

Minutes of the joint North Brookfield, East Brookfield Board of Selectmen, North Brookfield Beach Committee, and East Brookfield Recreation Committee meeting.

This meeting was called to order at 6:00PM in the East Brookfield Town Hall on Tuesday, August 11, 2021. In attendance were Braedon Hatt, Joe Fish, Bob Button (EBBOS), Dale Kiley, Jason Petraitis, John Tripp (NBBOS), Leo Fayard, Karen Berard (EB Recreation) Michelle Thayer, Kathy Crevier (NB Beach Committee) and Tara Hayes (Town Clerk NB).

The East Brookfield Rec Committee went through the numbers if the beach was fully staffed 7 days a week 10am to 6pm for a 10-week season: 2 lifeguards=\$1800.00/week at \$16/hour, 3 maintenance crew (14 weeks) 3 hours/day at \$15/hour, plus additional monitoring attendants and a coordinator would bring the payroll to about \$49,000 for summer season.

EB already pays \$1,200 a year to put the docks in and out of the Lake, and has spent a considerable amount of money updating and purchasing life saving equipment and swim lesson equipment.

With two people we could monitor the parking lot, need to talk about policy to keep to Town residents. Karen spoke with Spencer about their Town beach; they have a monitor. EB Rec Comm. feels it's better to stop someone from entering the beach than asking them to leave after they've unpacked. It all takes money.

Dale Kiley said it makes sense to do a gatekeeper, can check sticker/resident status.

EB Beach Comm said the beach is wide open, you'd have to fence in and make an entrance and exit. John Tripp said you can use telephone poles with chains, it would be cheap and easy.

EB Beach Comm said for safety they'd need two monitors, most likely high school or college kids. There are times when the beach is empty and other times people are in and out all day. If the beach isn't busy the extra monitor can help with other tasks like clean up.

Kathy Crevier said it's not a perfect world, neither Town has money. East Brookfield's beach budget is \$17,000, North Brookfield's is \$9000, a total of \$27,000. We have to figure out ways to cut and make things work.

Michelle Thayer said that a requirement for high school graduation is community service. We could have volunteers be the monitors. Not asking the kids to physically remove anyone from Beach, just let non-emergency dispatch know. It would eliminate a lot of budget problems. Michelle did state that getting kids to commit and follow through could prove difficult. EB Beach Committee said they've had 25-30 kids say yes to volunteering at the beach and they were lucky to get 2 to show up. Mr. Tripp said he's tried to get kids to help with yard clean up for elderly but couldn't get anyone. Michelle said she'd speak with Mr. Lind.

EB Beach Committee said we're talking about 112 hours a week, who will manage finding volunteers, coordinating schedules, and what happens if no one shows up. Mr. Tripp asked how many hours the volunteers needed to graduate; Michelle was unsure but thought it was 10. EB Beach Committee said they could maybe get volunteers for a beach clean-up day in the Spring. Tara Hayes asked if volunteers put in and took out the docks. EB Beach said it's a pain to do the job, and to get friends/volunteers to help, it's a liability if someone gets hurt or does it incorrectly. They've got a contract with someone and

dock maintenance is included. Kathy Crevier asked if that came out of the EB BOS budget, they said the taxpayers pay for it, but no it doesn't come out of Beach budget.

Tara Hayes suggested if people want to use the beach, they can pay for a \$25 parking permit for the Summer. EB Beach asked who will collect the money, who will give the stickers, the money will go to the general fund, not to the recreation committee. The residents are already paying taxes.

Kathy Crevier asked if Spencer charges their residents. Yes, \$5/year. Tara pointed out they have a bigger tax base. Kathy said Spencer also charges for swim lessons.

Kathy asked how many North Brookfield kids took swim lessons this year? EB Beach didn't have a breakdown but 65 kids participated. Kathy said she was told by the EB Beach Comm, unless NB gave EB another \$3000 they wouldn't advertise to NB residents. EB Beach said they don't discourage or turn away NB kids, but if we got a lot more kids, it costs more money. Kathy said it used to be that NB kids could participate and it was advertised in NB, something changed. Kathy feels since NB Beach paid for lifeguards to be on duty during lessons NB kid should be invited. EB Beach asked when NB paid for lifeguards. Kathy said she just signed an invoice for lifeguards and has two more to sign. EB Beach said that's NB's share, it's not specifically for swim lessons.

