

RYE PERKINS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, March 21, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Rye Town Hall

Voting Members Present: Chairman Gregg Mikolaities, Vice-Chair Mary Westover (by telephone), Secretary John Bellino, Karin Nelson and Doug Abrams.

Non-voting members Present: Police Chief Kevin Walsh.

Also present: Beach Committee Member Larry Rocha, Perkins Road

I. Call to Order

Chairman Mikolaities called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Roll Call

The members of the committee and the public introduced themselves.

III. Charge to Committee

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. Approval of the Minutes of March 7, 2019

The following corrections were noted:

- It should be noted the Bill Marney should be **Bill Lowney**.
- Page 4, 6th paragraph, last sentence should read: **Whatever is done on Perkins may affect other streets and they have to be mindful of that.**
- Page 6, 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence should read: **He thinks that is an issue because people may not park but they will stop.**
- Page 9, **Karin Nelson** seconded the motion to adjourn.

Motion by Karin Nelson to approve the minutes of March 7, 2019 as amended. Seconded by John Bellino. Vote: 3-0. Abstained: Doug Abrams

V. Discuss on site meeting with Public Works and Police

Chair Mikolaities noted that he and Chief Walsh met with Public Works Director Dennis McCarthy since the last meeting. (He presented a sketch of the intersection of Perkins Road and Ocean Blvd to the committee.) He stated that one of the things they identified was the first couple hundred feet and how it can be cleaned up. He noted that Perkins Road is very wide in this area. One of the things that he has heard is that this is just a “free” right turn move because of its width. One idea discussed with Mr. McCarthy is bringing the striping further down on the road when this area is restriped this spring. A future project would be pulling out the pavement in the DOT right-of-way to make it smaller.

Chief Walsh noted there is a “no parking” sign in that area that needs to be replaced. There will also be two more signs added. They also discussed, with Mr. McCarthy, the idea of having a sign that reads “no standing parking” to address the issue of people stopping to unload. He continued that making the pavement smaller was done on Dow Lane. It was done in stages to see how it would work. Mr. McCarthy first talked about the striping and the possibility of putting up temporary bollards, which were also used on Dow Lane. He pointed out that if the pavement is eventually cut out, they want to avoid making it grass because people will then use it as a crossing area. The idea is to have something that grows there so people cannot walk through. However, it has to be something that will grow low so it does not block sight at the intersection.

Chair Mikolaities pointed out the property line for the condominiums on the plan.

Chief Walsh stated that the two parking signs will be there as an obstacle to keep people from pulling off. He will also look into having an extra sign about “no standing parking” to prevent people from unloading. He continued that Mr. McCarthy is going to install bollards at the entrance to the parking lot to define the entrance and exit. If the entrance to Perkins Road is narrower, it will not be as inviting or easy. Vehicles will continue to move forward, which will

push them past the business. Also, if there is no standing parking, it will open it up for people who are walking because there will be fewer vehicles sitting. He noted that the bollards are temporary and are made of rubber. It is not going to damage anyone's car but it will discourage people from driving in and out.

Member Abrams commented that this addresses the intersection but that is not the extent of the committee.

Chief Walsh explained it addresses the safety concerns, starting in this location, and moving down Perkins Road. This will discourage a lot of vehicles from coming onto Perkins Road from Ocean Boulevard.

Larry Rocha stated that this is a good idea because the turn at that intersection is dangerous, especially for people who are walking from the beach because they do not always go to the crosswalk. A lot of people are crossing in this area. He pointed out that what he has noticed, more than loading and unloading in that area, is loading and unloading in front of the Dunes Hotel on Ocean Boulevard. That is even more dangerous.

Chief Walsh stated this is a challenge because it is a common thing that has been going on. Also, there is going to be a challenge with the Jenness State Beach parking lot design being changed this year. There are going to be a lot of changes right out on Ocean Boulevard, which will fall under the Police Department and enforcement. He is trying to work with the State Parks Manager on how her staff and the Police Department can all work together.

Mr. Rocha pointed out the area of concern on the plan, for the committee, for vehicles loading and unloading on Ocean Boulevard.

Speaking to Member Abrams, Chair Mikolaities noted that the committee has discussed, and the Selectmen are pursuing, opening up some type of conversation and agreement with the State. The committee will be making recommendations to the Selectmen that will perhaps help them with their negotiations with the State. There are some things that are under the State jurisdiction, such as the operation of the park.

Member Abrams asked how receptive the State is in doing anything based on the town's recommendations.

Chief Walsh stated he has always found them to be receptive to suggestions from the select board.

