

Baycliff Civic League Minutes
Alanton Elementary
May 18th, 2011

President Claire Polley called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. There were 18 Bay Cliff residents in attendance along with 7 representatives from Cape Story and Broad Bay Island.

Claire passed around two documents to be reviewed, one on the drainage system at the boat ramp and the other on redistricting of the local resident districts used in City Council and School Board elections.

Old Business

- **Discussion of Picnic Pavilion**
 - Do we need a key to gain access to the Pavilion?
 - Requests in the summer will quadruple – will this block boaters?
 - During winter who will use the Pavilion?
 - Liability is included in current coverage, to insure the structure there will be an insurance increase of \$750 a year.
 - What about Gangs and Vandalism?
 - Who will police the area?
 - Who will be responsible for the trash?
 - Bill Westendorf suggested that we put down the concrete pad and put up a pop-up pavilion (temporary) to get a feel for who will use the area and what kind of issues we may have with a more permanent structure. (not on the proposal)
 - How will the Pavilion be reserved?
 - Do we charge a fee for use?
 - Should we look at doing this in phases – Picnic table – concrete – electrical then build Pavilion if we see that it is working?
 - Marion Buis mentioned that no one really hangs out at the benches down by the water.
 - Bill Westendorf made a motion to vote on doing the pavilion proposal in steps. 1st stage Picnic Table, Concrete and Electricity with the 2nd and final stage being the Pavilion Structure. John Hogan Seconded the motion. There being no quorum we could not vote on the motion. Will be discussed at the September meeting. Later in meeting we had late arrivers and we now have a quorum building the Picnic Pavilion in stages was approved.
- Minutes of the March 16th meeting were read by recording secretary Janie Cecelic and approved.
- Martin Ton reviewed the budget. \$39,000 in savings account, \$16,000 in checking account. Need to move \$4000 from checking to savings. Suggested that we have \$7500 be moved to a “true” emergency fund. Marion announced the count on the Budget and it was approved by all.
- Frank Cunningham had nothing new to share with the group.
- John Hogan announced VBCCO meeting June 1st at the Central Library at 7:00. Thelma Drake will be there to discuss the Light Rail.
- Claire discussed the letters from the city about the sludge and pollution at the boat ramp. City has declined the request to remove the sludge from the boat ramp area even though they admit it was their fault.
- Bill Westendorf mentioned that anything under the water belongs to the Commonwealth – Land Grant for the good of all.

Dredging

- Bill Page applied for dredging survey on canal and basin. 20 foot wide 4 feet deep.
- Friday Bill should have all the information on what it will cost the residents to get the dredge done by the city via the SSD (Special Service District)
- 62 Baycliff homes will be involved along with 11 sites across the water.
- Godfrey property may be an issue and they are included.
- Canals off the main waterway will need special dredging for their property.
- If we allow the boat ramp as the transfer station. The city will require permission from the Civic League.
- Dredge will be disposed at Oceana Pit.
- Any damage to the boat ramp will be repaired by the city if due to the dredging project.
- The waterway will be marked to Coast Guard standards (additional pilings – markers)
- Boat ramp dredging would not be Civic League responsibility it will be included within the other waterfront properties as part of the SSD.
- The value of the home and property (total assessment) would be used to determine the cost for each waterfront resident.
- Need to develop a personalized flyer to each resident involved.

Claire introduced Bill Desteph, City Councilman.

Claire opened the floor to representatives from Cape Henry to speak about their concerns with the dredge project.

- They wanted to hear about the dredging project and concern about the transfer station in Long creek.

Bill Desteph:

- Dredging issue he is very familiar with there are 11 egress areas for transfer stations. These maps will be shared with all civic leagues.
- May have 1-3 months that Long Creek is used.

Budget Discussion

Reasons he voted against the budget:

- 24 million dollar shortfall that was balanced on the “backs” of our school systems taking 23 million dollars from school system reserves as a whole we have 300 million in other reserve accounts.
 - Year end reserve fund account the city has 125 million dollars.
 - Unidentified land acquisition account the city has over 50 million dollars.
 - Storm water management the city has 98 million dollar surplus.
 - The city has more than enough money in reserves to cover the shortfalls and should be trimming other areas.
- The city has handed off the authority to raise certain fees to the City Manager, City Council no longer has control over raising specific fees. Bill believes that the councilmen should be held accountable for any raise in taxes, fee or any thing that affects the resident’s wallet. Bill feels that this is unconstitutional to allow the City Manager to control these fees, the attorney general Ken Puchenelli says it is a “gray area” and that these fees are optional. You don’t have to get married on the beach; you don’t have to remodel your house, park at the ocean front, etc.
- He questioned the “new” trash fee, that is already pay for trash in our regular real estate taxes. The new \$10 fee for trash is already in effect. It is estimated by 2018 that the trash fee will increase to \$60 a month.
- Storm water management has declared a surplus over the last few years. This year they say that they need to raise taxes?

