

## **Rye Beach Committee**

### **Rye Beach Committee Minutes Wednesday September 15, 2021- 7:00 pm – Town Hall**

**Members present:** Frank Hwang, Mary-Ann Sullivan, Seana Zelazo, Mary Mitchell, Deirdre Larkin, Assistance from Janice Ireland

**Call to Order:** Frank called the meeting to order @ 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment:** An email to the Beach Committee from Cybele Grier was read.

Hi Chairman Hwang. My name is Cybele Grier and I reside at 1311 Ocean Blvd in Rye. First I would like to thank you and the committee for focusing on the water quality of our beaches. I live across from the beach access road to Pirates Cove and enjoy swimming in the ocean as many days throughout the year as I can (even in the winter).

This summer (as well as last summer) I have been dismayed by the number of days we have experienced high levels of bacteria. My concern is the cause(s) of this situation and what the Beach Committee in conjunction with the other various state agencies and local committees are doing to determine root cause and then enact steps to eliminate or at least mitigate the problem. For example, is anyone working with NHDES to determine if the major contributor is from human fecal matter being discharged into the salt marshes and then into the ocean from the septic systems up and down Ocean Blvd. Is anyone working with local Code Enforcement and Animal Control to enforce dog owners clean up after their dogs. Without fail, every time I walk the Rye beaches during the season in which dogs can run free, I find dog waste left behind by its owner. There must be more that can be done to ensure our beautiful beaches are environmentally safe for us to enjoy.

I am interested in helping the Committee in any way I can to achieve this end result. Please feel free to reach out to me by email or phone. Thank you.

Kind Regards,

- Discussion on possible reasons for beach closures. More construction/development? Are there violators of septic systems and is this contributing to the problem? Is this being addressed? Have Water Quality/Environmental sub committee work with Conservation Commission.

**Approval of Minutes:** All approved minutes.

#### **Agenda:**

- Update from Mary on the new Parking/Beach Committee. She said they have not met yet and schedules are being coordinated, meeting probably next week.
- Update on 2 properties at both Cable Road (grass planting and chair placement to extend the mean high tide line) and Pirates Cove (2 rows of grass planted and taped off) in front of 1228 Ocean Boulevard. Need update from Selectman Epperson.
- Coming out of the Beach Committee meetings was the confirmation from Tyler McGill at Summer Sessions Surf Shop to rescind the Right to Know (RTK). In return, the Beach Committee has summarized the concerns that have come up via various forms of communication.

Here is the summary list that we have received from residents and that have been discussed during our meetings.

- Beaches are not for making money
- Truck takes up two plus parking spots at Sawyers
- Coaches have told Rye residents in the water and beach the time (M to F) in the water is only for Summer Sessions by permit
- Have told residents they cannot park at the northernmost spot at Sawyers as it is for the truck (aside from the lifeguard parking)
- Use town resources including lifeguards, DPW, police for commercial, for-profit benefit without giving anything back to the town
- Do not give back. Take, take, take then disappear for the winter after they have made their money
- Not enough space safely in the water for residents to surf, boogie board, swim, etc.
- My child was hit by one of their boards.
- Commercial vehicles should not have parking permits when we don't have enough space for our residents to park.
- They do not support the town, its initiatives, etc. Why should we allow them to use our town beaches?
- Town beaches are zoned non-commercial. Why are they allowed to host for-profit camps?
- Draws undue attention to Sawyers aka non-residents parking at town beach
- Takes up tons of space on beach, forcing residents who are already there to move
- In past years, documented over permitted 30 surf campers per session (quote was over 50 in 2019 sessions)
- Create additional trash on the beach from camps. Why not do beach clean ups?
- No education on surf etiquette / protocol or keeping beach clean, create dangerous environments for kids, parents and anyone else in the water
- No path to progression like other sports, just beginner programs. Not creating proficient surfers just floating "buoys"
- Promote pick up drop off, parking on eel pond side of 1A which are both illegal at town beaches

Questions (vs complaints):

- Why can't the camps not run at Jenness? Or walk from the shop versus using truck and conducting pick up drop off at Sawyers?
- Why can't the truck not drop off boards and then pick up boards at end of day? Why does it need to take up two spots all day every day?
- Is the town liable with Summer Sessions accidents/injuries since the town approved a permit for them and do they have an emergency plan in place for these incidents?

