

**Madison Beach and Recreation Commission**  
**Monthly Meeting**  
**August 6, 2019**

**In attendance:** Rob Card, Mary Pat Nardino, Pam Greene, Shane Kokoruda, Vince Dussich, Scot Erskine (Director), Bill Piggott (Salt Meadow Park), Ted Rahmann (Bauer Park), Bruce Wilson (BOS Liaison)

**Absent:** Joe Oslander, Virginia Raff

**Guests/members of the public in attendance:** Bill Stableford and Dick Passero (Academy School Community Center Design Committee), and Madison Residents: Jaime Dietz, Catherine Ferrante, Scot Gamber, Jane Gamber, Robert Gilbert, Holly Gilbert, Mark Feiner, Mason Feiner, Davide Mendonez, Michael Docker, Allen Jewell, Frank Guarascio, Anne Tarpey-Flanders, Betsy Lerrsault, Terry Kensler

Meeting called to order by Chair Rob Card at 7:00 p.m.

I. Approval of the Minutes:

Regular Meeting, July 2, 2019: Motion by MP Nardino to approve, seconded by Shane Kokoruda. Vote: motion passed; minutes approved unanimously as submitted.

Special Meeting, July 11, 2019: Motion by MP Nardino to approve, seconded by Vince Dussich. Vote: motion passed; minutes approved unanimously as submitted.

Special Meeting, July 22, 2019: Motion by MP Nardino to approve, seconded by Vince Dussich. Vote: motion passed; minutes approved unanimously as submitted.

II. Public Comments:

- A. Terry Kensler (77 Scotland Road) proposed expanding the number of pickleball courts to accommodate the growing number of players in the Madison community.
- B. Frank Guarascio (121 Hammonasset) reported 2 incidents he witnessed at Madison beaches that demonstrated the need for lifeguards to be on duty to address these kinds of issues when they occur.
- C. Al Jewell (22 Partridge Lane) commented on what a great place the Surf Club is, but has had some problems with pets, particularly dogs, being near the picnic area and asked that the ordinance restricting dogs during the beach season be enforced.
- D. Betsy Lerrsault (11 Brantwood Drive) appreciates having staff back in the guard gate at West Wharf Beach, but reported an embarrassing incident she experienced when she was asked to leave the water while a wedding was taking place and would like signage that better delineates the Town beach at West Wharf from the Madison Beach Hotel property.

- E. Anne Tarpey-Flanders (94 Five Fields Road) spoke to the need for lifeguards at Madison beaches and that patrolling the beaches was critical to public safety. Based on research she had done, she cited average lifeguard salaries in Connecticut ranging from the low teens to low twenties that she would be happy to forward to the B&R Commission.

### III. Chairman's Report: Rob Card

- A. Change in the agenda: The Chair has made changes to the Beach & Recreation Commission meeting agenda which will now allow public comment at both the beginning and end of the meetings, and will feature a report from the Director that will cover a department budget update, projects update with priorities listed, incident reports, section reports, and general updates. Section reports from individual park committees can be placed on the agenda by request if they are needed.
  - i. Mentioned that the Tree Warden position had been added under Scot's supervision and questioned whether that would need to be added to the agenda.
- B. Review of other agenda items:
  - i. Beach Issues and Pass Updates: The Commission will need to set dates to conduct an evaluation to deliver recommendations for next year based on feedback and data from this year.
  - ii. Academy School Community Center Update: Commission will receive information from Committee Chair Bill Stableford that we need to be thinking about as a Commission.
  - iii. Update on Community Survey: Will be postponed until September but we should set a Go-Live date.
  - iv. Town Strategic Plan: Bruce Wilson will be presenting; there are many moving parts, but the Commission should be informed from a planning standpoint.
- C. Role of the Commission: Need to have a discussion about the function of the Commission based on the current Code of Ordinances. Scot and MP provided background information on the history of the ordinances, evolution of the Beach & Rec Department, and the need for charter revision to address these issues.
- D. Review of the CIP: An update of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan covering B&R projects and facilities was distributed, and Rob Card focused on potential costs associated with the operation of a Community Center by B&R.
- E. The First Selectman has requested an update to current programs to include programs that were canceled due to lack of space and/or lack of interest and participation.
- F. A resident reached out to express concern over nonresidents/fishermen use of the four parking spots on Middle Beach Road which is not a B&R area; the issue was directed to the Madison Police Department.

