

# History

**Update April 2023**

The following Chesapeake Isle history Information was compiled by the original CICA history committee some time in the 1980's. It describes the "modern" history. That is, what occurred after about 1950.

Since then, new research tools have evolved and have been used to uncover much more about our community, going all the way back to 1654!

As more is discovered we will communicate this in the quarterly newsletter under the history section article.

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Oldtimers in our area will tell you about the overnight horse and buggy trip from Elkton to Beaver Dam Farm. The halfway point was Wood's Store (also the Elk Neck Post Office) near Hart's Church. Beaver Dam Farm raised peas about a mile from the Turkey Point Lighthouse.

Quite a few years later, the farm was purchased for a rumored \$40,000.00 and operated as a retreat by the Salvation Mission House, Inc.

In the late 1950s, C.A. Firmani of Richardson Park, Delaware bought the farm. He laid out the first section of what he called Rolling Hills on Plat Vol I, Folio 10 on 7/13/60 and opened up shop. During those first years, lots sold for as little as \$10.00 down and \$10.00 per month.

During the period between 1960 and 1964, the balance of the old Beaver Dam Farm was platted in three additional sections. A 5/27/64 composite plan indicated that Rolling Hills would have 336 lots totaling 177.6 acres, 26.7 miles of roads, 28.7 acres of recreational land. On the same plan, lot prices ranged from \$995 to \$8,000.

In 1965, Rolling Hills was sold to a tangle of corporations handled by Robert M. Brinley. Mr. Brinley immediately changed the name of the development to Chesapeake Isle and lined up a property auction for 5/30/66. The auction was convened, begun, and then promptly canceled by Mr. Brinley.

The Chesapeake Isle Civic Association was formed in 1966 by property owners who sought to protect their investment in Chesapeake Isle.

One of the key accomplishments of the Association during those early years was the construction of the bathhouse at the swimming beach in 1969. Association dues in 1969 were \$5.00 per year.

Our community was on the move. About 120 families owned home sites and by 1969 there were nearly 30 homes scattered over the hills. By 1971, nearly two thirds of the lots platted were sold and a building boom had produced a crowded neighborhood of 46 homes. Association dues in 1971 went to \$10.00 per year.

In 1972, it became clear that because of his failing health, Mr. Brinley was going to sell his interests in Chesapeake Isle. The Civic Association took immediate action to acquire legal status.

During 1973, we incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Maryland and adopted revised Bylaws at our August 27, 1973 Annual Meeting. We were prepared to acquire the dedicated community recreational lands, the roads, and responsibility for enforcing the restrictive covenants. We never got a sniff at them.

In January 1973, the J.C. Cabot Equity Corporation of Valley Stream, New York, acquired all rights and holdings of Brinley's Chesapeake Isle, Inc. for something over one million dollars. This included 117 lots plus all community land and responsibility the Civic Association had incorporated to receive.

On March 2, 1973, the new owners distributed a HUD acquired Statement of Offering. It described a community of 274 acres of land containing 335 lots and 32.6 acres of recreational land including a network of roads. It expressed Cabot's intention to ultimately turn the community land and roads over to the Civic Association. Lots listed from \$9,000 to \$30,000 each.

During 1973, we grew a little more. A survey on 12/31/73 identified 166 property owners. Fifty-three homes were standing, including three owned by Chesapeake Isle, Inc., 24 summer homes, and 26 year round homes. On 2/2/74, Chesapeake Isle, Inc. still had 96 lots.

The Civic Association began to gear for the future. To spur membership growth and allegiance, the first annual Spring Dinner was held on 4/27/74 at the Madison House in North East, and in December our first holiday social was held at the home of Bill and Lonnie Powers. Dues were increase to \$15.00 per year in 1974 and finally to \$25.00 in 1978 to establish resources required for the eventual acquisition of land and responsibility. The countdown had started - by 8/14/74, Cabot owned only 67 lots. In June 1975, we tallied 67 homes of which 32 year round occupancy.

Between 1974 and 1979, Cabot moved from developer to absentee speculator. He owned about 25 lots, many of which were little value because of terrain or percolation problems. Finally in 1979, the Civic Association acquired the community land and roads, and all rights pertaining to enforcement of the restrictive covenants. The Pavilion was built and Chesapeake Isle T-shirts and stickers were designed. In 1980, Turkey Point Road (Rt. 272) was taken over by the State which provided much improved maintenance and snow removal. Beach and road signs were erected and a portable pier was added to the launch ramp area. The first Year Book was published and Santa (Bill Putland) made his first visits to Chesapeake Isle children and grandchildren on Christmas Eve.

The Architectural Review Committee was established in 1981. Operation Identification was begun and the new entrance sign was erected. The 1981 crabbing season was fantastic with as many as five "keepers" being caught on the toss of a weighted chicken neck.

The Erosion Project Planning Committee was begun in 1982. We had our first Easter Egg Hunt and a memorable Halloween Party was held at Merri and Ross Jahren's home. Hay wagon trips to the lighthouse were begun after the Fall Clean-Up Covered Dish Social in 1983 and the

Mooring Area light was put into operation. The fishing was fine that year if you consider cat fish, eels, and perch good fish.

The Erosion Project on the Elk River was begun and completed in 1985. Our mooring puller was designed and built, and the Pavilion driveway was paved. A Long Range Planning Committee was established and our new tractor was purchased. Chesapeake Isle celebrated its 25th year of existence at the Spring Dinner Dance at the Nottingham Inn.