



# Town of Blades

**Charter Revisions  
2024**

# Town of Blades Charter – What is the Charter?

- Defines the structure and town operations of the town government
  - Outlines the duties, powers, and responsibilities of the town local government
  - Includes rules & regulations of electing officials, levying taxes, and using town funds
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- Defines the town's boundaries
  - Ensures that the town's actions & policies align with State laws, and the needs of the local government
  - The Blades Town Charter was last amended on July 30, 2001.

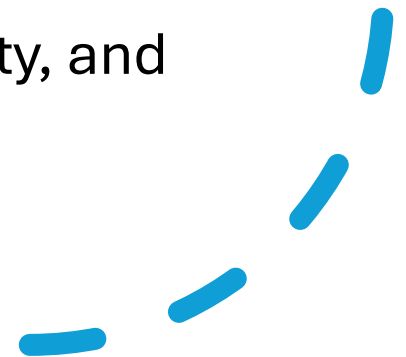
# Town of Blades Charter includes:

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1. Incorporation
2. Territory and Limits
3. Annexation of Territory
4. Structure of Government
5. Qualifications for Mayor and Town Councilman
6. Method of Making Nominations for Mayor and Town Councilman
7. Manner of Holding Municipal Elections
8. Organization and Annual Meetings of Council
9. Regular and Special Meetings
10. Quorum
11. Rules and Minutes of Council
12. Vacancies
13. Disqualifications
14. Contracts
15. Duties of the Mayor
16. Town Administrator
17. Administrative Assistant
18. Police Administrative Assistant
19. Power to Borrow Money and Issue Bonds
20. Town Solicitor
21. Police Department
22. Assessment of Taxes
23. Assessment Appeals
24. Levy of Annual Taxes
25. Collection of Annual Taxes
26. Enumeration of PowerT
27. Town Budget
28. Remedies for Collection of Taxes, Assessments and Other Charges
29. Power to Borrow against Anticipated Revenues
30. Streets
31. Use of Town Money
32. Obstructions, Nuisances and Unsanitary Conditions
33. Municipal Zoning Regulations
34. Actions or Suits against the Town
35. Motor Vehicle Violations
36. Disposal of Property
37. Survival of Power and Validating Section

# Town Charter Revision Process

- Council Workshops – open to the public as advertised in The Star and the Town Website and Bulletin Board
- Estimated hours – approximately 15-18 hours in three long sessions
- Review of other jurisdictions' charters
- Purposes - transparency, clarity, and updating to 2024



## Next Steps

- Town Council will consider suggestions/recommendations based on public hearing and revise draft accordingly.
- Town Council will send amended draft for legal review to the Office of State Representative Daniel Short.
- Town Council must review and make changes required/recommended by Representative Short's office.
- Final version of the Town Charter must be filed with Governor, President Pro Tempore of the State Senate,
- Speaker of the House, Secretary of State, and the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau.
- Wait for the General Assembly. The General Assembly must be in session for 30 days after the filing. If the General Assembly doesn't negate the amendment by a two-thirds majority, it's considered to be assented to.

# Revisions from Council Workshops

1. Use of pronouns
2. Elimination of anachronisms and/or items managed by Sussex County
3. Manner of Holding Annual Municipal Election
4. Assessment
  - Assessment of Taxes
  - Assessment Appeals
5. Power of Town Council to engage federal and state agencies.
6. Clarity of process for collecting delinquent taxes and fees

# Pronouns and Respect

## PREVIOUSLY:

- Non-inclusive:
- Use of “he” was used traditionally in formal writing as a gender-neutral pronoun
- A reflection of social attitude that only men did business

## CHANGED TO:

- Inclusive and gender neutral
- Use of “he/she” as well as “they,” “them,” “their”
- Respectful of individuals’ self-identification

# Elimination of Anachronisms and/or Items Managed by the County - For example:

To establish and regulate pounds and to restrain, prohibit and impound any domestic or wild animal, beast, bird or fowl running at large, and to authorize the destruction of the same, and to impose taxes on the owners of dogs and to regulate the keeping of livestock, poultry and dogs.

