

OCEAN GROVE UNITED COMMUNITY GATHERING September 5, 2014

Board members were introduced:

Harriet Bernstein Co-Chair

Luisa Paster Co-Chair

Herb Bachmann- Treasurer

Board Members: Joan Caputo, Dee Davis, Jan Moore, Emily Sonnesa, Barbara Burns, Ray Russamano
Jim Eberle, Angie Butler

The meeting began with a slide show explaining the mission of Ocean Grove United, its history and various accomplishments, and ways that Ocean Grovers can participate in its events and activities. Having begun in response to a civil rights issue in Ocean Grove, OGU has evolved into a broad based civic organization which strives to unite and include the diverse populations of the town in activities and events that both create community and benefit the town. OGU has held fundraising events for Mary's Place, the Monmouth/Ocean FoodBank, St. Paul's Food Pantry, boardwalk renovation, the Red Cross and local Fire Companies. We have had meetings to discuss the issue of LGBT bullying and the importance of responding to hurtful words. We have supported local businesses in the off-season, and supported local theater groups, the Historical Society, and the Chamber of Commerce. Following the presentation there was a forum for audience members to comment and suggest future activities and issues that OGU can address.

Suggestions and comments from the audience included the following:

- Request for continuation of the Town Picnic.
- Meet and Greet Events including a Block Party at the beginning of the summer to welcome everyone (including part-timers and renters)
- A welcome Wagon for new residents. Chamber of Commerce President, Rich Lepore, noted that the realtors have a welcome packet including information about all the organizations in Ocean Grove.
- Outreach to youth including outreach to the Neptune School District for better services to LGBT and questioning students.
- Outreach to African American residents in Neptune.
- Displeasure about the locked gates separating Asbury Park and Ocean Grove in the late evenings.
- Broader advertising ---possibly use of the Camp Meeting Association Boardwalk Bulletin Boards and informational tables both at the Community events such as the Harvest Festival and outside of the Auditorium before events.
- When a question came up about the inclusiveness of all religions in Ocean Grove, a member of the audience suggested setting up an additional inclusive Bible study group.
- A clarification was made to the question of the CMA denying the LGBT community use of its facilities for weddings. The CMA denial was limited to the boardwalk pavilion, which unfortunately is no longer used for any private events. This is still a point of disagreement with the Camp Meeting Association. Additional input received clarified that the use of Thornley Chapel for a civil union was also denied but not appealed.

The OGU Board has met and is planning strategies to implement plans that are in keeping with our mission.

