

Memorial Beach Advisory Committee

Minutes for meeting January 28, 2016

Attendance:

Diane Mandile, Deborah Keefe, Ray Mullins, Paul Congdon, Greg Mancini, Robert Fredrickson (absent), Paul Brinkley (absent)

Meeting called to order by Chairman Diane Mandile at 6:30P.M.

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance lead by Diane

Motion by Diane to accept minutes with minor corrections for 1-11-2016. Second by Deb.

Vote: Deb yes, Ray yes, Diane yes. Paul Congdon abstain, Greg Mancini abstain.

Motion by Diane to accept minutes with minor corrections for 1-14-2016. Second by Ray.

Vote: Deb yes, Ray yes, Diane yes. Paul Congdon abstain, Greg Mancini abstain.

Diane has sent all of the missing minutes that were approved to Greg Roberts to be posted on the Town web Site.

Diane introduced new committee members Paul Congdon and Greg Mancini appointed by the Board of Selectmen at the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Diane: mentioned receiving a request from Robert Fredrickson to change the day and possibly the time of meetings because of conflicts he had with the current day and time.

Ray: mentioned that we had already previously made changes to accommodate Robert and that we should maintain the schedule we are currently on. The conclusion was unanimous to keep the meetings as scheduled. Diane will send an email to Robert advising him of our decision.

Diane: Our plan tonight was to discuss operation and enhancements issues at the beach.

After a brief update for Paul C. and Greg on some issued we have completed and sent to Selectmen, Diane went on to mention other items we will be working on is signage, general operations including hours, length of season, tables and grills, minor enhancements.

Resident Bob Russo suggested we have a sticker for year round. Diane mentioned that we will be talking about extending the season starting earlier in the Spring further into Fall and having someone at the booth for a longer season starting earlier in the morning and going later at night.

Resident Ron Danforth, brought up the question of the boat ramp and boaters who power load their boats with multiple signs posted with a \$100 fine for power loading but that there is no one assigned to the ramp to watch, warn or fine power loaders. Ray mentioned that the biggest offender of power loading is the marina's who bring boats in, usually two boats at a time, and leave the trailers in the water while they take the boats out for testing and then power load the boats while joking about power loading.

Paul C and Greg mentioned that the ramp, since it was replaced, already needs repair due to sudden drop-offs past the ramp caused by power loading. Deb mentioned that one recommendation we need to make is to have proper staffing to handle these problem areas.

Diane mentioned that one of our recommendations should be to hire a Parks and Recreation Director. Our goal as a beach committee is to enhance and improve the beach so it becomes more of a destination for people. Deb mentioned that we still have to hire supervisors. We have to get away from hiring only high school staff. We need more mature individuals as well such as Senior Citizens working and getting credits off their taxes without actually being paid. It has been approved by the BOS but no one has yet written a policy to address that.

Returning to Diane's Recommendation for the BOS is Operations. Which reads

### **Operations**

"Please accept this report and recommendations with respect to daily operations at the beach. This continues to be an area of great concern to those who use the beach as well as those who manage it."

"The experience of a day at Memorial Beach can be enhanced by attention to the detail of infrastructure, amenities, rules and regulations and interaction with personnel."

"In recent years decisions regarding beach operations were made by first determining the impact on town personnel. We feel this is the wrong approach. Memorial Beach is a town asset that should be used to entertain residents and provide additional revenue. Operating an entertainment venue like a beach does present challenges but those can be overcome with proper planning and staffing."

"In order to address the issues discussed below, we took into account both comments from town residents as well as practices at area beaches and entertainment venues."

### **Supervision**

"It is our opinion that the Memorial Beach is a vastly underutilized asset of the town. We feel that rather than setting up barriers to increased use we should provide a structure to encourage wide spread use of the property. We do acknowledge that current staffing levels are not adequate to address the issues that will certainly arise but feel that should not be the barrier to moving forward."

"Therefore, we suggest that the town seek to hire a professional to manage the beach along with the other parks and recreation facilities in town. Having this person on board would provide more accountability over staffing, supervision of beach personnel, daily operations and future growth and enhancements. We believe that only by hiring a professional with related experience, can the town hope to build and position our lake as a premier recreational destination for families in central Massachusetts and beyond. This individual should be expected to interface with other town departments and outside parties in order to develop Memorial Beach and position it as a high quality, Well managed lake destination that should provide increased revenue to support this position as well as other town programs and projects."

Deb. So, in that vein we have talked about a parks and recreation director. Someone who can oversee all the parks. Diane, can oversee not only what we currently have but can move us forward. Such as

Kayak or sailboat rental concession. Or a vendor that offers sailing lessons or for the town to run something like that.

Deb mentioned the likelihood of the Webster Lake Association partnering with the town to see about getting a pavilion built for concert, parties or rental of the space for private functions. We need a parks person. The highway superintendent has too many responsibilities to address these issues. Diane, I get the feeling that the residents want more and I believe they would support an idea like this.

Deb made a motion for the town to hire a Parks and Recreations Director, Second by Ray. After discussion the Vote is unanimous in favor.

Diane, made a motion that the restrooms be open while the booth is open. Second by Deb. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **Length of Season**

“In order to maximize revenue we recommend extending the season. The current season that is built around the school calendar does not take advantage of the Memorial Day, labor Day and Columbus Day holidays. People do use the beach on those holidays but the booth is unmanned so gate revenue is not collected.”

“We also recommend extending the day for booth collections. Many people utilize the beach on summer evenings after the booth personnel have gone home. By lengthening the day, revenue from daily and/or walk in patrons will add to the bottom line.”

“There has been some question as to whether the town can be held liable for accidents that could occur while lifeguards are not present. We have learned that Wallum Lake hours of operation extend beyond the hours that guards are present.”

“Bathrooms should also be open while the booth attendants are collecting fees.”

Deb recommends the beach be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday during the month of April. In May, open every day. If not open in April we need to open through mid-October, through Columbus Day. Advertise staff to work only weekends, only weekdays. Hiring mature individuals for weekends and teenagers on weekdays when the booth is not as busy. Supplement the busy weekends with students when necessary.

Diane, thoughts on length of season could be beginning of May to mid-October.

Ray, let's back up a little here and make a decision on when the booth will be open. If we want to extend them later in the day, then let's make that recommendation. Let's get that out of the way and then we can discuss all the incidental things. We don't have to be concerned with the manning of the positions. That's up to the Highway department now or up to the Parks and Recreation director.

Greg suggests early May until Columbus Day. Deb, are you talking every day from the first of May. Paul C, every day with hours set 7am to 8pm.

Ray, I'll make a motion that the booth be open from 7am to 8pm from May 1<sup>st</sup> through Columbus Day weekend. Second by Deb. Approved with unanimous vote.

Deb made motion to adjourn. Second by Paul C. Approved with unanimous vote at 7:55pm.  
Respectfully submitted

Ray Mullins Secretary