

RYE PERKINS ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting

Tuesday, February 19, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Rye Town Hall

***Members Present:** Selectman Keriann Roman, Police Chief Kevin Walsh, Doug Abrams, Steve Hillman (Beach Committee Rep), John Bellino and Mary Westover. Karin Cullity-Nelson arrived at 5:30 p.m.*

***Note:** Non-voting members: Selectman Roman, Steve Hillman and Chief Walsh.*

I. Call to Order

Selectman Keriann Roman called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and let the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Introductions

Selectman Roman introduced the committee members present.

III. 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.

Town of Rye Board of Selectmen

IV. Elect Chairman

Motion by Doug Abrams to nominate Gregg Mikolaities as chair. Seconded by John Bellino.

Motion by John Bellino to nominate Mary Westover as vice-chair. Seconded by Doug Abrams.

There was no quorum for the votes so the nominations will be revisited when a quorum is present.

It was agreed that Member Westover would run the remainder of the meeting.

V. Next Steps

The committee discussed dates and times that would work best for the meetings, while keeping in mind the report deadline of April 30th. It was agreed to set meetings for every Thursday at 6:00 p.m., in order to stay on schedule.

Member Westover asked Chief Walsh if he had information that he would like to share with the committee before getting started.

Chief Walsh submitted photos to the committee that were taken on Perkins Road in 2015 showing different parking situations. He reviewed the photos and spoke in regards to improvements that have been made since that time. He noted that the bathhouse on Jenness State Beach is being renovated this year and they are changing the traffic flow. Instead of entering near the bathhouse, the vehicles will be entering where the exit is currently located and exiting by the bathhouse. The first year will be challenging and the traffic pattern will need to be monitored to see how it goes.

Member Abrams noted that the new proposed entrance will be across from Perkins Road, which will create more mayhem.

Chief Walsh stated that he expressed his opinions about this; however, the State's engineers already made the decision for the design.

Member Hillman stated that the Beach Committee was recommending for mitigation is having some type of uniform personnel at that corner. He asked if the State would be willing to have someone there on the weekends or would it need to be someone provided by the town. He continued that help from the State will be needed. They cannot just build the bathhouse, change the traffic pattern and walk away.

Chief Walsh replied that the State is not going to send a uniformed officer to deal with the traffic. The Police Department will have to pay attention to the situation this year and note any problems that have occurred. If there is enough information, he can submit this to the State and tell them that a change is needed. He reiterated that the town will have to see how it goes this first year.

In regards to Member Hillman's comment, Selectman Roman stated that it would be appropriate to have it on the record that the town at least asked, even though it is probably not going to happen. She can bring this to the full select board.

Member Westover stated that one of the contributing factors to the chaos in that area is that there is no one in charge. Things start to escalate and there is no one there to babysit the offenders. She thinks that someone with some designation of leadership needs to be there and be visible. Once one person misbehaves, it gives other people permission to misbehave and things start to snowball.

Speaking to Member Westover, a resident of Perkins Road, Member Abrams asked if she feels that an officer at that intersection would solve the issue.

Chief Walsh stated that it is State property and they need to hire enough staff to have someone monitoring the traffic. These people would have the ability to block the entrance, when the parking is full, and wave the vehicles on. Eventually, if people get used to that system, it will self-regulate and keep the traffic flowing.

Member Westover agreed. She stated that what they are trying to do is curb the bad behavior and adjust habits in that area. This new designation of parking is going to cause additional chaos down there in the beginning.

Note: Karin Cullity-Nelson arrived at 5:30 p.m.

Selectman Roman noted that the committee should revote on the motions for chair and vice-chair now that a quorum is present. She also suggested having a secretary for the committee to take notes on their work.

Doug Abrams put his motion back on the table to nominate Gregg Mikolaities as chair. John Bellino seconded the nomination. All in favor. (voting: D. Abram, J. Bellino, M. Westover, K. Cullity-Nelson)

John Bellino put his motion back on the table to nominate Mary Westover as vice-chair. Doug Abrams seconded the motion. All in favor. (voting: D. Abram, J. Bellino, M. Westover, K. Cullity-Nelson)

Motion by Doug Abrams to nominate John Bellino as secretary. Seconded by Karin Cullity-Nelson. All in favor. (voting: D. Abram, J. Bellino, M. Westover, K. Cullity-Nelson)

Vice-Chair Westover opened back up to Chief Walsh.

Chief Walsh suggested that the committee form a checklist for the next meeting of specific traffic safety concerns.

Selectman Roman suggested going through the Beach Committee reports because they have identified concerns for Perkins Road already.

Speaking to Vice-Chair Westover, Member Abrams asked how many days a year she feels are a concern.

Vice-Chair Westover noted that over the last ten years it has escalated. At this point, it is every Saturday and Sunday with nice weather from Memorial Day to Labor Day. There are also big vacation weeks where the weekend activity can occur all week long, typically the last two weeks of July into the first two weeks of August. She has found that the families and college students come back into the area if it is a nice Labor Day Weekend. Its creeping up to be more of an issue. That last couple of summers have escalated significantly. Safety is really an issue at this point. Anyone who lives in that area is accustomed to the visitors but it has taken a completely different direction in the last five years.

