

RYE PERKINS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, March 7, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Rye Public Library

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

Non-voting members Present: Steve Hillman, representing the Beach Committee and Police Chief Kevin Walsh.

Public Present: Joan & Jim Cassin, 17 Perkins Road, Bill Marney, 14 Cable Road and Ryan McGill, 21 Perkins Road.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Mikolaities called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Roll Call

The members of the committee and the public introduced themselves.

III. Approval of the Minutes of February 28, 2019

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

IV. 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.

- V. Discuss Past Area Studies
 - a. Beach Committee Presentations
 - b. Tighe & Bond Parking Study

The committee members were to review the Beach Committee report and the Tighe and Bond parking study for preparation for this meeting.

Update from Chief Walsh:

Police Chief Kevin Walsh noted that he met with the town's highway foreman who has oversight of the town signage. He and the foreman reviewed the intersection at Perkins Road and Ocean Boulevard. (Chief Walsh presented a photo of the intersection to the committee to review details.) He explained the property line of the condo property (on the corner of Perkins) triangles out into the travel lane on the north side of Perkins Road. The land on the corner is all private. There is usually not an issue with cars parking in this location; however, if there was, it would be an issue of private property. He continued the day he was at Perkins Road, there were two cars parked at a telephone pole, which was a "no parking" zone but it is not well marked. He and the foreman agreed that the "no parking" stamp (on the south side pavement) will be continued up to the stop bar at the end of Perkins. The pavement near the area of the stone wall, will also be stamped "no parking". One of his safety concerns is the parallel parking in front of the pizza restaurant. The cars are backing out of those spaces into Perkins Road.

There was discussion on the issue of vehicles waiting for parking on Perkins, once the paid parking at the Dunes parking lot is full, and causing a backup of traffic.

Member Nelson suggested that a "parking lot full" sign be posted closer to Ocean Boulevard before Perkins Road, to help discourage cars from turning onto Perkins if the lot is full.

Chief Walsh will follow up with the owner of the Dunes to discuss some ideas. He noted that the parking lot has two entrances and exits; one off Perkins and one on Ocean Boulevard. There was some discussion about changing the way cars enter and exit the lot; however, it was felt that it would be best to leave it as it is due to the volume of cars entering the lot. Changing the entrance would cause too much congestion in other areas. He will also speak with the owner about roping off the entrances, once the lot is full, and having the staff wave the cars along.

It was noted that Vice-Chair Westover spoke with Public Works Director Dennis McCarthy. She stated that Mr. McCarthy said that all the roads in town have a 50ft town right-of-way. Where that 50ft is on Perkins Road, he was not sure because the pavement is not always in the center. He indicated that the property markers would have to be found, which cannot be done right now because of the snow. She noted that Perkins Road, from outer white line to outer white line, is 21ft so it is pretty narrow.

The committee reviewed (on the map) Chair Mikolaities suggestion to define the entrance to the rear Dunes lot and keep it separate and distinct from the side parking lot.

Chief Walsh summarized that “no parking” will be stamped on the pavement up to the intersection on the south side. There will also be “no parking” signs where the white fences are located. He will also work with Dennis McCarthy and Chair Mikolaities on some other ideas to present to the committee. He continued that 43 Perkins Road has an extra wide driveway (which is used as a turnaround for some vehicles.) He looked at that area and there is a granite post at the end of the driveway for a fence. He will speak with the property owner about putting something in that area to narrow the width of the driveway to help discourage cars from using the area as a turnaround. He will come back to the committee with more information.

VI. Potential Solutions Discussion

The committee reviewed the list of concerns noted at the meeting on February 28th:

- Sidewalks
- Speeding
- Width of Perkins Road
- No parking at hydrants
- Volume of traffic
- Signage
- State is not a partner in the solution
- Turnaround in handicapped space (near 41/43)

Joan Cassin, 17 Perkins Road, stated that vehicles pulling into driveways does not seem like a very important thing to people; however, it is for the people who live in those homes. There are children playing outside and this is a dangerous situation. The cars are not looking out for children and are pulling into driveways quickly to turnaround. She asked if Perkins Road could be made a one-way road to the beach. Vehicles would only be able to go down the road and it would help to keep the traffic down.

