup> (at the Legion Hall in Cheriton) was really for the most part a super, 3-day council meeting. Among the topics addressed were: staff reports; alley issues; amending the 42 Code (Chapter 42 of the Town Code - parking and other related issues); a possible graffiti ordinance; whether to buy a street sweeper; whether to buy equipment and do our own grass cutting; memorandums of agreement with entities to which we donate money; filing of ethics disclosures by key employees and council members; prospects for Town uses of the STIP, Meatland and/or the Keck properties (see 1 below); additional staffing needs; status of the old CC High School; the multi-use trail (see 2 below); beach erosion issues; possibilities of recycling; changing name of library; reviewing prospects for wind turbines; and disbanding council committees (see 3 below).

(1) Nearly two years ago the R/E committee, headed by Councilman Brown, in conjunction with the Finance Committee, of which I was the only council member, thoroughly studied a host of possibilities for the long term needs of the Town for office, meeting and other space. As part of that study the conclusion was then that Meatland (now vacant now for 3 or 4 years) was the best long term site for our municipal campus. Acquisition of that property then and now is not an easy process, but for many obvious reasons, that location was clearly the best choice. Now it seems the entire council and the candidates who just ran for council all concur. The Keck property can also make sense for the Town as a source of more well locations, maybe recreational uses. The STIP location does not compare favorably to Meatland for a variety of reasons.

(2) We revisited the possible changes to the "conceptual plan" for Central Park and the "Community Trail" and the result was still to move the basketball court, tennis courts and the kiddie park but all three recreational facilities will remain on the park/school property. The 4 lots across the street on Madison that are owned by the Town will remain unencumbered, thus my main objection to the plan approved on 4/10/08 by a 5 to 1 vote (I voted "no") was cured. Again I strongly believe supervision of recreational activities is the key, not simply location.

(3) While the consensus of Council and the Mayor's preference is to disband all council committees, I think the sweeping change is unwise, but I am only one. In keeping with what I continue to call council lite, we now seem to think workshops are the answer to any contentious issues or in lieu of any heavy lifting at regular council meetings.

## **Boundary adjustment**

The only "meat" on the agenda (and it was low fat since we did not debate the merits of this concept) was agreeing to have Town staff address the costs and benefits, or as Tom Bonadeo

accurately stated, the risks and rewards of this prospect. Council unanimously agreed to direct staff to develop a matrix to assist us in the analysis. A workshop will be scheduled to evaluate the pros and cons of a boundary adjustment. You will want to follow closely and make sure that we objectively analyze each piece before we jump into it or decide to avoid it as the case may be.

### The election "debate" held on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Fire Hall

As I personally conveyed to each of the 4 candidates (who were able to attend), everyone did a very good job of articulating his/her positions on key issues. The format was much improved over prior years and the opportunity to hear each person speak and respond to questions was excellent. Our citizens should be pleased at the competencies and the quality of the field of candidates, any one of whom would be an asset to the council. Further, while there wasn't much substantial disagreement among the four, they aired their differences in civil and respectful ways.

### Some of the other matters on the 5/8/08 agenda

Council unanimously approved: A resolution to consider a Public Private Partnership as possible means to deal effectively with the prospect of a regional water and sewer system. This step is not a commitment to such a plan; rather it is a commitment to a process that meets statutory guidelines that are designed for this type of economic issue. While we must continue to seek ways to spread the costs to build and to operate a system that Cape Charles is required to build, we must insist that the regional plan actually brings financial benefits to the Town's operation of such a system that would not exist without this plan.

Council also unanimously approved the scheduling of a budget hearing on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM; we will also have a budget workshop May 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. This is another workshop you will want to attend. I plan to provide my insight and commentary for your consideration regarding the proposed budget and the budget trends in the next few days in a special edition of the Crier.

Last but not least, by a 4 to 1 vote (Councilman Elliott was absent from this meeting), a workshop is to be set for consideration of the proposed changes to Chapter 42 of the Town code. This matter was already discussed at the retreat and as requested and as is appropriate presented again with the old code and the recommended changes. I was the lone holdout (voting "no") believing that this could be dealt with at next month's council meeting, even though it would take some time, and finalized at the July meeting when agreement on the changes occurred.

### Council members changing on July 1<sup>st</sup>

Steve Bennett, Bruce Evans and Larry Veber were elected Tuesday to 4 year terms. Bruce was an incumbent, Steve is a "new" member and attained the most votes; Larry finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the votes and returns to Council after a 2 year hiatus. Congratulations to all three of you! Thanks to Joan Natali and Scott Walker for their efforts as candidates and to Sambo and Melvin - neither of whom chose to run for re-election, for their service to the Town. Those who remain and whose terms end on June 30, 2010 are Mayor Sullivan and council members Bannon, Burdiss and Elliott.

#### **DATE CHANGE FOR CONSTITUENTS MEETING – NOW ON THURSDAY**

My office is at 117 Mason Ave., Suite E (next to Kelly's Pub) - 5:15 – 6:15 PM on Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. This is your opportunity to come, voice opinions, ask questions and learn more about what your Town government and your Council are doing to honor our duty to you by always striving to serve the best interests of the Town with each action we take. Please come; we will all benefit. Your responses and/or inquiries to anything in the Town Crier or about "Town" business are welcome at [johnburdiss@baycrk.net](mailto:johnburdiss@baycrk.net)