

# **RYE PERKINS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE**

## **Meeting**

**Thursday, April 4, 2019, 6:00 p.m.**

**Rye Town Hall**

*Voting Members Present: Chairman Gregg Mikolaities, Vice-Chair Mary Westover, Secretary John Bellino, and Karin Nelson*

*Non-voting members Present: Selectman Keriann Roman, Beach Committee Member Steve Hillman and Police Chief Kevin Walsh (arrived at 6:20 p.m.)*

*Also Present: Bill Lowney, 2175 Ocean Blvd.*

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Mikolaities called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

### **II. Roll Call**

The members of the committee introduced themselves.

### **III. Review Committee Charge**

## **Rye Perkins Road Safety Committee Charge**

### **Charge to the Committee**

- 1. Become familiar with Perkins Road and the concerns of its residents regarding beach going motor vehicle traffic in the summertime as it poses a safety risk to residents and pedestrians to include cars speeding, turning around in driveways, executing unsafe U-turns, and parking adjacent to fire hydrants and driveways resulting in unsafe conditions.**
- 2. Meet as necessary to review the Rye Beach Committee's annual reports, recommendations and meeting minutes; Town ordinances and the Tighe and Bond Ocean Boulevard Parking Assessment Study as a basis for providing recommendations and suggestions to the Selectmen for making Perkins Road safer during the summer months, taking into account consideration of any unintended consequences, e.g. a total ban on parking could push parking into other residential neighborhoods and could affect businesses.**

- 3. Produce and present a final report to the Selectmen by April 30 2019, allowing time for the Board to analyze it, develop next steps and implement them prior to beginning of the summer season.**

**The Rye Perkins Road Committee shall follow the Rules of Procedure for Committees established by the Board of Selectmen.**

#### **IV. Review and approval of March 28, 2019 minutes**

**Motion by John Bellino to approve the minutes of March 28, 2019 as presented. Seconded by Karin Nelson. All in favor.**

#### **V. Update from Selectman Roman**

Selectman Roman noted that the select board is meeting with NH DOT in a non-public session on Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss Ocean Boulevard and to see what kind of help they will give the town. She also noted that Route 1A is a right-of-way and DOT has an easement from the center line extending out 25ft on either side. DOT is not in charge of Jenness Beach; however, they would deal with turning into the State Parks or onto Perkins (traffic flow on Rte. 1A). She asked the members if they have any items they would like her to discuss with DOT.

Vice-Chair Westover stated that they would have to work with DOT with regard to the wide mouth onto Perkins Road (intersection of Perkins and Ocean).

The committee agreed that Selectman Roman should bring this to their attention at the meeting.

Chair Mikolaities stated that it is important that the State get personnel there on the weekends to help with directing traffic. Enforcement seems to be the biggest issue.

Vice-Chair Westover asked if DOT and the State Parks would collaborate in terms of personnel issues.

Selectman Roman reminded the board that the select board is holding a joint planning session with the State and DOT would be a part of that meeting. The meeting with just DOT is specifically for the RV (campers) issue because that is what passed at Town Meeting. She would like to bring up some issues to DOT, in advance of the work session, so they can start to think about solutions.

Chair Mikolaities agreed that personnel would be more of a State Parks issue. He commented that DOT handles striping, maintenance, traffic control and signage.

Vice-Chair Westover asked what the intent is with the RV's.

Member Hillman stated that the Beach Committee's thought was if they could get the RV's to park somewhere other than on the crowded stretch of Ocean Boulevard, it would help with the chaos. There is stress in that area. Part of it is the size of the RV's and the amount of parking that they take up. The warrant article that was passed was to get the conversation started with DOT to see what they can or can't do.

Selectman Roman pointed out that the restriction is going to be for a certain size. The intent is to not prohibit Class A campers because they can fit into a regular parking spot. The size would be for RV's 25ft and up (Class C and above).

Chair Mikolaities suggested that speed limits, signage and traffic control devices be brought up to DOT.

Selectman Roman commented that a bicycle group had requested signage making it clear that bicycles have full use of the lane. That is not the town's jurisdiction so this will also be brought up to DOT at the meeting. She asked the members of the committee to email her if they come up with other things that should be discussed with DOT.

- **Joint Work Session with the Selectmen, State Parks, and N.H. DOT will be held on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 p.m., Rye Town Hall**  
(A member of the Beach Committee and Perkins Safety Road Committee are asked to attend.)

