

**Rye Beach Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, July 18, 2022  
6:30 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

***Members present: Chair Mary-Ann Sullivan, Mary Connolly-Mitchell, Seana Zelazo, Selectman Bill Epperson, Alternates Anne Baker and Dierdre Larkin***

***Others Present: Interim Town Administrator/Police Chief Kevin Walsh***

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**II. Discussion with Town Administrator/Police Chief Kevin Walsh  
Re: Parking survey suggested by Giles Ham**

Selectman Epperson noted that he was not present at the last meeting when there was discussion about a parking survey, which was brought to the Committee by a resident who was volunteering his services to do the work. He noted that the town has had numerous parking surveys. He does not want to discourage anyone from offering voluntary help. However, the help has to be measurable, efficient and actual. He asked for the Committee to give him the details on what was discussed.

Chair Sullivan explained that Giles Ham has a background in this type of work. He was offering on a voluntary basis to do a check on the cars and provide the information to the Committee and town, as he thought it would be helpful because there has been a significant increase in beachgoers.

Alternate Baker commented that there hasn't been a study since the change in the number of parking passes each household can receive. She noted that Mr. Ham offered to do the study next year, as this year is too late. The study would involve volunteers who would collect the information.

Chair Sullivan asked if they would be counting cars with parking passes at certain times of the day.

Alternate Larkin stated this is being done to give information about the parked vehicle volume at different times of the day.

Selectman Epperson clarified this comes down to parking permits. He noted there is no baseline to compare that to.

Alternate Baker pointed out this would be the baseline. It's just a check to see if there's been any difference with the reduced number of parking passes per household.

Member Connolly-Mitchell noted that it would also tell when the busiest times are when beach passes are using the spots.

Alternate Larkin stated he is volunteering and that is greatly appreciated. She is just not sure what they would use the data for.

Administrator Walsh noted that a parking study was done in 2014. The study considered permitted and public parking, eliminating parking in areas to improve sight line, and creation of seasonal and metered parking. In regards to metered parking, he pointed out that once the town starts to make money on the parking along Ocean Blvd, the State will take the money back. The costs for setting up that infrastructure is astronomical. One of the ideas that came out of the parking study was the possibility of remote parking areas. The study looked at Rye Junior High, Rye Elementary, the outer marker and Goss Farm. It was discovered that the remote parking will only work during the warm weather days after July 4<sup>th</sup> to the first two weeks in August. There will then be a reduction in the number of cars, as college and some public-school students go back to school. For that short window of time, it was not feasible to consider remote parking. In regards to the elimination of parking spaces to open up sight line views, the study showed that the line of cars in some areas act as a safety barrier. Cars parked on both sides of Ocean Blvd slow down the speed of traffic. He noted that the accident and fatality rate along Ocean Blvd in Rye is very low. He noted that there were some minor revisions made after the parking study, such as parking boxes for "no parking" at the end of the driveways along Ocean Blvd, as well as some of the side roads. This was done to provide a line of sight for the homeowners coming out of their driveways. There was also a review of the parking signs and the replacement of weatherworn signs. He noted that there is a parking ordinance that supports the parking signs. Parking enforcement is completely funded by the fines that are written. Sixty percent of the fines go to parking enforcement and forty percent goes to the general fund. Over the four months, the fines collected is about \$80,000 to \$100,000. The system has been in place for a while and it does work. In regards to the parking study, he asked what the mission would be. He noted that the town is also working on a project on the corner of Ocean Blvd and Perkins Road, near the Dunes Motel. The goal is to try to reduce the width of Perkins Road so it's not so wide and inviting, as people will swing in to Perkins Road to do a U-turn in driveways. The goal is to also get a curbing for the sidewalk to encourage more people to use the sidewalk and the crosswalk across Ocean Blvd.

Selectman Epperson commented that they don't want to discourage anyone from producing any actionable things that can be done. If Mr. Ham could put down on paper what he specifically wants to do, then the Select Board could take it into consideration.

Administrator Walsh asked about Mr. Ham's credentials.

