

Beach Committee Meeting Minutes Saturday January 19, 2019
Called to Order at 9:33 AM by Larry Rocha Chairman

Attendees: Larry Rocha, Steve Hillman, Lori Carbajal
Absent Committee Members: Keper Connell and Brad Fulkerson

Although this was a public meeting with Rye residents in attendance, there was no public commentary or public input during the meeting as it was a Beach Committee Work Session. It should be noted that the attendees were from the Perkins Road, Old Beach Road and residents from Cable Road.

Lori Carbajal opened the meeting with statistical data she obtained from Rye US Census figures 1980 – 1990 to 2010 and referencing the Tighe and Bond Parking study summer of 2014. She stated she looked at this data as a result of conversations she had with Police Chief Walsh regarding specifically lower Perkins Road where most of the traffic complaints have been had over the past few years as well as site walks by the previous board of selectmen in response to issues in this neighborhood.

In the conversation with Chief Walsh, it was felt that eliminating the parking completely would simply move the problem to other neighboring streets that currently do not have a problem or people would simply park illegally.

She stated in the T & B parking study the report states “plenty of resident parking in the resident only areas.” However, the report does not state the day of the week, time of the day or weather conditions on the sample dates which is crucial to a solid reporting of conditions to determine crowds and lack of parking. As an example the date in the report July 24, 2014 was a Thursday and that day reported rain at 7:00 AM overcast and temperature about 70 degrees, not an ideal beach day and a weekday where most residents and non-residents are working. Ms. Carbajal stated it is her feeling as is the rest of the committee that the state is not doing its part to move traffic north when the Jenness State Beach parking lot is at capacity and there and the lot is not manned as is Wallis Sands State Park. She suggested the state should have personnel at the entry of the Jenness lot and when it is at capacity there should be a sign pointing people north to Wallis Sands State Beach showing the number of parking available at a price of \$15.00 and \$20.00 for RV’s. This would move the traffic and congestion away from the Jenness Beach area as well as the endless searching of parking by visitors.

She stated that on the July 4th weekend the parking lot mid-day at Wallis Sands State beach was only 85% capacity and on Sunday Labor Day weekend the lot at Wallis Sands was only 50 to 65% capacity and no lines. South of Wallis Sands state beach along Route 1a south to Jenness Beach including parking at Sawyers was at maximum capacity.

Steve Hillman agreed stating it is very important for the State of NH to understand they are missing out on dollars and the state loves dollars. He stated they make all the dollars and leave Rye with the mess. Mr. Hillman stated they would want to know this and implement these policies noting he sees Wallis Sands is seldom full. That the state must assist Rye, since our resources for police and fire and ambulance go to the state parks for emergency services on Rye’s dime. The state never comes here for management or assistance with the influx of tourists they advertise to come here.

He stated these are the bare minimum of what the state must be doing here. He would like to see the state barter especially with trash pick up along our beaches since they come through at Jenness and north to Wallis Sands. The town of Rye must request this from someone at DOT or State Parks that we need them to do this. This is what we need.

The state must help us mitigate the issues in Rye because they are advertising people to come to their state parks and this is the problem that has been inherited by Rye with zero help from them.

Lori Carbajal- brought up that if you have a NH state parks license plate you can go to the state parks for free. This may be something we can take to the state whereby if you are a Rye resident with a Rye resident parking sticker, could we go to the state to park for free at Wallis Sands as a resident of this community.

Ms. Carbajal brought up that she understands that some residents want no reduction in parking saying its free in the mountains or other beaches and stated this is simply not the case. Rye is unique in that the beach is in the neighborhoods. If you go to the lakes region you have to park at the Weirs or small parking areas in Alton Bay unless you have friends, or you own lakefront or part of a marina and own a boat. The mountains are similar where if you're hiking there are no homes in the area where the hiking trails are, and the parking is available below the mountain. Looking at York, ME very different as well because of planning they have a large parking lot along the ocean which is pay-to-park.

