Town Government

The Town of Odessa is an incorporated area with powers granted by the State to govern themselves through their elected officials and authorized appointees. The powers of the Town are established in its Town Charter approved by the Delaware General Assembly and most recently amended in June 2000. The elected governing body consists of a five member Town Council comprised of a Mayor and four councilpersons and a Treasurer. Officers serve a two-year term – the Mayor, Treasurer, and two members of Council are elected in odd numbered years, the other two Council members are elected in even numbered years. Municipal elections are held the first Monday in April each year. The Town Council meets the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Old Academy Building on Main Street. The Mayor presides over the meeting.

Through the Town Council, a Planning Commission has been formed to assist the Council with its zoning and land use duties. The Planning Commission is composed of five members who must be registered voters of Odessa. The Commission is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council. The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the Council and its major responsibilities are to interpret and recommend revisions of the Town’s Zoning Ordinance and to evaluate and recommend modifications of the Town’s Comprehensive Development Plan. The Planning Commission is also responsible for arranging public hearings for proposed subdivision plans and must forward the Commission’s recommendations to the Mayor and Council. The Planning Commission meets as necessary.

A Board of Adjustment is authorized by the Town Council for Odessa. It is comprised of three citizens who are registered to vote in Odessa. The Mayor, with the approval of Council, appoints the members of the Board of Adjustment. The Town Solicitor is a non-voting advisor on the Board. The Board has the task of ruling on appeals from aggrieved parties concerning zoning variances, administrative reviews, and Historic Commission decisions.

Odessa’s Historic Commission advises the elected officials on proposed changes to the exterior of buildings within the Odessa Historic District. The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Mayor with the consent of Council. The Commission must review applications and issue a historic review report to the Zoning Administrator for exterior changes visible from the street, demolitions, additions, and the construction of new structures.

The Town has no full time employees and has contracts for services necessary for the operations of the town. Odessa contracts for building inspections, police service, snow removal, street lighting, and refuse collections. The Town maintains the local streets and sidewalks in common areas and its parks through commercial contracts.
Public Safety

Police services are provided to Odessa through a jurisdictional agreement between the New Castle County Police and the Delaware State Police. This agreement provides for 24-hour a day services for the Town from the State Police Troop 9 office located on Main Street in Odessa. The location of this office also provides a continual police presence. Emergency medical services are provided by the Odessa Volunteer Fire Department and dispatched through the New Castle County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center ambulance and paramedic service.

Fire protection is provided by the Odessa Volunteer Fire Company located on Main Street. The Fire Company operates a dry hydrant system that was installed several years ago that can be pressurized using a pump located at the east end of Town that withdraws water from the Appoquinimink River. The Odessa Volunteer Fire Company participates in the mutual aid agreement with surrounding volunteer fire companies and its responses to incidents are dispatched through the New Castle County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center operated by New Castle County government.

Education and Library Facilities

The Town of Odessa is within the Appoquinimink School District, which is among the fastest growing districts in Delaware. The Appoquinimink School District operates three elementary schools (grades K-4), one intermediate school (grades 5-6), one middle school (grades 7-8), and one high school (grades 9-12). Children in Odessa attend the Silver Lake Elementary School, Redding Intermediate School, Middletown Middle School, and Middletown High School. Buses transport children residing in Odessa to these schools.

The library in Odessa was established in 1847 and is the oldest free library in Delaware. The Corbit-Calloway Memorial Library, located at 2nd and High Street, is a contract library to the New Castle County Department of Libraries. The Library was originally located next to the Old Academy Building and is currently located in a building constructed in 1947. Additionally, Odessa has easy access to a much larger community library located at the new Middletown High School called the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Library. Opened in 1996 to serve the needs of this regional area, the library is about 20,000 square feet in size and offers a wide range of materials and services.

Senior Services

The Middletown-Odessa-Townsend Senior Citizens Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit senior center located at 300 South Scott Street in Middletown. This center provides a variety of services for seniors living in southern New Castle County.
Health Care

There are no health care facilities within the Town of Odessa, although there is a facility located within 15 minutes in nearby Middletown. The Christiana Care Health System (formerly the Medical Center of Delaware) operates a Family Health Care Center at 200 Cleaver Farm Road in Middletown. A Wound Care Center was recently added to this facility. The closest major hospital is the Christiana Care Christiana Hospital located north of the C & D Canal in Stanton, Delaware, about 25 miles from Odessa.

Postal Service

Odessa is served by a small United States Post Office. The building is located on Main Street and serves as a central gathering point in the town since mail is not delivered and must be picked up at the Post Office. A town bulletin board is located at the Post Office and is used for posting meeting notices and public announcements.

Solid Waste Disposal

The Town of Odessa provides refuse collection to residential and commercial properties in its incorporated area. A fee is assessed to property owners to fund this service. The Town currently has a contract with Home Waste Inc., a private refuse collection service.

Recreation

Recreational space for residents is available at Memorial Park and at a park located behind the Old Academy Building. Memorial Park is located on the western side of the Town and consists of about 4 acres of grass ringed by trees and a small basketball court. The Park provides mostly a passive recreational area, but reportedly it is seldom utilized in part due to the difficulties of crossing U.S. Route 13 to reach the park. A second town park, located behind the Old Academy Building offers a tennis court and playground equipment and reportedly is often used by residents. Parks are valuable assets in a community, therefore it is important that efforts be made to ensure that these assets are available for use by all residents. If Memorial Park is under-used, the Town should determine why and develop a strategy to increase its use. Perhaps developing a small parking area would increase accessibility. A pedestrian and bike path might be developed that includes improved crossings of Route 13. Additional facilities might also be added such as playground equipment or a picnic pavilion that could be reserved through the Town for social gatherings.

On the east end of Odessa, the State operates a small boat ramp located on the east side of the Appoquinimink River. In 1994 the State met with the Town to discuss its proposal to build a parking lot for the boaters on the
parcel across from the ramp on the west side of the River, which was at the time an industrial site. The proposal included a pedestrian bridge to connect the two sides. Recently, the State revised this plan and has proposed completely relocating the boat ramp and parking area to this now State-owned parcel on the west side of the River. Odessa Town Council has discussed the new boat ramp project and voted to oppose this new proposal favoring the original project design.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Plan recommends the pursuit of opportunities for improving the recreational potential for Memorial Park, including increased accessibility. Accessibility could be enhanced by developing additional sidewalks and bike paths including improved signalized pedestrian crossings at Route 13, and the installation of parking facilities.