Member Hillman, Beach Committee Representative, stated that the Beach Committee discussed the idea of having no access onto Perkins from Ocean Blvd. The suggestion was to stop it at the Dunes entrance. It wouldn't be all the time, perhaps just weekends during the summer. He noted that he spoke with the Police Chief but he did not think it was the best idea.

Chief Walsh stated that education and enforcement to make this idea happen would be huge. It would cause unintended consequences. There are people who have been asking for this on other streets. Also, he is not sure if all Perkins Road residents would be in agreement with the idea, or

even other town residents who use the road would agree. To change the traffic pattern, or have it on specific days, would not work well because it would be hard to keep people aware and educated.

Chair Mikolaities stated that at the last meeting the committee identified safety issues. He would like to discuss when these issues are concerns, such as Memorial Day to Labor Day or only weekends. They need to make sure they are not changing traffic and adding sidewalks for just a few days per year.

Mrs. Cassin pointed out that this would be hard to articulate because some summers are warm and the traffic starts from Memorial Day through to the middle of September.

Chief Walsh noted that in 2018 there were very few good days in May and June. In July, the weather changed and the traffic started. It went until the middle of September.

James Cassin, 17 Perkins Road, stated that whatever is done has to be consistent every day because there will be a learning curve. Signage and rules should be consistent from a certain date in May to September that way people will know what they can do every time they come.

Ryan McGill, 21 Perkins Road, stated that Dow Lane has high speed traffic coming off Route 1 every day of the year. Dow Lane residents wanted a dead-end road. In talking about changing traffic to address the safety on Perkins Road, there would first need to be a study to see the direction of the flow and where the speed is coming from. He personally thinks the highest speeds are coming from in town down the street to the beach (travelling east on Perkins).

Chair Mikolaities noted the committee is making recommendations to the Selectmen. The committee is going to work through “baby steps” with a bigger vision for the future. Whatever is done on Perkins will affect other streets and they have to be mindful of that.

Mr. McGill stated that having a traffic study will help to make the correct decisions. There are a lot of people in town that feel their street is unsafe. How can it be said that Perkins is the worst when there is speeding traffic on Dow coming off Route 1. He continued that the traffic starts when the kids get out of school, which is around the 20th of June. That is why the Fourth of July becomes the big week. The biggest issues happen on the weekends when people do not have work and are trying to get to the beach.

Speaking to Mr. McGill, Chair Mikolaities asked what he would suggest for changes.

Mr. McGill stated he feels comfortable on the road. He walks on the road and feels comfortable most days. On the busy days, he uses more caution because he knows it is a busy day. He pointed out the busier days are on the weekends; however, he does not find it to be a safety issue.

Chair Mikolaities stated it is not the locals. The locals know where to park and where to go to the beach. The locals know what to avoid. He thinks it’s a matter of training the beachgoers and people who are visiting the businesses in that area.

Member Nelson stated there are 10 weeks max and 10 Saturday and Sundays. That is only if those Saturday and Sundays are perfect. Her thought is they do the signage and some of the things that are being talked about and see how it goes. Start small and see how this summer goes. If there is still an issue, then it can be relooked at and a traffic safety study can be done.

Member Bellino concurred that whatever is done has to start small and then expand out. It has to be tried out to see if it is going to work. As long as the chief and the town is open to piloting, that would be a path forward. He continued that the idea of no through traffic has a lot of elasticity to it and issues for surrounding neighborhoods. The committee has to look at how these ideas are going to solve the problem, as well as how it is going to impact.

Chair Mikolaities noted that a recommendation to the Selectmen could be that the committee reconvenes in October to review how things went over the season.

Vice-Chair Westover stated the issues are from Memorial to Labor Day on the weekends and the holiday. She thinks they should start with that because it is the biggest impact. Vacation weeks and good weather days just cannot be predicted.

Chair Mikolaities asked if the issues last all day long.

Chief Walsh explained that on good weather days there is some early morning movement, such as 7:00 a.m. By 9:00 or 10:00 a.m., the area is packed. The traffic can go up to 8:00 p.m.

Member Hillman agreed the issues are over those 20 to 24 days, (weekends), with a bump for holidays and good weather over July, August and the first part of September.

Chief Walsh confirmed it is the weekends and holidays that are the issue. He feels that Sundays are most packed if it is a good weather day.