Looking at the T & B report, the town is giving free parking to 1700+ visitors, plus the private lots and State Parks that are pay-to-park. What was looked at was the increase in population US Census in Rye from 1980, 1990 to 2010. She stated the access belongs to everyone including the residents and not just visitors. She stated not everyone is within walking distance to the beach that lives in Rye, so they have to bring their cars. She stated that if she brings her surfboard, she would take her car to Sawyers because its too far to lug everything the distance from her house. We know that all the communities around Rye are growing, Portsmouth, Greenland, Exeter, Epping and Rye is not exempt. In 1980 the town has grown by 790 residents. Since 1990 Rye has grown by 686 residents yet the town has provided no additional resident only parking areas. We also know by the research done by the schools due to declining enrollment that the average age in Rye is 55 Years old and aging. Given the population is older that means if you came here in in 1980 at 30 years old your now 68 years old and your knees are going. Sawyers is not the optimal area for many residents to go to for these reasons if you have any mobility issues, so this eliminates 55 parking places for an aging population. Ms Carbajal felt based on this analysis that it wouldn't hurt the town to provide additional resident only parking areas in an area that is a level area within close proximity to the beach. Looking at Old Beach Road the area of Sunset Path and Old Beach Way could provided resident only parking possibly an extra 15 spaces. She did not feel that a broad sweep of added resident parking was needed or warranted and would not be in favor of that. She felt the warrant articles that were proposed by the beach committee and passed would be very positive for access and parking relief especially getting the RV's off of Route 1a and into private parking areas such as the Dunes or Wallis Sands State Park. The RV's limit access and take the place of two passenger vehicles for every one RV. They add to the congestion and are one of the biggest safety issues in a very congested area. The T & B parking study wanted vehicles removed from the congested areas of Route 1a to remote parking areas though that has not been done and there has been no added spot where it can be done and may be done with a parking shuttle.

Steve Hillman agreed that these things need to go front and center and these have been the recommendations from the committee to the board of selectmen. There needs to be a balance with visitors to residents. He felt the signage must be pushed including the fines increase. The loading and unloading in permit areas then the ticketed if they are in that zone unloading. These areas are no standing no parking and needs to be strictly enforced. He felt the towing must be implemented though, wasn't sure how a tow company would pull a car from a parallel area. The tow signs must be implemented throughout the no parking areas.

Mr. Hillman felt the state must take an active part with the town to move traffic north to Wallis Sands. Larry Rocha stated the state park at Jenness Beach has an ordinance which prohibits vehicles longer than 20' from being parked there though again, there is no one there on duty to monitor these infractions and they continue to be an issue.

Steve Hillman stated, the town of Hampton and City of Portsmouth had sued the state to get seasonal help.

He felt that the elimination of the RV's along Route 1a would make the largest difference to the surrounding neighborhoods and free up space. The town should be able to enact these changes since the state highway runs through the town and the town may purpose regulations pertaining to those roads in their town.

Larry Rocha said in his observations, he felt there certainly was not enough resident parking on weekends. He stated that over 2000 resident parking permits were issued to 130 spots of availability which does not seem fair. Lori Carbajal stated that in 1994 only two parking permits were issued to each household where now there are sometimes four issued to one household. She felt the town needs to relook at that to adjust how many are issued.

Steve Hillman felt it makes sense to evaluate where we can add more resident parking for residents. We need to see what's working in terms the warrant articles if passed.

He stated, Perkins Road is an anomaly, parking is laid out incorrectly because the flow of traffic runs east to west and the parking is on the south side of the road instead of matching the flow being the north side of the street. So, can this be manipulated the flow of traffic to solve the U-Turn issues by visitors. Mr. Hillman felt that perhaps no access from Ocean Blvd would also work if you don't change the parking from south side of the road to the north side of Perkins.

Larry Rocha felt there was plenty of parking along Ocean Blvd for visitors to include, all the state parks and private parking areas and members agreed. Mr. Rocha felt the only way this could be resolved when the issues came up, that no parking would resolve it. He didn't feel one-way parking was fair for the residents that live there but that NO ACCESS from Ocean Blvd. would make sense so no turn-arounds on the street and that could work.

Steve Hillman felt that with the rules that are being set in place and through warrant article with the signs including tow, parking configuration changes Perkins Road, RV's off Route 1a/Ocean Blvd. He stated all of these items are put in place and we're proactive with this information to everyone including residents here are the rules. If people do not adhere to this then privilege's will be taking away piece by piece. These rules can be at the surf shops, and coffee shops, newspapers on all aspects of media.

Larry Rocha stated that it won't happen overnight, but it will educate people with the higher fines, towing behavior will change. Steve Hillman felt he didn't believe in sweeping changes until we can see what's helping and what is not. He didn't feel that resident only parking would solve the problem on Perkins. He felt that pockets of resident parking are a good thing and its valid that not everyone can walk to the beach. He said the state beaches have been here forever and every beach community has the same issues however, most beaches elsewhere have a very different set up than Rye.