Vice-Chair Westover noted that the committee is addressing the intersection but they will also address west of the Dunes rear lot to Big Rock Road. Maybe at the next meeting, the committee can discuss that based upon the proposed ideas for the area closer to the intersection. She continued that once people commit to turning onto Perkins Road, there is no way for them to turn around if congestion starts to develop on Perkins Road. Their only option is to go west on

Perkins. She thinks they have to talk about how to deal with that and evaluate it in real time during the summer. Some of the ideas may not be as mitigating for the traffic as it is hoped to be.

Mr. Rocha noted that he lives on Perkins Road and has been observing this for fifteen years. The Surf Shop and other businesses that have opened have increased the flow of traffic on Perkins Road tenfold. He does not think that making that area narrower will have any effect on cars coming up that road. It will make the corner safer but it will not really avoid cars coming up. The Beach Committee has looked at this issue for the past five years and there are tons of problems.

Speaking to Mr. Rocha, Member Bellino asked his thoughts on what might help alleviate the issues.

Mr. Rocha commented that making the road a one-way might be a solution. He continued there are only twenty-one parking spots on Perkins Road. The only way to solve the issues, with Jenness Beach being right there, is to eliminate those twenty-one spots. He pointed out that making the spots “resident only” does not alleviate people from having to turn around and come back.

Member Abrams pointed out that even if there is no parking, people will still be driving down and having to turn in someone’s yard.

Chair Mikolaities stated that getting rid of those twenty-one spaces does not mean those people are not coming to Rye. The people will just park at the other end of Perkins Road or on other side roads.

Mr. Rocha stated it is really a matter of deterring people from parking illegally. The deterrence’s the town has now, are not effective. He thinks a couple of signs stating that the car will be towed for parking might help deter that.

Member Bellino stated that he sees why it might seem like a plausible solution to take out the twenty-one spaces. However, at the end of the day there are still cars coming out of the Jenness State Beach area. There will still be cars driving down Perkins to find parking.

Chair Mikolaities commented that even making the street one-way will not help because there are other side roads they will go down.

Member Nelson pointed out that they are just going to take another road to get to Perkins going the right way.

Member Bellino stated that they know the traffic is coming from Ocean Boulevard west on Perkins. He noted that one of the residents mentioned that there is also a lot of traffic coming in from west to east. He asked if this is an issue.

Mr. Rocha confirmed.

Chair Mikolaities pointed out that Ryan McGill mentioned this at the last meeting. The locals are going down Perkins from Central to drop off their kids for camps or go to the Surf Shop.

Chief Walsh pointed out that following the litter trail, the majority gets dumped on Love Lane from cars coming and going. The cars are travelling that path through Perkins Road.

Speaking to Vice-Chair Westover and Mr. Rocha, Member Bellino asked if they concur that there is a good amount of traffic from the west going east that they have to contend with.

Mr. Rocha replied not as much but yes.

Vice-Chair Westover replied yes. She continued that after a while it is difficult to discern what east bound traffic was originally west bound traffic. In the frenzy of the late morning or afternoon, it is hard to discern. In actuality, it is all just chaos.

Member Abrams stated it has to be handled in components; deferring some of the cars that would normally be going down Perkins with signs saying “additional parking two miles down”; modification of the intersection on a temporary basis to see how it goes; and discussion with the State to see if there is the possibility of a gate to keep people going further north.

Referring to the ideas discussed with the Public Works Director, Member Nelson stated she thinks they are good solutions to try to make it less attractive to go down Perkins.

Chief Walsh noted there are five businesses in one spot; pizza place, beach parking, food and beverage, surf lessons, rentals and camp. There is also a restaurant and a motel. It is all legal and permitted; however, there are a lot of functions in one area.

VI. Chief Walsh Update to the Committee

- **To be addressed at next meeting**

VII. Action items for next meeting

- Chief Walsh to provide the committee with copies of the parking ordinance and will give an update on Perkins Road.
- The committee will discuss calming factors past the Dune’s lot up the rest of Perkins Road.
- The committee will discuss the idea of a designated loading zone.
Chief Walsh is not a fan of this idea because if it is restricted to one or two cars, it will end up being five cars. The residents of Perkins Road have made it clear what they are

dealing with and that should be eliminated. If loading and unloading is going to happen, the State should be providing that inside the parking lot.
Vice-Chair Westover agreed with Chief Walsh.

VIII. Other Business

- **None**

NEXT MEETING – Thursday, March 28th, 6:00 p.m., Rye Town Hall

Adjournment

Motion by Doug Abrams to adjourn at 5:43 p.m. Seconded by John Bellino. All in favor.

**A copy of the Tighe and Bond Parking Assessment Report and the Beach Committee Report are available for review in the Selectmen's Office, Rye Town Hall.*

Respectfully Submitted, Dyana F. Ledger