Bill Marney, 14 Cable Road, noted there are college kids who get out of school in May who go to the beach. He sees it starting a little earlier than July. He sees it from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Vice-Chair Westover pointed out that is actually 15 weekends in 2019; from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Mrs. Cassin stated that there is not a huge amount of people around Memorial Day because there are not a lot of people going to the beach quite yet. If things were started then, people who went to the beach would start to see that things have changed. This will get people in the mode of what has changed and what they should do.

Member Nelson stated that signage is not a seasonal change. It is not training people for Memorial Day to Labor Day. It is signage for year round. No parking on the pavement is not going to change.

Vice-Chair Westover explained that the behavior changes between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Signage can be all the same but the rule book goes out the window.

Chief Walsh stated the big part of this is enforcement. Defining this better makes the awareness better for people. If the parking staff is in doubt, they are told to write the ticket. The administrator who handles the appeals is very good at looking at each case along with the ordinance. In moving forward, the way the tickets are issued and documented are being improved. He noted further up Perkins towards Central, there are a couple of spots where vehicles can park significantly off the road and that has started to happen. He believes the driveway boxes have pushed some of the parking that way. The frequency of that is more on the weekends. He asked if the committee should look at this area for “no parking”. He will bring photos to the committee of the area and a copy of the ordinance to review.

The committee reviewed photos submitted taken on Perkins Road by Vice-Chair Westover in August 2018, which show the activity for that area.

Member Hillman stated that one thing one of the Beach Committee members is very adamant about is “no stopping, no standing”; just like “no parking”. She thinks that is an issue because people may not park but they will stop. In this particular area, that might be something that should be considered.

Speaking to Chief Walsh, Member Bellino commented that it was mentioned at the first meeting that there have been some changes made to help alleviate that.

Chief Walsh stated that in the area near the Dunes, people will stop to unload their vehicles and then move on to a parking space. During the 3 to 5 minutes that they are stopped to unload, the traffic is being backed up. He suggested that they may want to consider adding to the “no parking” a “no unloading zone”.

Mr. McGill suggested having an unloading zone.

Chief Walsh commented that he agrees with this idea. The only issue is where the safest place would be to have that zone.

Mr. McGill stated it would not just be unloading at Perkins. It would be unloading at Jenness, Sawyer’s, Pirate’s Cove, etc.

Referring to the State beach, Vice-Chair Westover noted there are hash lines at the end. She always thought that was no parking but also to allow someone to unload.

Chief Walsh explained the motion that goes on in that lot is chaotic. When the spaces are all full, they will park in handicap or the traffic lane to unload, and will back up traffic. There is a lot of unloading going on inside the parking lot that is backing up the traffic onto Ocean Boulevard. He pointed out that he spoke with Meredith Collins (State Parks Manager) about the idea of having a staff member available to help keep the traffic moving.

There was some discussion about signage to move the cars north when the parking lot is full.

Chair Mikolaities spoke about temporary speedbumps that were put in at the recreation fields to slow traffic down. The speedbumps are made of rubber and are removable so they can be used as needed.

Chair Mikolaities summarized the discussion:

- The consensus of the committee is that the timeframe of the traffic/safety concerns is between Memorial Day and Labor Day;
- The focus is primarily weekends and holidays;
- The committee is not talking about permanent changes to traffic flow; and
- The committee is trying to redefine what is already in place for an ordinance.

He asked the committee if they should be looking at long-term solutions for pedestrians in that area, such as sidewalks.

Vice-Chair Westover stated the pedestrian issue has merit. Cars going east and west, and being parking on the south side of Perkins Road with pedestrians going east and west, is challenging. She thinks they should discuss this to try to brainstorm some ideas. If there is some good progress at the bottom of the road (the first 300ft off Ocean Blvd.), it might emanate positive change throughout Perkins Road. She would like to factor in the pedestrian traffic and the parking along the south side of Perkins, just to know that it is there and how the moving parts interact.

Chair Mikolaities stated that when he looks at these things, either the road is made wide enough so people can safely park or it is narrowed down so people cannot park. This road is 21ft and people are still parking where there are “no parking” signs. The road should not be made wider to define more spaces but it really can’t be smaller than 21ft.