Larry Rocha stated that he grew up and lifeguarded 60 lifeguards on the Jersey shore. He stated you had to pay to park and you had to pay to get on the beach and they never had the problems here because visitors knew you'd get towed. If the lots there were full and they parked 300 cars, then people would go to the next beach. He didn't feel that could be replicated here because it's a different set up. He felt that we should add to the resident only permit parking as Perkins, Old Beach Road.

Lori Carbajal stated the area at Cable Road where vehicles park at the stop sign at the intersection of Route 1a is very dangerous and NO PARKING should be there. In fact, the distance from the stop sign to park should be 30' and it is not. The members agreed this area should be NO Parking due to the gridlock and hazard it poses there with visitors trying to maneuver there.

Larry Rocha felt that adding to Perkins the resident only parking with boxed out buffer from driveways perhaps 15 cars could park there. Old Beach could be 15 spaces.

Lori Carbajal stated, much of the issues of residents on Perkins was safety due to the U-Turns at this location. There needs to be enforcement there stationary, and signage that is posted NO U-TURN Fine

and NO Litter signs posted in this area. She felt the management on Perkins Road is critical. Larry Rocha stated he hadn't thought of signage to prohibit U-Turns though the enforcement would be key. Steve Hillman felt that stationary enforcement at Perkins or Sawyers for NO Loading was critical in making this happen so no one stops and no one U-Turns as with Perkins. His concern with making this area NO PARKING OR RESIDENT ONLY is the original issue with residents at Perkins when they were at the BOS Meeting then other neighborhoods such as Old Beach also wanted the same. He felt too that adding more resident parking and should include Perkins Road, Old Beach Road. He agreed the problem area at Cable Road intersecting Route 1a should be no parking as well. Mr. Rocha stated in his years of counting cars, maybe you're taking away a total of 30 spots to give to resident parking especially if the areas are boxed out for passenger vehicles. Lori Carbajal felt that signage was critical for all areas of Rye to include signage for littering with a fine posted. She felt that signage would discourage U-Turns, littering and illegal parking. Larry Rocha felt that although the police department is stretched these measures need to be made to have any affect on the traffic flow and quiet enjoyment of the residents of the community. Lori Carbajal felt that Perkins and Sawyers needed to have permanent parking enforcement officers stationed at each location to prevent as an example at Sawyers Beach from visitors parking to load and unload when the Rye town ordinance that is on the books is clear there is to be no off loading/loading. Ms. Carbajal stated when this practice is allowed you just push the problem of visitors parking in illegal parking areas. She stated that last summer she pulled into Sawyers Beach and was waiting for a vehicle to finish unloading which was there 5 minutes plus, when the SUV trunk was closed after dropping off the passengers, the vehicle had no resident parking sticker and was from MA. She stated she followed the vehicle for over 17 minutes around the neighborhood of Jenness Precinct. When the driver couldn't find a spot he parked in an illegal spot at Big Rock. Ms. Carbajal stated she advised the driver he would get a ticket as that was no parking and the driver replied he'd been driving around for 20 minutes and couldn't find a space. She stated she said he could park in her driveway for \$15.00. Ms. Carbajal stated the practice of allowing visitors to off load at Sawyers or other resident only spots only creates a larger problem when the driver leaves their passengers they don't want to walk back more than a half mile to the original spot. In this case if off loading was strictly prohibited, the driver and passengers would have parked legally in an available spot or possibly travelled to Wallis Sands IF signage was posted in Jenness Beach showing available parking at Wallis Sands State Beach. The committee members were in agreement that the ordinance must be enforced if that meant manned people stationed at Sawyers Beach. Steve Hillman said that he and the committee is not expert as parking engineers, but we can look at the parking to see what has been done and not done and use the warrant articles in place to see if they are working first. Larry Rocha said what the committee was originally charged with by former selectman Musselman, is "look, listen and observe" and make recommendations. As we all know, the beach committee has made these recommendations for years as well as listen to residents in terms of issues and get back to the BOS with the feedback. Now we are a more vocal group whereby residents give us information via Facebook to let us know of any issues we may not be aware of and, we've taken action. Mr. Rocha stated that it has been said that he has an "agenda" because he lives on Perkins Road and he takes exception to that. He would say the same regardless because he can see what's happening. He stated he lives at the most westerly end of Perkins so his home is not affected by the parking at the east end and there's no parking where he lives. He says he takes walks to the area of the parking which he picks up weekly and states though, the trash has become less over the past year of two.