Member Bellino stated he lives three blocks up. He can confirm that Saturdays and Sundays, six or seven weeks out of the year, have the most traffic and the most issues.

Vice-Chair Westover read a letter from **Martha Leary, Dunes Motor Inn**, regarding her parking concerns. She requested that no decisions be made on any changes until all reports regarding the parking and traffic be made available and/or are distributed to all residents of Rye.

Vice-Chair Westover noted that she would like the members to review the Tighe & Bond Report. She would like Member Mikolaities to speak to this in more detail. She pointed out that the report didn't have anything specific about Perkins Road or the activity that is being experienced in that area.

VI. Public Input

Vice-Chair Westover opened to the public for comment.

Lori Carbajal, 18 Tower Ave, Beach Committee member, noted that the Beach Committee had a meeting recently that was committed to discussing the issues on Perkins Road and outlying areas. She urged people to review the minutes of the meeting (January 19th) and look at the recommendations made by the committee. Some of the recommendations included; stationary attendant at Jenness State Beach, stationary attendant at lower Perkins Road, stationary attendant (police presence) at Sawyer's Beach. It was also recommended to have "No U-turn" signs, enforced by a parking control officer, and a parking attendant supported by the State at Wallis Sands State Park. It would behoove the State financially to place an attendant there. The State has done nothing to appropriate any assistance for the Town of Rye. It has been on the shoulders of the taxpayers. She does not think that Rye can really do anything purposefully unless they get help from the State in terms of manpower.

Chief Walsh spoke in regards to the contact people for the State. He noted that he could set up a meeting with DRED to discuss their intentions for staffing at Jenness State Park for this coming season. He will try to have this information for the next meeting. He will also ask if their parking is restricted to certain size vehicles, such as RV's.

Selectman Roman noted that she requested that a discussion about Jenness State parking be added to the Selectmen's next meeting agenda. A letter could be sent from the select board to the State listing the town's requests to see where that would go.

A resident from Old Beach Road, asked what the specific problems are on Perkins Road.

Vice-Chair Westover noted there are lots of traffic issues and congestion on Perkins Road. Cars are turning around on Perkins and soliciting homeowners for parking in their driveways. There are pedestrians going back and forth to the beach with baby carriages and wagons. The pedestrian traffic, coupled with cars going east and west on Perkins Road looking for parking, causes safety issues. People have almost been hit on Perkins. The drivers are not necessarily speeding. They are not paying attention. Their focus is on finding a parking spot that doesn't exist on Perkins Road. The amount of traffic that cycles back and forth on that road is astounding.

A suggestion was made for one-way traffic in the summer.

Chief Walsh noted the issue is how this will be managed and will it be realistic to enforce.

Another suggestion was to make the parking on Perkins residential only.

Chief Walsh explained that the concern is they are going to look deeper into other neighborhoods for parking. That is already starting to happen on Maple and Big Rock.

There was discussion on enforcement.

Member Hillman stated that if the traffic flow can be improved and the town can get some help from the State that would be a good path forward. At the end of the day, there are a lot people that come into this town. All the problems are not going to be solved. The key is that what is solved in this area is going to be pushed somewhere else. The committee needs to be aware of that so they don't pass the problems onto others.

VII. Set Date for Next Meeting

- **Next Meeting Thursday, February 28th, 6:00 p.m.**

VIII. Other Business

- **None**

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Westover adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger

Martha Leary
Dunes Motor Inn
February 18, 2019

Selectman / Parking Committee Chair, Keriann Roman:

When the many glorious NH State Parks were developed it was with the intent that **All Residents of New Hampshire** should and would be able to enjoy their beauty for generations to come. People have been coming to visit and enjoy the beauty of Rye Beach for centuries. Some have made it home and earned their livelihood on and near this ever changing scenic gift. My husband grew up visiting Rye Beach (his uncle John Carberry owned and operated Carberry's Store on Ocean Blvd.). It was his attachment to Rye that was the overriding reason for his choosing to develop The Dunes Motor Inn here in Rye In 1962. At that time the dunes rear parking area included the three house lots on Perkins Road.

Three years ago a request was made by town residents as to safety concerns in and around the Jenness Beach area. Funds were allocated and the engineering firm Tighe and Bond was hired to review parking and traffic concerns. Their findings were that there were no specific areas in Rye that have higher numbers of traffic incidents and that where cars are parked actually reduces the rate of speed. They concluded that there isn't a lack of resident parking but there is a lack of public parking. They made several recommendations for improvement. In addition the town has received reports from The Rye Police Dept., Department of Public Works, The Town Clerk and The Beach Committee. It appears that changes are to be made without consideration of these recommendations. The real issue here is not resident parking verses public parking but the global issue of population growth and the best approach to offset it's impact.

Some of us may recall several years ago the attempt to deny public access to areas beyond the boundaries of Jenness State Beach. Thankfully, this was deemed illegal by the courts and access was granted up to the high water mark from Sawyer's Beach to Plaice Cove.

I respectfully submit that NO changes be made until these reports requested by the town are made available and or distributed to all residents of Rye.'

*Sincerely, Martha Leary
Dunes Motor Inn
2281 Ocean Blvd.
Rye Beach*