Alternate Baker noted that he owned a civil engineering firm that did traffic studies. He is now retired.

Administrator Walsh pointed out that if Mr. Ham comes up with an idea and it goes to the Select Board, it will be challenged by the folks who live in town because there are a lot of engineers who live in Rye. The community is going to want to know where the idea came from and what data supports it. It's important to know the gentleman's credentials.

Alternate Baker noted that she doesn't think he was going to project any ideas. She thinks he was just going to be looking at numbers and provide the data to the Committee.

After some further discussion, the Committee agreed to ask Mr. Ham to provide a memo of what he would like to do, which can be submitted to the Select Board for their consideration.

### **III. Approval of Minutes – June 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Motion by Seana Zelazo to approve the minutes of June 20, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Mary Connolly-Mitchell. All in favor.**

### **IV. Organization of the Committee**

- Chair

**Motion by Bill Epperson to nominate Mary-Ann Sullivan as chair. Seconded by Seana Zelazo. All in favor.**

- Vice-Chair

**Motion by Mary-Ann Sullivan to nominate Mary Connolly-Mitchell as vice-chair. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor**

- Recommendation for open seat

**Motion by Mary-Ann Sullivan to recommend Anne Baker for the open seat. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.**

A letter of recommendation for Anne Baker to become a sitting member will be sent to the Select Board by Chair Sullivan, along with a letter of intent from Alternate Baker.

### **V. Old Beach Road**

No further complaints have been received in regards to parking issues on Old Beach Road.

Chair Sullivan agreed to send an email to Administrator Walsh informing him that the Committee has received sporadic complaints about cars blocking the right-of-way on Old Beach Road. She will ask Administrator Walsh if he can have officers make an extra patrol in that area, especially on the weekends.

## **VI. Beach Committee Mission – Items to Focus On**

The Committee reviewed the Beach Committee's mission, which is to support what the Select Board is doing with recommendations and observations regarding the environment and safety at the beaches in Rye. The goal is to promote safe, healthy and clean use of Rye Town Beaches; to ensure the voices of Rye concerned citizens are heard; and to promote shared and equitable access to the beaches, while working in partnership with the Select Board, Police and Fire Department.

Chair Sullivan asked the members to give their thoughts on things they feel the Committee should be working on.

Selectman Epperson suggested putting something in the next town newsletter about beach access. They should also mention the email address for contacting the Committee.

Chair Sullivan suggested focusing on water testing. There was some discussion with former chair Hwang about shoulder season testing. She asked Selectman Epperson if there are funds to cover extra testing in the shoulder season, which would be done by the Surfrider Foundation.

Selectman Epperson agreed to look into this.

Member Zelazo agreed to contact Surfriders for more information about what they offer for testing.

It was agreed that water testing is very important and citizens are genuinely interested in that information. It was also agreed that access onto the beaches and safety is important for the Committee to stay focused on.

Selectman Epperson agreed to follow up with DPW Director Jason Rucker in regards to accessibility to the beaches.

There was some discussion about trash being left in areas where people are parking beyond the State Beach at Wallis Sands, at the end of Central Road, and up to Odiorne Point. This is something the Committee will keep in mind to address.

Chair Sullivan noted that she heard from another teacher at the elementary school who would like to have her class involved with the posters for next year. She suggested the Committee continue to work with the schools and to keep the student and community involved.

There was some discussion about the Rye 400<sup>th</sup> Celebration and how the Beach Committee could be involved. The celebration will be a year long event starting in December 2023 with the kick-off starting immediately following the Christmas Parade with a candlelight stroll through the center of town ending at the tree lighting ceremony. The Beach Committee discussed the possibility of having a beach cleanup day during the Rye 400<sup>th</sup> Celebration to involve the whole community. They also discussed the possibility of the beach posters having a 400<sup>th</sup> Celebration theme.

Chair Sullivan suggested that the Committee discuss one or two of the ideas at each meeting. Committee members can then work on the ideas between meetings and bring updates back to the monthly meetings.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Bill Epperson to adjourn at 7:25 p.m. Seconded by Seana Zelazo. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F Ledger