

# BAYSIDE GAZETTE



APRIL 20, 2017

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FREE



JOSH DAVIS/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

## EGG-CELLENT ADVENTURE

Hundreds of children race through a field near downtown Berlin on Saturday to scoop up some of the thousands of eggs hidden there. The annual Easter egg hunt was part of Spring Celebration, sponsored by the Berlin Chamber of Commerce.

## Barbara Purnell named winner of '17 Berlin Award

By Josh Davis  
Associate Editor

(April 20, 2017) Longtime Berlin resident and president of the committee overseeing the Germantown School Community Heritage Center project Barbara Purnell, 74, has won the 2017 Berlin Award presented by the Berlin Lions Club.

The award, recognizing volunteer work in the town, is in its 52nd year. The previous co-winners were Cam and Woody Bunting.

"I was really shocked. It was a great surprise," Purnell said on Monday. "It was a great honor to receive it."

Former Berlin Shoe Box owner Jesse Turner, who passed away last month, nominated Purnell. A committee of previous honorees handles the selection process.

In the nomination form, filled out last year, Turner wrote that Purnell was hardworking, loyal, honest, put others before herself and had a strong will to motivate. He cited her activities

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Barbara Purnell

## Not in our Oasis: OPA reverses GM

By Josh Davis  
Associate Editor

(April 20, 2017) About 200 people – an unusually large turnout for an Ocean Pines Board meeting – crowded into the community center last Thursday night and heard what they hoped they would hear: the introduction of family fun day on Sundays at the previously adults-only Oasis swimming pool is not going to happen.

After hearing resident after resident decry the schedule shift, the Ocean Pines Board of Directors voted 5-2 to reverse the decision of acting General Manager Brett Hill.

So concerned about the change were homeowners and residents that

they spilled over into two standing-room-only sections in the rear and side of the Assateague Room. In addition to the addition of the family day at the Oasis pool, Hill planned to introduce adults-only hours on Sundays at the Swim and Racket Club.

Previously, a family event was held at the Oasis pool, formerly called the yacht club pool, on Wednesday evenings until 8 p.m. That was shifted to another pool after an apparent conflict with county regulations forced the pool to close at 6 p.m. It was discovered after the fact, however, that the county would allow hours until 7 p.m.

At one point during the meeting, supporters of the new policy were asked to stand, and just two people

rose to their feet. After nearly two hours of public debate, the board of directors voted to overturn the change.

Before that could happen, Board President Tom Herrick opened the meeting up to public comments, which he said were strictly limited to the pool discussion, the meeting's lone agenda item.

"Also, no negative comments are allowed," Herrick said, drawing laughter and boos from a large portion of the audience.

Board Vice President Dave Stevens clarified that no negative comments "of a personal nature" were permitted.

Stevens and other directors said

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The Ocean Pines Board of Directors vote 5-2 to overturn a policy change made by interim General Manager Brett Hill regarding the Oasis Pool. Only Hill and Pat Supik, who participated via speaker vote, voted for the measure during the special meeting, last Thursday.

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**RECOGNIZING HOLLAND**

Town of Berlin Managing Director Jeffrey Fleetwood, right, presents a service award certificate to Berlin Police Special Officer Claude Holland on Thursday. Holland, who has served on the Berlin Police force for a decade, was not able to attend a ceremony held in March when the town honored 22 town employees for their combined 255 years of service.

**Berlin unveils first draft of \$8M FY18 general fund budget**

Big ticket item \$2.5 million new police station building

By Josh Davis  
Associate Editor

(April 20, 2017) The Town of Berlin released preliminary details of its \$8.06 million fiscal year 2018 general fund budget during a work session at Town Hall on Monday night.

Berlin Mayor Gee Williams said department heads and the town administrator had worked for the last several months to prepare the draft. The meeting on Monday was for review by the mayor and council.

“[The approach] was to hold the line wherever possible and cut if we can,” Williams said on Monday. “What this preliminary general fund budget process seeks to do is simply [provide] an ongoing commitment ... to take care of our immediate needs while also planning for the future.”

The general fund was about 10 percent less than the previous year, in large part because of the \$2.75 million purchase of the Berlin Falls park property in 2017. The big-ticket item this year is a \$2.5 million new police station, which Williams said would be paid off over a period of 10-12 years by casino revenues.

The budget draft includes a \$97,000 increase in property tax revenue, estimated by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation and based on the current tax rate of 68 cents per \$100 of valuation, set in 2012.

Two consultant studies were included in the budget, to update water and sewer rates and create a prioritized list of town-owned streets that are in need of repairs.

The Town of Berlin workforce would also get a wage increase under the budget draft, accounting for \$102,003.

During the session, the mayor, council and staff also discussed changes to workman’s compensation insurance, new security procedures related to technology and updates related to the new police station, which broke ground this year near the corner of Flower Street and Route 376.

Williams said, on Tuesday, the budget had no real surprises.

“[The draft] is basically a continuation of what we already started over the last couple of years, but nothing really new,” Williams said. “Everything in that budget, as far as I can see, has been some things that we’ve been either considering, studying or taking actions for the last, at least, two-to-three years.”

A work session for the utility fund portion of the budget will be held on Monday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

After that, Williams said the town would advertise in local newspapers and hold a public hearing on June 12. The council would then vote on whether to adopt the budget.

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