Tara Hayes said we need to figure out funding. Tara said she's Town Clerk for NB, she'd be willing to take payment and pass out stickers. She asked if there was a special account we could use. No, it would have to be reappropriated at town meeting. Michelle Thayer asked where the money people pay for dump stickers goes. Into the general budget. EB Beach said it'd have to be an enterprise fund. Dale Kiley said in order to be an enterprise fund you'd need to make enough money to run yourself.

Joe Fish had a question, it seems like when there's a discussion with NB about the Beach the issue is how to keep non-residents out. But we have bigger fish to fry. He researched agreement and, in his findings, he came across a Town Report from 20 years ago talking about erosion at the beach, it's only got worse since then. There used to be a paved road but it disintegrated, our Highway dept didn't fix it. Erosion and lifeguards are the bigger problems. Dale said not according to NB residents, the beach is in NB and those residents can't enjoy peaceful use of their home, it's being disrupted by people from out of town. EB Beach said that's a policing issue, don't you think residents make noise at the beach? It's 90% kids.

Tara said the kids aren't the problem, there a drug deals going on. EB Beach said that's not their problem.

Kathy said the initial agreement in 1981 between the NBBOS and EB Planning Board states the beach is for the joint benefit of residents of both towns only. EB Beach said their stance is outsiders are welcome. They've accepted state funds for the lake, it's inappropriate to say, at a public facility, you can't come here because you're not from here. Michelle said all other towns do it, she's been turned away. She used to go to the town beach, it was a peaceful community feel. The last time she went, about 12 years ago, a caravan of people from Worcester came and turned the beach into a turf war, every town resident left the beach. It's not any better now, the town kids are not comfortable going to the beach.

EB Beach said they've not heard those complaints, just a couple abutters complain. Two points: 1, they allow Spencer to use the beach since they share a school district, 2, their sign says "Welcome to East

Brookfield" when you enter town, we're not being very welcoming if we don't allow people to use the beach.

Dale asked if EB has a landfill/recycling center, no they have pickup service. Dale asked if NB is supposed to let everyone use their recycling center. EB said if they let you use theirs then yes, you'd reciprocate. Michelle said we share a beach with Spencer (Brooks Pond), it's private. Even allowing Spencer/NB/EB residents is different than allowing everyone. EB Beach is not saying we shouldn't have qualifications to use the beach. If we had a monitor, we they could purchase a day pass, the monitor could take a copy of their registration or license, if they make trouble, we know who they are. Michelle said that's different than unrestricted use. EB Beach said we can't supervise without people.

EB Beach said NB is not reading the whole agreement, it says the 2 towns will have a committee, they'll agree on a budget, equally funded by both towns. This is the first year in at least 15 years that anyone from NB has attend a meeting. 3 years ago, Dale requested \$7000 for beach at town meeting. Dale said yes, it had been taken out of the budget by Mary many years ago. EB Beach said if we're going to follow the agreement, we should follow all of it, not just the part NB likes. To say you can only afford \$7000 so EB should only pay \$7000 we can't open the beach, can't pay lifeguards.

Michelle asked if lifeguards are required and if we have two full time lifeguards. EB Beach said we can't have one 17-year-old girl there. Michelle said her concern is getting better coverage. EB beach said that people complaining about BBQing at beach at 6PM on Sunday isn't going to be solved by a lifeguard. EB Beach said sometimes there's no one on the beach and the noise is coming from neighbors and the island. Kids playing is annoying to the residents, but when they're raising hell that's ok. Maybe we shouldn't have a Town Beach, we can sell the property.

Kathy wanted to talk about erosion, she thought Bond offered to fix the beach. EB Beach said that was not the solution, adding sand won't solve it. They applied for a state grant but didn't get it. Part of the problem is that new houses went it with paved driveways, NB is doing a great job with the roads in that area, but because there's no coordination with EB, all water washes down the beach driveway. We're lucky we haven't been fined, we created a sand bar, can't get docks to 5-foot depth. Also, someone clear cut trees, not approved by us, they gave resources away. Tara asked if the person was fined, EB said no.

