

**Town of Laurel, DE Presentation**  
**Chesapeake Bay Advisory Group**  
**Local Government Advisory Committee**  
**March 20, 2019**

**Mayor John J. Shwed**

**Laurel History and Data**

- Started as a place for Native Americans to cross Broad Creek
  - o known as the “Wading Place”
- Named for the Laurel bushes that grew along the banks of Broad Creek
- Town prospered in early days
- Town home to five Delaware governors
- Town subjected to changes in American lifestyle – Cars and malls
- Downsizing of DuPont’s Nylon Plant had significant negative effect
- 2008 American recession resulted in additional stress
- population about 4,000
- Median household income \$39,000
- New elementary, middle and high school built at a cost of \$100 million approved by voters in a Laurel School District referendum.

**Laurel Revitalization**

- Town has enjoyed good working relationship with Laurel Redevelopment Corporation

LRC has done great job building new structures along Broad Creek

Lead to development of the Ramble – a conceptual plan to bring additional new structures, a greenway, and nature based park along the banks of Broad Creek.

- State designated Town Center area as a “Downtown Development District” This provides financial incentives for new construction and remodeling in the DDD.
- Town developed new branding strategy with aid of consultants Ben Muldrow through grant funding through the Neighborhood Building block Grant.
  - o “Laurel – Great Things Come Naturally”
- Town pursuing two sector economic development strategy:
  - Ramble along Broad Creek
  - New commercial and residential development in the Rt. 13 Corridor

### **Laurel – An Environmentally Conscious Community**

- Town enjoys an excellent working relationship with State Government.
  - DNREC has been especially helpful
- Town built state of the art Waste Water Treatment Plant beginning in 2005 at cost of approximately 8 million dollars funded by State loan and grant. Replaced a smelly lagoon system.
- Quick response from DNREC when Town experienced a sewer line break underneath Broad Creek in 2004. State (DNREC) provided \$950,000 to repair this break and complete the necessary connections and upgrades to the Southside Pump Station.
- Completed project to separate storm and sanitary sewer in the area of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and King Street. The Town received State Revolving Fund loan in the amount of \$1.3 million with 100% principal forgiveness.
- Laurel is proud that we have several parks in the community. The Town has partnered with the LRC and the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance to plant over 300 trees and plants along Broad Creek.
- Grant funding was received by the Town and LRC through DNREC in the amount of \$200,000 for the construction of a bioswale and constructed wetlands as one of the first steps in the construction of Tidewater Park, the nature based park.

- Grant funding was received by the Town from DNREC in the amount of \$70,000 50/50 matching for the mapping of the Town's storm water system, to prepare for the MS4 Regulations.

### **Laurel Challenges**

- Town has limited resources – financial and personnel
  - o no dedicated grant writer
  - o no dedicated economic development coordinator
  - o experiencing minimal increase to tax base
- Town has partnered with Towns of Seaford, Blades, and Delmar to plan for MS-4 implementation.

### **How the Committee can help communities like Laurel**

- Be sensitive to our small size and the impact of environmental regulations.
- Provide us with grant assistance