To locate, regulate, license, restrain or require the removal of slaughterhouses, wash houses, laundries, canning establishments, phosphate, fish, fertilizer or manure plants or establishments, swine pens, privies, water closets and any businesses or buildings or conditions detrimental to the public health or constituting a public nuisance or of an offensive or noxious nature.

To acquire, suitable place as a lock-up or jail for the Town which shall be used as a place of detention for persons convicted of violation of law or ordinance, or for the detention of persons accused of violation of law or ordinances for a reasonable time, in cases of necessity, prior to hearing and trial; and to provide for the restraint, support, and employment of paupers, beggars and vagrants; provided, that the jails of Sussex County may be used for any such purpose.

# Manner of Holding Annual Municipal Election

## OLD

First Monday of April

2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Council members and Mayor to serve a two-year term.



## NEW



More inclusive of population



First Saturday in April



Noon to 7:00 p.m.



Council members and Mayor to serve a three-year (3) term

# Annual Municipal Election/ Voter Registration

## OLD

Registered in the Town of Blades Books of Registered Voters – in addition to State and County\*

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- 18 years of age

- U.S. citizen for one (1) year

- Citizen of Blades for six months prior to municipal election

*\*Failure to vote in two consecutive contested annual municipal elections will result in removal from the Book of Registered Voters*

## NEW

Utilize the State of Delaware Sussex County Election Log\*

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- 18 years of age
- U.S. Citizen for one (1) year
- Citizen of Blades for thirty (30) days prior to the municipal election
- Must show proof residency in the Town of Blades

*\*No penalty for failure to vote in previous municipal elections*

# Assessment of Taxes

## OLD



Use of Town of Blades elected assessor to make an annual valuation and assessment of all real estate within the Town of Blades



Verbally explained reasoning

## NEW

- State Law – Assessment each 5 years
- Adoption of assessment as compiled by the Sussex County Board of Assessment
- Eliminates the need for Town of Blades elected Assessor.
- Check very carefully the initial assessment letter you receive for accuracy – 30 days to rectify. Appeal to the County.

# Assessment Appeals

## **OLD**

- Appeals process managed by: Town Council in collaboration with the elected Assessor as the Board of Appeals

## **NEW**

- Appeals process managed by Sussex County Board of Assessment Review

## Engagement with Federal and State Agencies

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This new language codifies the right of Town Council to engage federal and state agencies when working with developers.

### **Section 30. Streets**

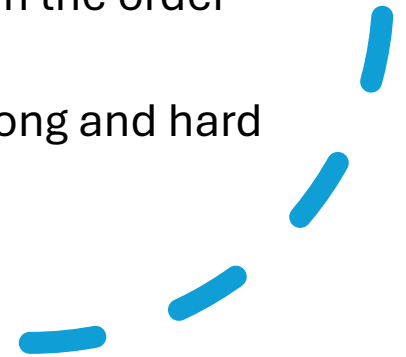
*(a) The Town Council shall have the power and authority to ask the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an Environmental Impact Statement and for the Delaware Department of Transportation traffic study or a traffic analysis on all proposed new development, to lay out, locate and open new streets or to widen and alter existing streets or parts thereof and to vacate or abandon streets or parts thereof, whenever the Town Council shall deem it for the best interest of the Town.*

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Thank you,  
Please  
adhere to the  
following  
requests

1. ALL OPINIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
2. Be sure your questions & concerns are respectful of all
3. You may speak at the podium only for no longer that 3 minutes.
4. DO NOT SPEAK FROM YOUR POSITION IN THE AUDIENCE.
5. PLEASE RESPECT THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS
6. We will revisit each topic of revision in the order each was presented.
7. The Mayor and Council are working long and hard for our Town.





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