Lori Carbajal felt the cure for Perkins road is pay-to-park at \$2.50 to \$3.00 an hour because it then becomes less desirable because it would no longer be a hot spot of free parking. You'd have to pay there the same as in a parking lot around the corner at the Dunes lot and if you're staying all day it could cost you more not to include a ticket for expired parking if you overstay. And, it would be much cheaper for them to park along Route 1a where it's free. She felt this eliminates the desire without removing visitor parking. Steve Hillman felt doing this you may be inviting more. It sounds good in theory but not sure if it cures the problem unless someone is watching or enforcing this area. He felt the town needs to be more visible. Enforcement must be in all the places of congestion and parking issues so residents on those streets aren't impacted. If the state is not going to put personnel on the ground in Rye then the town needs to step up especially Friday through Sunday and on holiday weeks.

Lori Carbajal stated the crosswalks at Cable and at Jenness State beach used to be manned but not they are not with even more visitors.

Larry Rocha said at the last meeting BOS was when he was reading the report and said we discussed NO Parking at Perkins, selectman Jenness nodded shaking her head in the affirmative, (that may be the only way to solve that problem).

Steve Hillman felt that he didn't want a sweeping of all no parking in the Jenness Precinct. Stating as an example at Perkins, if made resident only, it will not stop the flow of turn around traffic if safety is the major component of problems there simply because that does not change the flow on the street.

He stated that the Chief of Police was never for increased fines for parking which he felt is critical and all of this needs to be in the media to include newspapers, surf shops etc.

His feeling was the RV's was the most important component to both the parking issues for access and safety and felt that getting this through with the fines, we need to see if this works this season. If it does not work then we can do more on the parking for residents and no parking if these problems are not resolved this year. This is a work in progress and you can't know what's working unless you implement the fines, signage, no load unload, no RV's. He stated if it is a huge problem throughout the summer, the board of selectmen can take action and make adjustments to implement more due to safety all on the streets that are not working. If Perkins is not improved it can be shut down especially where everyone has been given fair warning.

Lori Carbajal felt that people are not conscious of doing something wrong when they U-Turn because all they're thinking is getting the parking space. Larry Rocha stated he did not see it that way because residents tell visitors and they are cursed at.

Steve Hillman felt that the enforcement needs to be from the state since our Police and Fire are chasing issues at both of the state parks while the state sits back.

He said you have enforcement writing the ticket for those unloading right there. Flaggers or parking enforcement so people are not stopping as an example at Sawyers.

Lori Carbajal stated again as she did earlier, she goes back to the town ordinance NO PARKING NO STANDING it is a no load zone and the town has taken a blind eye as stated and this creates the bad behavior and illegal parking. You in effect create unintended consequence of allowing loading/unloading is the illegal parking so they can go back to where they dropped off their passengers.

Lori Carbajal stated in the end, an extra 15 spaces from Sunset Path to Old Beach Way (off Old Beach Road) for resident only parking is not going to hurt anyone and should be put in given her prior analysis. To remove parking completely from Cable Road at the intersection of Route 1a/Ocean Blvd (south west corner by the stop sign). She felt that 5 resident only parking could be added at the beginning of Perkins Road.

Larry Rocha agreed with all except that he felt all of Perkins Road that is now parking should be resident only parking by permit, Or no parking.

Lori Carbajal felt the issues on Perkins of residents there have not always experienced the issues they are today.

Steve Hillman felt the issue on Perkins was the flow of parking regardless of visitor or resident only parking and felt that a parking engineer would likely say the same thing.

Lori Carbajal said that if the board of selectmen want a parking change or resident only parking, they have the power to put forth a warrant article.

Steve Hillman stated what we recommend or, the board of selectmen decide what they want to do on their own related to parking or no parking, they can just do this overnight and don't need a warrant article to implement it. He stated that police and DPW need to make these things happen and it needs to be delegated and put in place by the town departments and the state.

Lori Carbajal felt that zero has happened for decades regarding more resident parking and the warrant articles the committee proposed were an essential part of the process to improve the beach for Rye residents.

Ms. Carbajal and Mr. Rocha felt there should be small areas of additional permit resident parking. Larry Rocha felt the signage on towing is very important so the problem isn't pushed to other area streets.

Steve Hillman didn't feel the board of selectmen needed to have a warrant article to add resident parking and wanted to have the proposed warrant articles by the beach committee acted upon this year, adding if they don't work the no parking can always be added.

Members not present, Keper Connell and Brad Fulkerson felt that no changes in parking should be implemented in 2019 in order to allow the changes in higher fines, additional enforcement, and assistance from the state of New Hampshire with signage and manpower.

MEETING ADJOURNED 11:22 am