

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF WESTBROOK
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, May 14, 2020
Via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Bishop called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectman Bishop, Selectman Hall, Selectman Fuchs, Rich Annino, Park & Rec Director, Paul Winch, Westbrook Foundation Chairman, An-Ming Truxes, Foundation Board Member, Trooper Borelli, Trooper Buck, Zack Faiella, Director of Health, Mike Esposito, Park & Rec Chairman, Chris Ehlert, Energy Chairman, Pat Marcarelli, COB President, Tony Cozza, BOF member, Jill Brainerd, Facilities, Aviva Luria, Press, Don Izzo, Emergency Management Director and Rich Holton.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON GOVERNOR LAMONT'S PHASE 1 OPENINGS AS IT APPLIES TO MUNICIPAL BEACHES

Governor Lamont has issued sector rules for the Phase I Reopening of Connecticut scheduled 5/20/20. As previously reported, Mr. Bishop participated in a DEEP call on Friday, 5/8 with Connecticut Shoreline municipalities regarding re-opening of beaches. It is anticipated that another DEEP meeting/call will be scheduled prior to Memorial Day.

Westbrook Public beaches have remained open throughout the pandemic; however, parking at West Beach was prohibited due to the lack of social distancing, etc. The Recovery Committee has met to discuss and develop plans for the re-opening of the West Beach parking lot. Proposed guidelines for the re-opening of the West Beach parking lot include:

- Westbrook Beaches have been and will remain open to the public regardless on one's residency.
- Social Distancing is imperative and will be monitored and enforced.
- **West Beach Parking lot** to be open daily, beginning Friday, May 15, 2020 from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. for **WESTBROOK residents ONLY**.
 - Proof of residency will be required:
 - Tax Bill
 - A piece of mail with Westbrook address
 - Driver's License (photo ID) will be "matched" with tax bill and mail
- The BOS reserves the right to re-visit and adjust as necessary all of the above conditions.
- Face masks are highly recommended.
- The BOS reserves the right to re-visit and adjust as necessary all of the above conditions.

The BOS discussed the legality of limiting the parking lot to Westbrook residents only. Mr. Bishop reported that the beach remains open to the public (regardless of residency); however, the parking lot, as town property, falls under the direction of the BOS. The BOS may restrict parking to Westbrook residents only. No fees will be collected for parking.

Trooper Borelli reported that a Constable and/or State Trooper will be on site for enforcement measures as necessary, assist Park & Rec staff, etc. Expenses relative to the additional police will be eligible for FEMA reimbursement. It is anticipated that individuals will voluntarily comply with social distancing rules, etc. Non-compliers will be asked to leave the beach and enforcement measures, if necessary, will include issuance of loitering fines, breach of peace.

Mr. Annino, Park & Rec Director reported that 2 staff members will be on site beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, May 15, 2020 through the Labor Day weekend. Flyers, outlining the social distancing rules, will be developed and distributed by staff. Non-resident individuals wishing to park at West Beach will be turned away.

Mr. Faiella, Director of Health, reported that face masks are recommended but not mandatory.

A representative from the Elks' Club reported that only Elk Club members will be permitted to park in their parking lot. They will have staff verifying membership.

At the request of Selectman Fuchs, Mr. Bishop outlined the parameters of the Recovery Committee. A Recovery Committee was formed, at the request of the Governor's office. Members of the small, staff driven committee include: David Maiden, Zack Faiella, Don Izzo, Representative Carney and Mr. Bishop (Chairman). Ms. Castracane, Troopers Borelli and Buck and Rich Annino participated in the recent meeting of the Committee and other individuals/Dept. Heads will be invited to participate as appropriate including representatives from constituent community groups; i.e. Westbrook Outlets, BOE Administration, B&Bs etc. Minutes from the meeting are available and the committee will provide regular reports to the BOS.

Mr. Bishop reiterated the draft recommendations of the committee (see above). Note that non-residents will be permitted to patronize Hog Wild but will be asked to move their vehicles after an appropriate amount of time (after their food is consumed). If they are not Westbrook residents, they will not be permitted to park in the lot for an extended period of time.

Mr. Ehlert expressed concern that Park & Rec staff may be put in harm's way by working with the public. He recommended that the rest rooms be closed and that the Hog Wild establishment not be permitted to open at this time. He commented that it is not appropriate for Park & Rec staff to enforce the social distancing rules. As reported above, Trooper Borelli commented that Constables and/or Troopers will provide enforcement measures, not the Park & Rec staff. Mr. Ehlert also recommended that the West Beach parking lot be accessible to everyone regardless of residency.

Mike Esposito reported that the Park & Rec staff has always patrolled the beach and checked residency for parking lot access (in the past, if you were not a resident, you paid a fee to park). Mr. Annino reported that Park & Rec staff will distribute flyers and ask for proof of residency (as they have done in years past). Any enforcement measures will be administered by the Trooper/Constable. Park & Rec staff will monitor the Hog Wild customers and ask them to move their vehicles after an appropriate amount of time (as they have done in the past).

