

Rye Beach Committee Minutes Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Members present: Frank Hwang, Mary-Ann Sullivan, Brendan Carney, Seana Zelazo, Roseann Vozella Clark

Joined by: Bill Epperson, Selectman- Select Board Representative to the Beach Committee

Assistance from Janice Ireland and Becky Bergeron

Guest Speakers: Steve Borne

Frank called the meeting to order at 7:00. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance was taken and all members and guests were alone in the room.

Frank read the attestation. There were no public comments. The minutes of the November meeting were taken by Mary-Ann were gratefully accepted by the members. There was no Beach Committee Meeting in December.

An update on items discussed at the last meeting was delivered by Frank and Seana. Both the Elementary and RJH are interested in having their students work with us on a possible beach clean-up on Earth Day this year. This activity will involve students and their families and assist us in getting the word out about being good stewards of our environment.

The second issue that Frank addressed was the follow up on the off- season water testing at area beaches. He has been in touch with Steve Jones at UNH. Frank is trying to have UNH help with water sample testing if Surf Riders and others help with the water collection during the shoulder season. There are currently no funds available from the town for off season testing (from Labor Day to Memorial Day.)

The last update Frank shared was concerning the website of Ogunquit River Watershed Action Alliance website

<https://www.townofogunquit.org/protecttheriver>. They may help us with ideas to educate and inform the public. He suggested beach committee members check out the website. Frank will try to have a group member address us at a future meeting.

Steve Borne (the guest speaker) talked about the Parsons Creek watershed citing various things that have been done by the town, and the EPA during the past six

years to address pollution issues. He brought the committee's attention to information that he has compiled from EPA sources that is in a report of the Rye Civic League beginning 2015. This information includes shellfish studies, septic system issues and marsh restoration.

Steve said there are monthly reports up to 2019 that report issues of levels of pollution in certain areas of the watershed that far surpass the acceptable levels set by the state guidelines. Steve said that many of these issues have been addressed to different select boards over the years with little or no changes.

Steve mentioned that half the money from the resident beach permits in the past has gone to the Beach Commission. He felt this money could be used for water testing. Communication to the general public concerning pollution levels being elevated could be much improved.

Selectman Epperson stated the this has been a problem for at least the past fifty years in certain areas of the watershed like Stinky Creek near Petey's Restaurant and Concord Point. He felt animals are often a part of the problem for example ducks, and deer on the marshes.

There was a brief discussion between Steve and Bill about the number of variances given through the planning board for leech fields allowing encroachment to wetland areas and whether it was a Master Plan or Zoning issue.

Mary-Ann brought up the increased number of people on the beaches and in the neighborhoods not wearing masks. She wondered if there could be better communication about this.

Frank thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roseann Vozella Clark