

## Update of PDA Rye Harbor Strip Mall Proposal Gets Extension Until June 2025

Rye Harbor is a unique and valuable piece of real estate. Pease Development Authority (PDA) is interested in developing Rye Harbor into a retail business facility/tourist attraction. The many current uses of the marine facility are far less important to PDA. (Shack and other businesses, commercial fishermen, daily users of boat ramp and tourists using charter boat services.) The Chairman of the PDA Board, Steve Duprey, is a real estate developer. The mission of the PDA is pro-business.

PDA's plan to build a strip mall in the Rye Harbor parking lot will lead to the elimination of the existing shack businesses that have been there for thirty years and will have a very negative impact on all current users of the harbor. This plan for the harbor is wrong in every way. The PDA plan had a deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 to commit \$1 million in Covid relief funds, late in August, NH Legislature received an extension to June 2025.

At the PDA Board of Directors' meeting on Aug 8<sup>th</sup> there was an overflow crowd. All speakers were against the PDA proposal. Speakers repeated much of what was said at the July 22<sup>nd</sup> PDA Port Committee Meeting: the PDA proposal to put a strip mall in the parking lot is a bad idea; there is no room in parking lot; it would have a negative impact on the use of the boat ramp; the strip mall takes the place of commercial winter boat storage; no one at the harbor was consulted about the plan; the shack businesses will eventually be eliminated; Rye Planning Board and Conservation Commission have not been consulted; the strip mall retail units will not necessarily be marine related; the PDA plan would be the first step of gentrifying Rye Harbor.

At the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, PDA claimed they were going to be transparent and would work with everyone at the harbor. To date this has not happened.

Rye does not have representation on the PDA Board and the town's effort to get one in 2023 was defeated. On March 24, 2024 NH Legislature House Bill #1513 was introduced in the House. This Bill was designed to transfer ability to appoint local representation to the PDA Board from the city/towns bordering Pease to Governor and Council. Portsmouth, Newington and Greenland would keep their 3 seats on the PDA Board, but the choice of who those Directors would be would no longer be local choice. Luckily this bill was discovered by Local Representatives and it did not pass. (Search - 2024 NH House Bill 1513 for more info.

Until 2021 PDA listened to the Port administration and accepted their recommendations. Since that time the PDA has taken a more aggressive role, essentially making all decisions for the Ports without the advice of each Port, which has led to this strip mall proposal at Rye Harbor.

See the August Civic News on the Rycivicleage.org web site to review the background of this issue as of August first.

Users of Rye Harbor have organized a group to oppose the PDA plan. We need your help to spread the word. Please [join our email list](#) and share the link to our petition <https://www.change.org/SaveRyeHarborMarineFacility> with friends & family who value the marine facility at Rye Harbor, and anyone who hates to see iconic working harbors disappear from the New England coastline.

Committee to Save Rye Harbor Marine Facility