- ERU – (Environmental Residential Unit) on water bill increased 100% last year 50% this year and 33% next year.

More reasons he voted against the budget.

Reviewing the Printed budget:

- Taxes and Fees - \$500 permit to get married on the beach he asked city council what is the justification for the fee? Other agreed that it does seem mighty steep they suggested \$200 but Bill's question is what is the justification for the fee? They are arbitrarily pulling numbers out of nowhere with no justification.
- 31st street project was supposed to be \$28 million dollar project; he could only find 22 Million in the budget. It took staff 45 minutes (the staff who wrote the budget for the project) to identify and locate all 8 entries to come up with the 28 million total.
- School board presented city council with a 640 million dollar budget; the city presented the school board's budget of 875 million, off by 235 million dollars. Bill could not determine where the discrepancies were so he developed 3 ½ pages of questions. Two weeks before the budget vote he asked about the review of school board budget and the response was that it was reviewed on April 11th when the questions were distributed. Bill questioned the 235 million dollar discrepancy again and the response was that items were accounted for differently. Outside auditor for city of Virginia Beach states that all monies would be accounted for the same way. Upon closer review they found grants and other items that accounted for 210 million of the discrepancy but we are still off 25 million dollars. Day of budget vote they still had not identified the variance so he voted NO on the school board budget.
- Bill put together an Animal services advisory board because the city of Virginia Beach is doing some things against state law such as; diagnosing and treating animals without a veterinary license and we have some operational issues within the shelters and have had these issues for over 17 years. All groups looked at proposal; everyone reviewed and agreed to have this board report to city council. City staff wants the board to report to the police department since they oversee animal control. Chief of police would rather they report to city council. State vets know Virginia Beach is doing this illegally. They have threatened \$1000 a month fine. Still not resolved
- Bill suggested that we replace our city manager similar to the military replace CO's every 2-4 years to get new fresh leadership, new ideas and to make it so we do not get used to the status quo. So we are not too comfortable.
- He is one of the most vocal members of council and one of the most approachable. He does respond to calls. Distributed his card with cell number.

Opened meeting up to questions:

- If Baycliff boat ramp is used as transfer station how many dredging projects would be pulled through Baycliff?
 - 2-3 depending on the location. It will be based on what makes more sense for length of travel and ease of access.
- What are the four dredging rights of way that they city have?
 - Long Creek area, down by PA High School, Laskin Road and Crab Creek.
- What is the impact on the neighborhood if the boat ramp is used as a transfer station?
 - 2 months every 3 years the boat ramp could potentially be used if all the projects are approved.
- Question from other neighborhoods. Would Long Creek transfer station be used for all the dredging?
 - No, it does not make sense. The city will use the closest most economic method to remove the dredge.
- Robin hood Forest project is going on where is the transfer station?
 - The transfer station is located in Bill Desteph's backyard.

- What is being done about the discharge from Mill Dam that is polluting our waters? They installed 6 additional pipes but they have not addressed the sludge.
 - Take some pictures and send to Bill Desteph. City agrees that it is their problem that the surrounding neighborhood buildings were built prior to specific regulations being mandated.

Bill left his card with all in attendance and asked that we call or e-mail him with any concerns. He will respond.

New Business

The votes were tallied by Marion Buis and the slate of officers was unanimously approved.

Special Gift presentation by Claire Polley representing the neighborhood to Christine Westendorf for all of her hard work and dedication to our neighborhood over the past years. Marion Buis hand made and painted a cat plaque for Christine.

Christine announced that the Garden club will meet this Thursday at 10:00 at the entrance for spring planting.

Bob Swank inquired about the dead tree by the creek if it was part of the tree removal proposal. Claire will check into this.

Motion to adjourn was made at by Frank Cunningham at 8:37 and seconded by John Hogan.

Refreshments and cake were served in honor of all the incoming and out going officers.