Note: *Selectman Roman left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.*

## **VI. Update from Chief Walsh**

Police Chief Walsh stated that he spoke with Ryan McGill (*Surf Shop*) and Mrs. Leary (*owner of property located at 2281 Ocean Blvd*) about the parking at the business property and in the parking lot. They also discussed the entrance and exit to the parking lot and business locations. (Chief Walsh presented a plan to the committee showing Mrs. Leary's parking expectations for her property, as was stated to him. He also reviewed on the plan the location of where he plans to install the rubber posts that were discussed at a previous meeting. The location of the posts will prevent cars from backing up into a public right-of-way. It is also going to eliminate cars from stopping and "stacking up" for unloading and drop-offs.) He noted that in the proposed location for the posts are five parking spaces that have been used for years. If the posts are put in place, those spaces cannot go straight in. It will have to be angled parking. Cars parked in these spaces are backing into the streets. The recommendation being made now, is to eliminate that in order to eliminate the congestion in that area. The posts will also help to eliminate the "temporary parking", "quick loading and unloading", "drop-off" area and "stacking" of vehicles for when the lot is full.

Vice-Chair Westover pointed out that there is a pathway in front of the building, which Ryan McGill noted they were required to have. She always thought the cars were parking right up at the building.

Chief Walsh explained that when they went to the Planning Board for a change of use, they were required to keep a barrier in front of where the vehicles park. The Planning Board wanted a pedestrian walkway to prevent vehicles from going right up to the building. (The business building at 2281 Ocean Blvd has apartments on the second floor, a pizza restaurant, a store and surfboard rentals.)

Vice-Chair Westover noted that there is activity going on at the back of the building in addition to cars going in and out.

Member Hillman stated that most people who are renting surfboards are taking them across the street, rather than loading them into a car.

Vice-Chair Westover commented it is during the times they are loading their trucks for summer surf camps.

Chief Walsh stated that a recommendation could be to have the building department and planning look at the parking plan for this property. It is going to be a challenge because it has been there for so long. He noted that they are charging for parking in front of the building, which is increasing the congestion in front of the businesses. It is also eliminating the parking for people who want to go into those businesses.

After some more discussion, Vice-Chair Westover commented that there seems to be no rules down there. People are kind of doing what they want to do.

Chief Walsh pointed out that the area and parking is not defined. If it is wide open, it is more inviting.

Referring back to the draft and the recommendations, Member Nelson stated that she does not remember them saying the south side for the sidewalk. She thought they discussed the north side.

Vice-Chair Westover stated that because the crosswalk is in front of the Dunes, it would make more sense for people to come down the south side to get to the crosswalk. She also thinks that the town does not need to put in a sidewalk. There should be a passageway provided for pedestrians. It does not have to be as elaborate as a sidewalk. It could just be the shoulder of the road, which exists on the north side but doesn't for the twenty-one parking spots on the south side of Perkins Road. She would like to encourage the Selectmen to look at this from a safety standpoint and not a parking standpoint. From a safety standpoint, they may want to reevaluate the parking ordinance on Perkins Road to align it with the current conditions that were not occurring back in the 50's when those spots were put in place. Parking is being allowed on Perkins Road because it has always been there. She would encourage this committee, the Beach Committee and the Board of Selectmen to reevaluate that and align it with current conditions to make it more relevant.

Chair Mikolaities asked if this recommendation is covered under #1.

Vice-Chair Westover stated she is pushing towards eliminating the twenty-one spots on Perkins Road.

Member Nelson pointed out that this can't be done until a study is done.

Vice-Chair Westover replied it could be indicated that this is an option.

Member Bellino stated that he agrees with Member Nelson. He understands what is being said and would be open to it but a traffic study would have to be done.

Member Hillman stated that the Beach Committee discussed this. The committee came to the conclusion that if some other changes could be put in place, maybe it will help and not be such a big problem. The changes should be put in place first to see the effect. If it helps a lot, then it can be done because there are controls in place.

Member Bellino stated that the committee has made some good recommendations that will hopefully alleviate some of the pain the residents on Perkins are feeling. He would like to see what happens there. He would also like to see a traffic study, taking into consideration that there might be an issue with those twenty-one parking spots. An expert would be able to say whether there is an issue there and how it can be solved. He reiterated that he would like to see how the first recommendations work and have a professional say whether those spots work.

Vice-Chair Westover stated that she does not want everyone to lose sight of the fact that this whole thing is about safety. The safety issues that were addressed with the Board of Selectmen initially were situations that were occurring from the Dunes lot up to Big Rock Road, more specifically Bernard. That is the "safety bubble". Stuff is happening in this area that is really not safe.

Member Bellino asked if she thinks it is all associated with those twenty-one cars.

Vice-Chair Westover replied not those specific twenty-one cars. It's the other cars that are "circling around" who are attracted onto Perkins Road because they know there is free parking on that side of the street.