Alignment and recommendations to BOS on commercial enterprises, follow up with Summer Sessions. The committee has not had a response from Summer Sessions/McGills to the summary of comments/complaints that was sent on August 31, 2021. Here is a summary of recommendations and questions to the BOS based on the complaints above.

The Committee is looking to try to find a balance with the town and commercial enterprises. The Committee is concerned that if nothing changes there may be a call to ban all commercial

enterprises from town beaches. The Committee has reached out to local commercial enterprises to engage in the discussion to find mutually beneficial solutions with minimal response.

For all commercial enterprises:

- Ask/Ensure commercial enterprises provide some measure of “common good” e.g. Beach cleanup, trash pickup, fund awareness initiatives, donate/sponsor town events, support lifeguards, create scholarship for Rye residents for summer camp or other lessons

(It is noted that Summer Sessions has offered discounts to the fire department for wet suits, as well as offered community programs with Boys and Girls Clubs, but not with any town of Rye specific groups. By example, Common Roots works actively with the PTA on its programs like the PTA supported mindfulness yoga at Parsons Field)

- Consider not allowing commercial vehicles to have beach permits (for parking committee to discuss)
- Confirm or clarify the zoning regulations at Sawyers via Board of Selectman and/or article in next election
- Stricter enforcement of pickup/drop off regulations.

Summer Sessions specific:

- Allow Summer Sessions truck to pick up and drop off gear only during summer prime hours, having alternative “safety” vehicle or method to be on site.
  - Create an emergency plan to account for potential accidents, and share that plan.
  - Utilize a walkie talkie like lifeguards to use for communication accidents since cell phone service is bad at Sawyers vs relying on driving a vehicle to their shop to communicate
  - Ensure coaches and staff are clear that limiting/restricting Rye residents to park or limit anyone else to partake and enjoy the ocean or beach for swimming, surfing or boogie boarding will not be tolerated.
  - Continue to limit sessions to 15-20 students per session or only have sessions once a day (aka AM or PM not both) or diversify location of camps (e.g. move some to Jenness)  
(Committee acknowledges this summer that 15 students and having lessons North of the drain pipe aka Browns Cottage area created more harmony)
  - Recommend additional curriculum options be added, incl intermediate or advanced lessons, ocean safety education
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- Discussion of exploring more crosswalks with the state to make streets safer. One priority was Bass Beach/Rye Rocks Sea Road, near Beach Club and Philbricks Beach. Identifying state roads vs. town roads.
  - Recommendation of sub groups: 2 per committee were assigned
    - A. Beach sticker/access Permit parking, bike racks, cross walks) – Mary & Deirdre
    - B. Commercial activity boundaries – Frank & Brendan
    - C. Water quality/environmental – Seanna & Frank
    - D. Educational activities awareness to the public – Mary Ann & Brendan

- Reached out to the PTA, they wanted someone from the Beach Committee to attend their meeting. Mary Ann Sullivan will be attending the October meeting.
- Beach walk is scheduled for Pirates Cove beach on Friday October 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 pm.
- Need to set date for a beach clean up. Organizing this needs to be planned. Consult/partner with Blue Ocean Society or Surfrider NH. Invite Surf rider NH to our next meeting.
- Discussion on donors vs. sponsors. Any donations accepted by the committee would change it's charter so focus on sponsors willing to cover cost of needs like beach clean up, poster supplies etc.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

The next meeting will be October 20, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre Larkin