



WHERE LIVESTOCK GRAZED - Middlesex Beach, a self-governing community development often mistaken as a town, has enjoyed more than three decades of prosperity on what was once grazing land called The Farms. • photo by Angie Moon

Not just a town

Community voices own standards

by **JIM CRESSON**

Ask most folks familiar with Delaware's southern coast what kind of a place Middlesex Beach is and they'll likely respond that it's one of the Quiet Resorts -- but is it really?

On first glance, it would seem to be. Nestled between Bethany Beach and South Bethany,

Middlesex Beach enjoys all the natural elements required for a first class resort town.

But what makes Middlesex Beach different is that it is not a resort; in fact, it isn't even a town.

Instead, it is a non-profit corporation established in 1959 as Middlesex Beach Association, a community development.

At the time of its creation, Middlesex Beach was a 123-acre tract of mostly wooded land known locally as "The Farms".

Three prominent area families -- the Addys, the Erretts, the Shorts -- developed the tract, platting 254 properties, grading eight clay

streets and penning detailed covenants regulating exactly what would and would not be allowed in construction.

The founders then chose Middlesex as their development's name, as that was what the area had been called at the time of Penn's Grant in 1682.

The Addys, Erretts and Shorts then deeded the entire tract to the newly-created Middlesex Beach Association, which was charged with annual maintenance of the development and the strict adherence of its established deed covenants.

In the ensuing three decades,

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Middlesex Beach has flourished as a growing community along Delaware's coast. Of the original 254 platted properties, the founders designated 239 as residential and 15 as commercial. Today, only three commercial and 33 residential lots remain unimproved.

"Middlesex is a thriving community," says Robert D.

Faw, immediate past president of the association's board of directors. "In recent years, our members have become very involved in the business of maintaining and improving the community."

As Faw notes, regular association business is conducted by a board of six members, elected for three-year terms. The board oversees the annual budget and appoints committees to handle such concerns as public works, administration, beach maintenance, security and building.

"Without a doubt, our building committee has been our most active committee," explains Faw. "It monitors all development and is very, very strict in adhering to the numerous deed covenants established for Middlesex Beach."

In recent years, says Faw, streets were paved for the first time, adding a new look to Middlesex. And a costly beach replenishment project added new life to the community's shoreline.

"We've been able to meet all the challenges that have faced us and our neighboring towns," explains Faw. "In fact, we even have a committee investigating the possibilities of our becoming a town someday. The report isn't final, but I've been told committee members are inclined to recommend we stay just the way we are."

For now at least, and possibly for quite a while to come, Middlesex Beach will remain a quiet development amid the Quiet Resorts of Delaware's southern coast.