- G. In response to Terry Kensler reaching out regarding the pickleball courts, this has been put on Scot's project list and will be part of an evaluation based on a reconstruction project and how we best serve our residents.

#### IV. Director's Report: Scot Erskine

##### A. Budget: Scot provided a print-out of a budget showing expenses from the General Fund as of July 1 with attached revenue statement from July 1. Discussion:

- i. This year's beach revenue is lower than last year, but beach pass season and sales started later this year. Parking permits continue to be purchased.
- ii. Tracking of budget is based on the expense side, not revenues.
- iii. Last year the department ended in the black, and is currently operating in the black for this fiscal year.
- iv. Next year's budget will have to be built on what we decide to do next year for beach parking and lifeguard hiring.
- v. If a line item is depleted, funds can be moved from other line items to cover those costs. If there are not enough funds left in other line items, then the department must go to the BOS for a special appropriation.
- vi. The addition of staffing gate guards this year should not present significant strain to the current budget year, because the beach season spans 2 fiscal years: the year ending June 30, and the year beginning July 1. If there is a shortfall next year for gate staff or lifeguards before the new budget goes into effect on July 1, funds can be requested through a special appropriation.

##### B. Projects

- i. Presentation of CIP Projects for 2018-2019 ended in a discussion explaining the CIP process.
- ii. Need for a snap shot of projects in various phases – planning, active, and wrapping up – so that we can evaluate project management needs to make sure Scot has the resources he needs and to measure progress.
- iii. Need to understand prioritization of projects.
- iv. Need to understand distinctions between day-to-day operational projects, projects within the regular department budget, and capital projects in the CIP representing 3 tiers of ongoing projects at any given time.

##### C. Incidents/Complaints: Report referred to Michael Docker, Summer Staff Supervisor

- i. Problems with dogs in the evening: process begins with staff person asking if the dog is a service animal having the appropriate licensing. If not, the owner receives an explanation of beach policy and where animals are allowed.
- ii. Life guards would be great in spreading out beach monitoring duties.
- iii. Someone went after a gate guard over a parking ticket; staff handled things very efficiently and the disgruntled customer went away satisfied.
- iv. Issuing of tickets is not new with this system; now staff have more control in terms of voiding tickets and resolving issues in the moment which also keeps customers satisfied rather than confrontational.

- v. An incident with a summer camper was explained by Scot Erskine.

D. Section Reports: (taken out of order)

- i. Bill Piggot asked about the status of the pavilion building construction at Salt Meadow Park. Scot has met about the overlooks and launch, but not the building.
- ii. Ted Rahmann reported on 2 scout projects at Bauer Park: 1) inventory and display of antique items/artifacts in the barn, and 2) a firepit and patio near the pavilion. These are a part of a larger vision for Bauer Park that was submitted to the Commission.