Member Nelson stated a sidewalk would certainly solve the problem of parking on the north side of Perkins Road. It would cover the safety issue of people walking up and down the street and there would still be parking on the south side.

Chief Walsh noted there will be a cost. There is also the consideration of town maintenance and liability.

Chair Mikolaities explained that a sidewalk also needs drainage because of the curb. There is also the option of a multipurpose gravel/dirt path about 6 to 8ft wide. The pedestrians could be directed to the path.

Mr. McGill stated that people will still walk in the street. Even if there are no cars, people do not walk in the dirt, the grass or side of road. They will walk in the middle of the road. Sidewalks could be put in and people will still walk their carts down the center of the road.

Member Nelson agreed.

Member Bellino stated everyone walks down the center on all those side streets. Even if there were sidewalks, people wouldn't use them.

Vice-Chair Westover stated the only difference between Perkins and some of those other roads, is that there is so much activity at the end of Perkins. What makes it more complicated on Perkins is that there is a higher frequency of traffic just because of what is going on at the end of the road.

Mr. Cassin noted that on the south side of Perkins, vehicles are parked very close to the driveways. He doesn't think they can box off the driveways, as was done on Route 1A; however, a shrub 3ft from the mailboxes might give enough space for the residents to get out.

Chief Walsh pointed out that anything that is done is going to have needs for maintenance and that needs to be considered.

Member Bellino stated he has no doubt that the residents on Perkins Road have a unique situation. There are a lot of factors that are creating the "perfect storm". There is certainly more traffic going down Perkins Road, compared to other side roads. He agrees it is much different than any of the roads north of Perkins.

Vice-Chair Westover stated that there may be some simple solutions. She thinks the committee has made good progress on the end of Perkins Road. Once that is identified and clarified, the committee could then think about addressing the area from the Dunes to Big Rock Road. It should be broken down into "bite size pieces" with small changes, not sweeping changes that are going to alienate everybody. They should want everyone to "buy" into this and to help. She suggested that they look at the changes this summer and then consider other steps for next summer. She commented there is a lot of frustration in the neighborhood and everyone wants a solution right now. However, they need to step back and realize that it is realistically going to be a slow process.

Member Hillman stated the Beach Committee states in all their reports that the State should help because that is part of the scenario. The more the State can give, the more it will help the situation. The town cannot do this alone.

Mrs. Cassin asked who connects with the State.

Member Hillman noted that the Chief is working with people from the State.

Chief Walsh explained he meets and is working with the State parks to manage things on the "ground level". When it comes to the State road, and issues above the State parks, that is where the town administrator and the selectmen are helpful. The committee can make recommendations, with some merit, to the select board on things that should be changed and they can take the ball from there.

Referring to the speedbumps mentioned earlier, Mr. Cassin stated this might be something that should be considered for traffic coming from in town for cars that are speeding to the beach.

Chief Walsh noted that what is done for one, must be done for all.

Speaking to Mr. Cassin, Vice-Chair Westover asked if they see people speeding going east on Perkins.

Mr. Cassin confirmed.

Mr. McGill stated it is more on days when it is not busy that he sees the most speed. When cars are parked there and people see that it is busy, they tend to slow down. He pointed out that late at night there are cars coming off Ocean into Rye, which are mostly residents.

VII. Action items for next meeting

- The committee agreed that Chair Mikolaities and Chief Walsh should meet with the Public Works Director to discuss possible ideas. The information will be brought back to the committee at the next meeting for discussion. DPW also has maps showing the intersection and Perkins, which can be brought back to the committee for review.
- Chief Walsh will speak with the owners of 43 Perkins Road about the extra wide driveway entrance.
- Chief Walsh will bring copies of the ordinance for Perkins Road to the next meeting. He will also bring photos of some of the areas on Perkins, closer to Central Road, where he has seen cars parked for the beach.
- Members to think about “calming” factors for the area starting at the entrance to the Dunes lot to Big Rock Road.

VIII. Confirm attendance for next meeting

- The committee agreed to a meeting again in two weeks, due to the upcoming town vote and timeframe for meeting with DPW.
 - **Next Meeting – Thursday, March 21st, 5:00 p.m., Rye Town Hall**

IX. Other Business

- **None**

Adjournment

Motion by John Bellino to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Seconded by Karin Westover. 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