Chief Walsh stated that he agrees with Member Nelson and Member Bellino that the data is needed to show exactly what is being indicated. If the select board has that information in front of them it will be a "no brainer" for them.

Vice-Chair Westover pointed out that she is not opposed to cars going up and down Perkins Road and parking if that works. However, in the last five years, it has become very uncomfortable and too unsafe to have all of that activity on that small strip of the street. It is because of the escalation in vehicle traffic and also vehicles parking further into the neighborhood, which accentuates the pedestrian traffic on Perkins Road.

Member Hillman stated that the Beach Committee has been in place for five years. The committee is getting traction so there are other things that are happening within the town that is trying to mitigate a lot of these issues. The town is really starting to take a hard look and starting to make headway. They have to see how it works. It might work great and everyone will be happy. He commented the town has to start somewhere because there is nothing right now.

Chair Mikolaities noted that is why they have short term and long term recommendations. The short term does not cost the town anything and is a week's worth of work. However, they cannot lose sight that there needs to be a Plan B.

After discussion, it was agreed that something concerning those twenty-one spaces could be added under "Safety Concerns and Observations" in the draft. Vice-Chair Westover will work on the wording for that addition.

Chief Walsh stated that he met with the Ogunquit Police Chief and looked at some of their parking. Ogunquit has four miles of beach. They have town parking lots to put cars in. Their main focus is usually the nightlife like Hampton. When the beaches clear out, they get the people heading to the bars which creates parking issues. A lot of the parking is in town. There is no parking allowed on any of the streets leading down to the beach. He is going to meet again with the Ogunquit Chief to discuss their intersections. He is also going to make a trip to the Town of Wells to see if their streets are all no parking down to the beaches. If that is the case and is best for safety, then this might be able to be done in Rye over time. He noted that they will also need to go inland about a mile with no parking on all the side roads. They have to be sure that they are not pushing the problem into someone else's neighborhood. He stated that he has worked for Rye for twenty-four years and there has always been parking there. The congestion has changed over the years for a number of reasons. He noted that he is going to be meeting with the York Police Chief to learn more about the electronic parking ticket system, which will eliminate handwritten parking tickets.

## **VII. Draft Letter to Selectmen**

Throughout the meeting, the committee reviewed the draft letter to the Selectmen prepared by Chair Mikolaities.

The committee suggested the following revisions:

### **"Tasks Completed" add:**

- **Took input from the public.**
- **Members of the committee, as individuals, conducted site surveys of Perkins Road.**

### **Other additions to draft:**

- **Re-word the last sentence in the first paragraph, to indicate the section of the road; *"from the Dunes to Bernard"***
- **"Vehicles backing up onto Perkins Road" – describe that a little bit more in terms of speed. Suggested – *"unsafe backing to find a parking space"***
- **Vehicles stopping to unload on both sides of street.**

- **State of N.H. Park System** – revise to say “*N.H. State Parks needs to look at their staffing levels to make sure they are adequate to handle the facilities*”. Jenness State Beach is one of their busiest spots.
- **Term of impact** – Memorial Day to Labor Day, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**“Short Term Recommendations” add:**

- Along with “no parking” signs add signs for “no loading/unloading”.
- Have planning and building department review parking in front lot at 2281 Ocean Boulevard, according to plans and files dated 7/22/2013. This area is approved for 9 spaces. Cars have been observed to be parking on Ocean Boulevard frontage.
- Stamp “no parking on pavement” all the way up to the stop sign on the south side of Perkins (Ocean Blvd to entrance to parking lot).

**“Long Term Recommendations” change:**

- Move recommendation #5 up to #1.

**“Safety Concerns and Observations” add:**

- Statement concerning the twenty-one parking spaces (to be drafted).

## **VIII. Public Input**

**Bill Lowney, 2175 Ocean Boulevard**, spoke in regards to the possibility of the study looking at the spaces in front of his house on the south side of Cable Road on the corner of Ocean Boulevard.

**The committee agreed that all the roads leading onto Ocean Boulevard should be included in the study.**

## **IX. Action items for next meeting**

- Vice-Chair Westover to work on and send wording regarding the twenty-one spaces to Chair Mikolaities.
- Chair Mikolaities to work on the changes for the draft. A final copy will be sent to the members before the next meeting so they may review.
- Chair Mikolaities will attend the meeting with State Parks, DOT and the Selectmen on Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30.
- Chief Walsh, Chair Mikolaities and Dennis McCarthy to revisit the site for finalizing plans.
- Chief Walsh will follow up with Mrs. Leary (Dunes property owner).
- **NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., Rye Town Hall (second floor)

**Motion by John Bellino to adjourn at 7:19 p.m. Seconded by Mary Westover. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted, Dyana F. Ledger