V. Old Business:

- 1. Beach Update (taken out of order): Discussion to determine a process for gathering/organizing public feedback and evaluating the beach pass system and other beach issues to make recommendations for next year:
  - a. Need for at least 2 special meetings: first meeting to be held in September when more data has been gathered to conduct a full debrief, and a second in October to discuss possible recommendations for moving forward. The first meeting in November would establish recommendations to be submitted to the Board of Selectman in December.
  - b. Issues to be addressed include passes, hours, lots, staffing (including lifeguards), and communications (including department website).
  - c. Also need to consider the acquisition of Complus by Passport and how the processes could be streamlined, and what Passport could deliver to address some of the problems experienced this year.
  - d. Scot would like a decision/recommendation by October to factor into department budget which is due in the first part of December.
  - e. Include planning for staffing needs and lifeguard recruitment in the budget so that the BOS will be prepared for a special appropriations request if necessary.
- 2. Academy Renovation Project (taken out of order)
  - a. Report was distributed to Commission members and Bill Stableford gave a review of the project including contributions from Scot Erskine and Linda LaSance from the Beach & Rec Department. The CIP request was submitted through B&R Department on July 1. The plan was submitted with 2 different models for managing the community center: one under management by Madison B&R Department, the second would hire an outside entity to manage the center.
  - b. Bruce Wilson described the referendum process for bringing this project forward within the context of a strategic plan that would include all capital projects for the Town.
  - c. Discussion of timeline for ramping up the B&R Department staff to manage the community center if referendum passes concluded that the construction phase would leave time for the department to do that. Estimated approximately 2 years for construction based on other

examples of community centers in southern Connecticut renovated from past school buildings. These centers are also normally run by the Beach/Parks & Recreation Departments of these towns, a natural fit.

- d. Most important and valuable thing that we can do in this process is to provide as complete and accurate information as possible to the voting public so that they can make an informed decision at referendum.
- e. Scot Erskine expressed that a new community center would become their new center of operations. Currently, the department has no real base, they are nomads with fragmented operations spread across multiple sites.
- f. Common misconception that there is plenty of space in Town with no need for a community center. In fact, the B&R Dept. has to turn down requests for programs and events due to a lack of space, and there is a vast unmet need by all kinds of organizations that are very interested in having a community space for their activities and events.
- g. Suggestion that the Commission might issue a statement of support if appropriate, and further down the line, if the community center passes referendum and a building committee is created, the Commission might have a liaison to the committee during the process.

3. Community Survey (taken out of order)

- a. Shane proposed that we approve the final version of the survey at the September meeting, approve the communication and delivery plan for the survey at the October meeting, issue the survey in October and use the November meeting for an initial review of the results.
- b. Should consider adding questions related to the pass system on the survey.

VI. New Business:

1. Town Strategic Plan Update (taken out of order): Bruce Wilson reporting

- a. Recommended that the Commission read the working draft of the Strategic Plan available on the Town website. It is a charge of the Board of Selectmen set forth in the Town Charter.
- b. The plan is divided into sections including an aspirational vision, a mission, and 5 guiding pillars or principles for future development: Community, Economic Development, Education, Natural Resources, and Government. The pillars of “Community” and “Natural Resources” are the areas that touch on the Beach & Rec Department most directly in terms of services provided to the community and the natural resources, parks, and facilities that it manages.
- c. Actionable initiatives to be accomplished in the shorter term could include managing properties like the Surf Club according to principles established by a Coastal Resiliency Commission, or creating an inventory of the parks and recreation facilities that we have.
- d. The Strategic Plan should inform both our long-term planning and our short-term actions. Capital projects (CIP) is a good example of a town

function that would be guided by the Strategic Plan. Initiatives will change over time, but the vision will be fairly constant.

- e. Measures/metrics for evaluating success in meeting goals have not been defined yet by the Board of Selectmen.

VII. Public Comment

- A. Jaime Dietz (7 Saint Francis Woods Road) encouraged the Beach and Rec Department to put resources and effort into updating and revamping the B&R Website so that information is better organized and more accessible, and might even incorporate the beach pass purchasing system into the B&R website. The current website is not user-friendly and cumbersome to navigate.
- B. Frank Guarascio (121 Hammonasset) had talked to other lifeguards who suggested that the Town hire an experienced lifeguard supervisor as a first step to manage and train lifeguards and help in the recruiting effort to reestablish the lifeguard program in Madison. Lifeguard supervisors can be hired on a seasonal basis.

VIII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Vince Dussich, seconded by Shane Kokoruda. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela Greene, Secretary

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL