

## **BEACH STIPEND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**SEP 4, 2014, 5:00 PM**

### **OL TOWN HALL MEETING HALL**

In attendance: BJ Bernblum ,Keith Coakley; Fred Callahan; Beth Cote; Rich Dakin; Wendy Gavin, and First Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder.

1. **Approval of Minutes of Aug 21, 2014 Meeting.** A motion was made by Beth Cote, second by Fred Callahan. **So voted.**
2. **Determine Beach Association Expenditures that are Appropriate to Subsidize**  
Wendy Gavin commented that she felt we should first identify the problem, and was concerned that the agenda item was assuming that we already decided to subsidize some expenditures. She feels that the problem is the public impact on the beaches, which causes security/garbage expenses, etc. What is the best way to solve that problem? She feels strongly that we need to have the conversation to define the problem and how to solve the problem, before we can decide whether or not to give stipends. Is it true that security is a problem, and if so, what is the Town's responsibility? There was further discussion about the fact that the beach associations feel that by providing their own security, they save the Town money in police services. Should we be discussing whether or not we should have stipends to begin with? Fred Callahan shared that he spoke to the Finance Director in Colchester, who said they give funds to the Lake Hayward Fire Dept, but not Lake Hayward Association. There was discussion about the responsibilities of the Town to take care of its assets (roads, parks, etc.), and the responsibilities of the associations to take care of their assets (roads, signs, etc.). The charter of the associations allow them to tax in order to take care of those responsibilities, but it does not alleviate any of their responsibility. There was a discussion about whether or not the associations would stop using security within their associations if there was no stipend. As one member pointed out, there seem to be two levels of security within the association – one is the guarding that the police might have to do, and the other is the kind of guarding that police would not do, such as stopping kids from playing soccer on the beach, etc. There was further discussion about the statement that the beach residents are paying year round taxes when they only reside there seasonally. In fact, the assessments are based on the value of the property, not on the amount of usage. After discussions about what the individual security benefits, it was agreed that the security that the beaches provide is somewhat a benefit only to them, and somewhat of a benefit to the taxpayers, as it decreases the burden on the police department.  
Keith asked about the uniqueness of White Sand Beach Association. First Selectwoman Reemsnyder clarified that the town is a member of the WSB Association by virtue of owning property within the Association, but they do not pay the taxes on the property to WSB Association. The assessed value of the property is \$1.3 million, and if we paid the current 3.75 mill rate, it would be approx. \$5,000 per year. There was a discussion about whether or not the Town should be paying this assessment or more due to the usage by town residents.  
There was also discussion about the uniqueness of Miami Beach and the impact of the availability of parking, both in the town lot and in the private lots permitted by the

Town. Because of this availability of parking beyond the capacity of town owned Sound View Beach, residents of Miami Beach feel that they suffer from the overflow, thus increasing their beach cleaning and need for security. The point was made that it is not only the town lot and private parking lots, but the parking that occurs along Rt. 156 right down to the State owned rest area by Old Shore Rd. People come in from out of town, park there, and walk down to Sound View and Miami Beach, which is beyond the control of the Town. Another rationale for subsidizing the beach cleanup for Miami Beach is that it is a public asset, because the public can use it. There was a feeling that the town has a moral responsibility to assist in the cost of beach cleanup. This also impacts the amount of security needed for Miami Beach, as the public is overflowing onto Miami Beach.

Hawks Nest was brought up, and it was noted that they have a bit more limited security, though they do have some issues with the cleaning of the outlet.

Keith Coakley asked about the responsibility of aiding in the cleanup of seaweed, logs, etc. The consensus was that this would not be the responsibility of the town, and is a choice that the beach associations make to keep the beaches pristine for their own members. First Selectwoman Reemsnyder shared a conversation she had with the DEEP, who is in charge of the area below high water mark, indicated that they were not interested in cleaning/removing the seaweed, and would not fund it.

Rogers Lake Clubhouse was discussed by the committee. Wendy Gavin felt that it is a community asset that we should support, but that it did not fit in with the "stipend" category. There was a question about whether or not this is simply a decision by Rogers Lake West Association to be available, but it is not a requirement, or a request by the town, so should it be eligible for the stipend. As in the case of Miami Beach, it is considered a moral responsibility to support the building as it is an asset to the Town as a meeting place and respite center.

Keith asked about the issue that Old Lyme Shores Beach Association brought up, and that is the fact that they pay high insurance on the rock outcropping. There was consensus that this was not a town responsibility.

Beth Cote brought up Pond Rd. in Miami Beach, asking about the situation. Pond Rd. is a private road that had been maintained by the Town of Old Lyme for many years, and at some point tried to make claim to the road. The issue went to court, and the outcome was that the Town did not have claim to the road, despite having maintained it over the years, and the Town must put up a sign in the parking lot directing traffic north onto Hartford Ave. Many people still turn right and right again onto Pond Rd., but the sign directing exiting traffic north on Hartford Ave. has been in place the summer of 2014. It was questioned as to whether or not the town should maintain Pond Rd.

It was suggested that at the next meeting, we could definitively decide on what might be eligible for stipend, and the amount.

3. **Communication:** None
4. **Schedule future meetings:** Next meeting was scheduled for Sept. 23 at 5:00 PM.

5. **Public Comment:** Dave Evers, RL West Association said that the grant to Lake Hayward was for \$7,474 from East Haddam. Fred Callahan was going to discuss this with East Haddam. Dave pointed out that the insurance is more costly due to the fact that they allow others to utilize the community center. He also offered to share the minutes from their meetings, which indicated that their board often met with the Town Board of Finance and shared budgets.

Selectwoman Mary Jo Nosal thanked the committee for their hard work, reiterating the importance of what they are doing. She told the committee that she too lives in a private association, and they do what they need to do in order to maintain their roads and common areas, at their own cost. The town has worked hard to keep the taxes low and a high bond rating, and the work that the committee is doing supports this.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.