Kathy said there's a lack of communication. EB and NB have separate meetings, but according to agreement it's supposed to be joint. It should be one month in EB, next in NB, and alternate. She asked why it always has to be in EB. EB beach said there's been no NB residents on the committee. John Tripp said we couldn't get anyone to serve, but now we have 2 members. EB Beach said Anne Barnes is the head of the committee; she's been having the meetings at her house which is handicap accessible and she provides refreshments. The meetings are legally posted in EB.

Tara said she doesn't see in agreement where it states budget from each town has to be equal. Dale said it states expenses shall be born equally by mutual consent of both parties. NB hasn't had a committee, if EB sets a \$20,000 budget and says \$10,000 each, but NB is not meeting, that's not mutual agreement.

Kathy said she asked to be kept posted and was not informed about the beach being closed. Dale said the BOH knew, signs were put up.

Tara Hayes brought up the invoices for lifeguards, questioning why she got 2 invoices for the same time period, one for 46.5 hours and one for 60.5 hours. Kathy and Tara both called the EB Treasurer for clarification but she was unable to provide it.

Tara reiterated she thinks parking permits are a great idea. EB Beach asked how many NB residents would buy one. Tara didn't know.

****At this point there were several people talking and conversations happening simultaneously****

Michelle brought up parking issues at Brooks Pond and said once Police started driving through that area and giving tickets there was zero issues. Maybe initial investment would be heavy, but the long-term effect would be worth it.

EB Beach said we need to lock the gate so people can't drive down to beach, we would need to give keys for handicap accessibility. Michelle said a monitor could help with that.

Michelle said many years ago she had called police for assistance at the beach and both towns said it was not their issue. EB Beach questioned if NB police could make themselves visible at the beach, is it reasonable to make the beach a part of their routine? EB can't patrol that area due to jurisdictional issues, only if backup is needed. If we got copies of people's ID's or plates, they're not going to make trouble. There are a lot of people in both towns that don't have a clue there's a beach.

EB Beach said they don't see huge crowds at the beach. Michelle gave an example at Brooks Pond where the less behaved people drove out the residents and it's not overrun with out of towners. EB Beach asked if a detail officer could patrol the beach a couple weekends/year. They said if enough EB/NB residents go it will drive away out of towners. Michelle said that's not the case. EB Beach said police details would do a lot to help.

Jason Petraitis said the issues now are to fix the beach and move forward with budgeting. He will talk to Chief of Police.

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Jason said he'd talk to the Chief; the big thing is getting these committees together and getting fixes for the issues. Tara suggested the committees meet and put together a list. EB said we need to get some rip rap and talk to conservation, after heavy rains it's bad down there.

John asked Bob (EB Conservation) if he knew what it would take to fix the beach. He said Federal Army Corps permits for a start. Keeping cars/trucks off beach, they are making things worse and killing the trees.

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Michelle asked about the permit cost, Bob said thousands of dollars and it takes about year to receive. Bob said we need to come up with a plan to divert water and fix docks.

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Bob said the upper parking lot is out of the buffer zone regarding the permit.

EB Beach said we understand money is tight, we're short too, voters approve budget, if they take an active interest, they will go to town meeting and demand more money for the beach. The Lake Association raised \$30,000 for treatment; they could be an asset to both towns.

Tara asked EB to think about the parking passes. Michelle said she'd do some research and find out who does parking permits successfully. Tara said she's already got a template and a person to print the stickers.

Kathy asked if EB/NB could switch meeting places every other month. EB said that would be tricky because they already have to give members a ride as it is, they'd have to pick up Anne Barnes too. Jason Petraitis said there needs to be some give and take.

Kathy said she spoke with someone at Camp Atwater, they are doing a grand reopening next year to celebrate their 100th anniversary. Kathy said it's the only camp on the National Register.

The meeting closed at 7:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Barre