

Rye Beach Committee Minutes
Meeting September 18, 2019
Town Hall

Attendees: Beach Committee Members: Larry Rocha, Lori Carbajal, Steve Hillman, Keper Connell, Brad Fulkerson and Town Clerk, Donna Decotis

Meeting Called to order by Chairman Larry Rocha at 7:07 PM

RESIDENT PARKING PERMITS

The committee invited Donna Decotis Town Clerk to address questions regarding the issuance of resident parking permits in terms of total number as well as spaces available for residents throughout the permit only areas.

Ms. Decotis stated that a total of 2,934 parking permits were purchased in the most recent counting though that number may be an over estimate due to people purchasing a permit then replacing the vehicle and purchasing another permit. She stated the ability to purchase a resident parking permit requires the automobile to be registered in the Town of Rye at the household. Steve Hillman asked if there was a point where the number of permits issued to a single residence was ever limited to two per household and Ms Decotis stated she had been working for the town for the past 12 years and during this time there was no limit.

Mr. Hillman had thought at one point while he was a resident going back to the 1990's there had been a limit at some point then changed.

The committee members felt the issuance of more than two per household is fine though an issuance of third, fourth or greater should carry a higher price tag for more vehicles to obtain a beach parking sticker. As an example, with a third parking permit perhaps that fee could be \$30.00 or \$35.00.

It was discussed that one needed to be a full-time resident, property owner or full-time rental resident and that it may be possible to get a permit if you are registering your car in January for the summer season and if you are a renter that is likely gone by May 15th as many rentals are through the winter and end by mid-May many may be obtaining the beach permit even though their lease may be up by the summer season.

Lori Carbajal asked when the window opens to purchase the permits and Ms Decotis stated they are at the window first thing in January. It was suggested by Lori Carbajal that perhaps the beach permit sales should not be in effect until the season warrants the purchase. As an example, no sales of beach parking permits until May 15th. If you are a resident and you register in January though April, you can simply come back to purchase the permit in May. This would stop winter lease holders from gaming the system since they wouldn't have a lease through summer.

Keper Connell inquires as to where the revenue from beach permits went and is it all allocated to the costs of the beach including rescue services such as lifeguards, jet ski and beach grooming. Ms. Decotis said she believe it used to be 75/25 split but now it is 50/50.

Committee members felt if people are using the beach then the revenue should go back into the beach costs. This would be a question for the select-board in terms of next years budgeting.

Brad Fulkerson stated based on math, the revenue from parking permit sales was in excess of \$73,000 and it is perplexing that we can't get trash containers and someone to pick up trash over the weekends because there is no money.

Lori Carbajal stated that is our money for stationary enforcement at Sawyers Beach for no parking/no standing and signage pointing visitors to Wallis Sands State Park if the state is not going to assist Rye which clearly, they have no intent on doing.

Larry Rocha stated it is clear that when there is an attendant at Jenness State Beach parking lot, it runs more smoothly with less gridlock and it seems fewer people taking handicap accessible spaces to load and unload.

Members inquired if stickers were still being tampered with and if they are still running into fake permits as they were a year ago. Ms. Decotis stated the new tamper proof stickers cannot be duplicated and the next step the town is taking is making it impossible to remove the sticker from a vehicle without ripping it into pieces.

Committee members were in agreement the costs should change to an increased fee for issuance over two per household. Also to be looked at is a maximum of three per household.

Brad Fulkerson stated it seems the increase in fines at the resident parking areas especially Sawyers seems to have made a difference with fewer people parking there without a permit.

Larry Rocha and Keper Connell felt the word is out there now and people don't want to go home with a \$100.00 fine.

Committee members felt that overall the summer seemed to go quite well and traffic issues seemed less than in prior years.

DUNE GRASS

Steve Hillman sent a letter to the board of selectmen to which committee members were looking for action regarding the planting of dune grass by ocean front residents presumably on their own property however took liberties well beyond their own property line and have encroached into the public's access and use of the beach at high tide. In some cases, no request from the homeowner was made to the Town of Rye, Conservation Commission nor NH DES and yet the dune grass was planted upon the public's beach.

Larry Rocha stated it was clear based on his site walk with Lori Carbajal and NH DES in 2018 that the planting based on a survey provided by homeowner was definitely planted on the public beach well beyond the owner's easterly boundary. He said the grass is now coming in and has promulgated even beyond the original plantings. Steve Hillman stated it seems perhaps it could be new plantings because it seems much larger in area and height than when viewed in the spring. Lori Carbajal stated on the site walk with NH DES the question was raised "who governs the area between where the state owns (mean high tide) and the property owner's verified boundary?" The state's response was the town has jurisdiction there.

She stated there is a misconception that owners own out to mean high tide but that is not how the deeds are viewed. In fact the deeds for the home in question has a restriction to build no structure within 30' of "Sea Beach" the eastern boundary. She stated a structure is according to the building department anything man puts there, cement, gravel, patio, stonewall, driveway etc. She stated you cannot have rules for the rest of us with setbacks and a separate one for ocean front owners. If the deed says 30' then the patio may be illegal based on the deed let alone the planting on the public's space including residents of Rye that are part of the same original plan to

use the access ways and beach. Steve Hillman said what's happened is in some cases where permission was asked to plant sea grass on their own property, there was no follow up by the conservation commission or other boards because there's nothing in place and there should be. He further stated it is a matter that can quickly get out of control if we don't act. Additionally, Steve added, Surfrider is aware now of the situation.

JET SKI

Steve Hillman inquired as to the new jet ski and Keper and Larry's thoughts on the Jet Ski at a cost of \$40,000.00. Keper felt it was aggressive but there is a need to have rescue abilities for people that are out that need assistance.

BEACH PERMIT PROCESS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Committee members all agreed a member of the committee should be part of the permitting process of those using the beach for commercial purposes. That is shortsighted to leave the group out of the process when much can be addressed in terms of issues and resolution for prior seasons problems.

Meeting Adjourned 8:31 PM