Mr. Faiella outlined the Phase I requirements for restaurant openings. Per Building Code, a restroom is necessary and a strict cleaning and sanitizing schedule (hourly basis) has been developed and will be enforced. Phase I includes re-opening of restaurants (with restrictions), including Hog Wild. It would be unfair to exclude Hog Wild from this re-opening. All restaurant establishments will be inspected by the Health Department, Fire Marshal, Building Official and others as appropriate. All Park & Rec staff will have appropriate PPE and if they don't feel comfortable their duties will be reassigned. Ms. Castracane reported that there are no consequences, by law, for staff members if they choose to not work under these unique circumstances. Mr. Fuchs requested that a letter be developed for Park & Rec staff informing them of same. Mr. Faiella reported that he will be involved with Mr. Annino and the Park & Rec staff vis a vis training.

Ms. Brainerd, Facilities, reported that parking passes will not be issued at this time for anyone and overnight parking will not be permitted at the West Beach parking lot.

Mr. Marcarelli, Council of Beaches Chairman, commented on some issues related to Middle Beach; i.e. will it be patrolled, status of out of town residents, etc. Current signage is in place indicating that no swimming is permitted, no lifeguards on duty, etc. since the water is not tested and there are no restroom facilities. Several years ago, there was a major discussion with regard to Middle Beach and the guidelines at that time were established. Regarding non-resident parking, Trooper Borelli indicated that they will, as time and staffing permit, patrol the Middle Beach area.

Mr. Ehlert reiterated his recommendation that Hog Wild remain closed. Mr. Fuchs suggested that the Town delay the opening of the establishment. Mr. Bishop responded that the Town has a signed contract with Mr. Anello (Hog Wild) that states he is permitted to open the weekend before Memorial Day.

Mr. Ehlert reported that beach parking in Old Saybrook is open (reduced capacity) for residents and non-resident. Ms. Luria, Harbor News reported that Old Saybrook beaches are open for Old Saybrook residents only.

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to re-open the West Beach Parking lot as recommended by the Recovery Committee (see above). Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Information regarding the re-opening of the West Beach parking lot will be posted on the Town's website, social media outlets, etc.

Mr. Bishop reported that the recommendations may be revised by the BOS as necessary including restricting parking capacity.

REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ACTION – WESTBROOK FOUNDATION GRANT – Park & Rec - Playscape

At the 5/12/20 BOS meeting, Mr. Fuchs requested clarification relative to the Westbrook Foundation Grant to Park & Rec for the purchase of a playscape to be located at West Beach. Mr. Fuchs questions included:

- Did the Park & Rec Board develop the application or did the Park & Rec Director submit the application without input from the Park & Rec Board?
- What type of community input did the Park & Rec Board and/or Park & Rec Director receive prior to submitting the grant request?

Mr. Bishop reported that the BOF must also take action on the acceptance of the grant. A BOF meeting is scheduled Wednesday, May 20, 2020. If not approved/accepted by the BOF at the 5/20 meeting, BOF action would be delayed until the end of June (the next Regular BOF meeting).

Mr. Winch, Chairman Westbrook Foundation, reported that the Westbrook Foundation encouraged Mr. Annino, as Park & Rec Director, to apply for a Foundation Grant for playscape replacement. At the Foundation's request, Mr. Annino attended the Westbrook Foundation meeting in February and presented the proposal for playscape equipment to be installed at West Beach.

Mr. Esposito, Park & Rec Board Chairman, confirmed that Mr. Annino, in multiple Park & Rec Board meetings, provided a comprehensive report on the project to the Board. The Park & Rec Board fully supported the proposal. Mr. Esposito continued that all initiatives of the Park & Rec Board are initiated by the community. Mr. Esposito outlined the protocols relative to the Park & Rec Board meetings. Mr. Annino regularly provides a Director's Report to the Board and at no time did any Board member express concern regarding moving forward with the playscape grant application.

Mr. Fuchs requested clarification on additional costs associated with the playscape including installation/construction and fees associated with certification of the equipment. Mr. Annino reported that the Public Works Department, as they have done many times in the past, will provide the labor needs of the project. Funds necessary for certification of the equipment will be provided by the "Playground Fund" that was established approximately 18 years ago utilizing donated funds, not town money.

Mr. Fuchs expressed support of the playscape project since the above issues were addressed.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to accept/approve and forward to the BOF for further action, the Westbrook Foundation Grant in the amount of \$39,000 for playscape equipment to be installed at West Beach. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman's Report

At the 5/12 BOS meeting Selectman Fuchs requested that a needs assessment be done relative to masks for residents.

Mr. Izzo, Emergency Management Director, reported that appropriate Department Heads; i.e. Elizabeth Carpenter, Social Services, Courtney Burks, Senior Center and Ms. Mullaney, VNA, are aware of the needs of their constituents and those needs are being addressed appropriately. As Emergency Management Director, he received two telephone calls from residents relative to masks. He provided appropriate information to them; i.e. where to obtain and/or how to make a mask. Information regarding masks is readily available and Mr. Izzo took exception to Selectman Fuchs comparison of Westbrook to surrounding towns and recommended that he consult with Department Heads prior to issues of importance that affect staffing and residents.

Trooper Borelli will speak with Selectman Fuchs privately regarding Selectman Fuchs' concerns with policing activity; i.e. speeding, etc.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Administrative Assistant