

RYE PERKINS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday, February 28, 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: Steve Hillman, representing the Beach Committee and Police Chief Kevin Walsh.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Mikolaities called the meeting to order at 6:07 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 19, 2019

- **Member Hillman, representing the Beach Committee,** noted that the Beach Committee submitted the end of year report to the Select Board, Parking Committee and public for review. One the recommendations that was listed in the report was to make Perkins Road “permit parking only”. The statement was not agreed upon by the full Beach Committee so the statement was retracted after the report was provided to the selectmen. He noted that this statement has not been deleted from the report but the public should be removed from the recommendations. This was not a statement that was made at the previous Parking Committee Meeting. He brings this to the committee’s attention for informational purposes.

**Motion by Mary Westover to approve the minutes of February 19, 2019 as presented.
Seconded by Karin Nelson. Vote: 3-0-1 Abstained: Gregg Mikolaities**

IV. Review Committee Charge

Rye Perkins Road Safety Committee Charge

The committee shall consist of not more than five members who are willing to collaborate and to work towards consensus in helping to resolve ongoing safety issues on Perkins Road. Members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen for an initial term ending on April 30, 2019. Staff members may be appointed as non-voting members of the committee. The Board of Selectmen will remove any member of the committee who demonstrates an unwillingness to collaborate and work towards consensus; and a new member will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. It is the Selectmen's intent to sunset this committee after completion of its charge, unless the Selectmen vote to continue the committee.

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.

Chair Mikolaities explained the committee is a safety committee. There has been some safety issues that have been identified, such as speeding, turning around in driveways, executing U-turns, parking adjacent to fire hydrants and driveways causing unsafe conditions. The committee's charge is to review the Beach Committee's annual reports, the town's ordinances and the Tighe and Bond parking study. The committee is to prepare a final report for the Select

Board by April 30th. He asked if there were other issues that were discussed at the first meeting. He asked if there were any questions or confusion about the charge.

Vice-Chair Westover stated it should be clear to everyone that it was the Board of Selectmen that narrowed the focus of this safety committee to just Perkins Road. There were other streets that were represented by taxpayers (at the previous meeting) that had concerns about their areas.

Member Nelson asked if narrowing it to just Perkins Road is possible because it is a bigger issue with the whole Jenness Beach parking. One does not work without the other.

Vice-Chair Westover commented there is a cause and effect that comes into play for sure. She was sensitive to the fact that it appeared there was some confusion that the Perkins Road residents somehow had leverage on this safety committee, which is not true. When the Board of Selectmen established the charge at one of their meetings, there was debate about how much of this could be taken on at one time. The Selectmen's minutes of that meeting reflect that they wanted to focus on Perkins. She wanted it to be clear that other roads are not being "dismissed".

Chair Mikolaities stated his guess is that whatever this committee comes up with may set a precedent for other areas. The committee should be cognizant of that too. He noted that he has also heard the word "parking". He pointed out it is a safety committee.

Vice-Chair Westover stated they should be sure to always address it as a "safety" committee to help diminish any confusion. After the previous meeting, she had asked the selectmen's secretary to distribute the Beach Committee's report that was presented at the select board's February 11th meeting. That included the annual report recommendations but it also had additional information that the committee should review and be familiar with. She pointed out the Beach Committee has done a lot of work on a lot of things, including things related to the charge of this committee.

Action Items from Previous Meeting:

- **Update – Jenness Beach State Park**

Chief Walsh reported that he met with the State Parks Manager Meredith Collins. She verified that the entrance and exit to the bathhouse site is not going to be changed. It will remain the same as it is now. He also spoke to her about the size of vehicles that can park at Jenness State Park. She confirmed there is a length limit of 20ft. He discussed awareness, education and enforcement on that type of violation with Ms. Collins. She researched how many tickets were issued for that violation. She reported back that there were a low amount of tickets issued; however, that may be due to minimal staffing. Ms. Collins is currently working with her administration on staffing for the summer. The oversight at Jenness State Beach, in the past, was not as direct as it should be. She is going to make some adjustments this year to improve the situation at Jenness. He summarized that Ms. Collins is going to be working on a better oversight of the park, and awareness and enforcement of the rules of Jenness State Beach parking lot. He noted that he will be working with the parks manager over the summer to see if adjustments or other improvements need to be made.

Chair Mikolaities asked the Chief to follow up with an update before the committee ends. (March 28th for update.)

Chief Walsh agreed.

- **State to put up signs to direct traffic up the road (Jenness Beach Park) when lot is full.**

Chief Walsh noted that if the staffing at the park is increased this year, they will be able to have barriers and someone to move the traffic along when the parking lot becomes full. He will follow up with the parks manager on this action item also.

Member Bellino asked if signs from the town can be used, if the State does not implement this.

Chief Walsh confirmed that he can work something out. The sign will be there or on the Wallis Road side. The signs addresses the crosswalk, alcohol and fireworks. It can be adjusted to say something else.

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

Vice-Chair Westover stated that at some point, the committee should determine if there are any items that should be taken out of those documents that might be helpful in addressing the charge. There is a lot of information and she feels it should be filtered to what is appropriate for the committee. This will lead to discussion about options that the committee could consider in pursuing their charge.

The committee agreed to read the reports for discussion at the next meeting.

In regards to the Tighe and Bond Study, Chair Mikolaities noted this was done for a different charge. It was done for a parking charge, as opposed to a safety charge. Obviously, parking is safety related so safety issues were identified.

Vice-Chair Westover asked Chair Mikolaities to summarize the objectives and the main points that came out of the study that are relevant to Perkins Road.

Chair Mikolaities explained that from a safety standpoint the issues were cars turning corners, parking at driveways, sight distance and stacking to enter the parking lots. He would like the committee to discuss what they see as the safety issues on Perkins Road.

Chief Walsh noted his thoughts on safety issues:

- When parking is full, there should be someone to move the vehicles along to eliminate stacking.
- There is a pizza restaurant at the corner before the lot. There is parking at this restaurant and cars are backing up.

Chief Walsh would like the committee to look at whether the ordinance should be adjusted to have no standing parking within the first 500ft of Ocean Blvd on Perkins. This would reinforce that this area needs to stay clear. He is also going to see how other beach communities manage intersections that have businesses and a residential neighborhood connected to it. He noted that an ordinance should be in place for this to back up the officers trying to enforce this.

The committee listed safety concerns and issues they see for Perkins Road:

- Business on the corner of the intersection causes safety issues with business traffic and cars backing out of the business parking spaces. The business traffic/parking needs to be managed.
- The intersection of Perkins Road and Ocean Boulevard becomes blocked by standing vehicles. The intersection should be clear.
- Speeding – The speed limit on Perkins is 30mph if the conditions are such that this speed would be safe. Conditions, such as pedestrian and vehicle traffic, may warrant a vehicle to be moving at a speed lower than the speed limit. Vehicles move too quickly at times due to the conditions.
- Vehicles turning around in driveways on Perkins.
- Perkins Road does not have sidewalks.
- There is a wide opening to Perkins Road. This may be exacerbating the situation.
- Cars park too close to the fire hydrant on Perkins. The area should be defined as “no parking”.
- Escalation of vehicle traffic going back and forth on Perkins Road contributes to safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- People are confused about the “no parking”. Signage is a big issue.
- The State encourages visitors to the beach. Congestion in this area is coming from the Jenness State Park. The State is not part of the solution.

VI. Public Input

Cynthia Hannon, 40 Perkins Road, stated people use her driveway to turn around all day long. She pointed out that her house is across the street from a handicapped parking space. People use that area as a way to turn around and they drive right over her lawn. She continued is not the speeding but the stop and the start of the traffic and the distracted driving. It is a safety issue because people are not paying attention. She noted that the issue goes on every single weekend during the summer.

Bill Marney, 14 Cable Road, stated he experiences the same issues in front of his house. The speeds on Cable are a lot greater than Perkins. The volume is also greater. It is the same type of activity as Perkins, with U-turns right in the road all day. People parking on Cable Road cannot get out of their cars without getting out right onto the road. (He submitted photos showing the issues in his neighborhood on Cable to the committee.) He stated the town has been lucky so far but something bad is going to happen. The situation is getting worse every summer.

Ryan McGill, 21 Perkins Road, stated there are certain parts of any situation that can make it unsafe. There is more danger on the roads everywhere. He does not think it is specific to

Perkins Road. It's everywhere in Rye. In regards to speeding, he stated the residents drive the fastest because they know the streets. He sees that it is busier and understands the issues. He just wants to have weight on both sides. He noted that since the signage for "no parking" has been put in on Perkins Road, the number of tickets that have been issued has decreased. From the stats for a clean and safe beach, it is safer and cleaner than it used to be.

Chair Mikolaities summarized the concerns:

- 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)

Vice-Chair Westover noted it is out there that there is free parking in Rye for the beach. People are coming down early to park for the beach. She pointed out this is not so much a safety issue. However, the knowledge of free parking in Rye is contributing to the escalation of vehicle traffic in the community that results in safety concerns on Perkins Road, as well as other roads.

Member Bellino stated that even if people are charged for parking from Ocean Boulevard all the way up, they are still going to come.

The committee agreed.

Vice-Chair Westover stated it is an issue of how this can be managed so the visitors are safe and have the accommodations they are looking for when they come, as well as everyone else in the community being safe.

VII. Develop time line for completion of committee work

1. Identify and list concerns
2. Site walk on Perkins Road (if committee agrees)
3. Discuss solutions
4. Draft report
5. Edit draft
6. Final meeting/final report

VIII. Action items for next meeting

- Members to read through the Beach Committee and Tighe and Bond Reports for next meeting

- Chief Walsh will look at the handicap spot and the fire hydrant on Perkins Road. He will address signage for the intersection and will speak with the Public Works Director about the width of the road. He will also reach out to other beach communities for information on what they are doing for intersections that have businesses and a residential neighborhood adjacent.
- Members to list and prioritize concerns
- Members to think about ways the State can contribute to the solutions

IX. Confirm attendance for next meeting

- **Next Meeting to be held on Thursday, March 7th, 6:00 p.m., Rye Public Library**

X. Other Business

- **None**

Adjournment

Motion by John Bellino to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Seconded by Mary 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