

Westbrook Council of Beach Associations
Minutes
August 7, 2023

The Westbrook Council of Beach Associations (WCOB) meeting was called to order by Vice President Cindy Howard at 7:02 P.M.

The following people were in attendance:

Cindy Howard	Vice President
Pauline Peterson	Secretary
John Hall	First Selectman Town of Westbrook
Paul Beaulieu	Cedar Crest Beach
Ron Botelho	Coral Sands Beach
Ted Budney	Sagamore Terrace Beach
Jackie Keith	Pilot's Point Beach
Steve Mason	Stannard Beach
Bruce and Mary Jane Monahan	Coral Sands Beach
John Moriarty	Old Salt Works Beach
Eric Peterson	Pointina Beach
Michael Tosatti	Grove Beach Terrace Association
Jack Zarny	West Beach

The business meeting began at 7:03PM. Officers in attendance were Vice President, Cindy Howard, and Pauline Peterson, Secretary. Pat Marcarelli, President and Steve Smith, Treasurer were absent.

Officer's report.

Cindy stated that the minutes from the July 10, 2023 meeting were posted on line. A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting. There being no further discussion, it was:

- VOTED: To approve the draft minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting as presented.
Motion passed unanimously.

Cindy reported on the treasurer's report. We have \$2,252.14 in the checking account and \$6,399.94 in the savings account as of August 7, 2023. There is one association that has not yet paid their annual dues, but those funds will be coming in shortly. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report. There being no further discussion, it was:

- VOTED: To approve the Treasurer's report as presented..
Motion passed unanimously

Harbor Committee:

Andy Calderoni was absent. No report.

Police Advisory & Traffic Boards: Eric Peterson reported. There is nothing new since last month. The board is not meeting until next week, August 14, 2023 at 6pm. The Town has hired a new full time police officer, but she has to go through training first which will be about three months.

Alleviating Hunger:

Tony Cozza was absent. Once again, the July 8th “Fill A Boat” with food and donations on the Westbrook Green was a great success. To date, we collected 540 pounds of food, and over \$8,000 donations with checks still coming in. Thank you to all our volunteers and our donors.

WEIA – Tony Cozza was absent. No report.

Coastal Resiliency Committee:

Ron Botelho reported that the Coastal Resiliency website is now up (www.4ShoreResiliency.com) There is a place on the website where everyone can voice their concerns regarding flooding, erosion, seawalls, jetties or other coastal hazards you may be concerned about. In addition, on August 19th from 9am to 1pm, at the Town Beach on Seaside Avenue, there will be a “Pop Up” Event where you can meet the project team, learn more about the project, help identify assets important to your community, and share your insights on local, coastal issues. Flyers were passed out to all in attendance and are available by contacting Pat Marcarelli.

A similar “pop up” event will be held in Old Saybrook and Clinton. People were asked to spread the word, and take some flyers. It is very important that as many residents share their thoughts with the consultants as possible as this determines future grants to our Town. On September 13th, a community workshop will be held at the Town Hall for all of you to share your thoughts and concerns. This is a community outreach to hear from all of the stakeholders regarding vulnerabilities to climate change and sea level rise. The purpose is to listen to residents voicing their opinions on any issues that are of concern. Presentations will be made by the consultants, etc.

John Hall stated that Town of Westbrook is the recipient of a \$150,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF) Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) to prepare a multi town Coastal Resiliency Plan in partnership with the neighboring Towns of Clinton, Old Saybrook and the Borough of Fenwick. The Plan will identify projects which address the risks and hazards to Town infrastructure and coastal properties (public and private) and that will increase community resilience. A great consulting team has been hired. The 18-month study will encompass all the coastal areas. As a result of this study, projects will be identified and grants will be applied for.

On August 23rd, the consultants will conduct a “field trip / bus ride” to areas of concerns that have been identified by residents and others. Go to the website if you wish to request a visit. Peter Gillespie, Town Planner is the point person for this field trip. You may email him directly.

Please show up at the August 19th and September 13th events and voice your opinions and also share your ideas for reducing flooding and increasing resilience.

New Business / Old Business:

Jack Zamy updated the Council on the six-month moratorium for cannabis applications in town. The Zoning Commission has voted to approve the six-month moratorium. Based on feedback from the community, a committee was established to discuss extending the moratorium to 12 months. At the Zoning Commission meeting, on August 28th, the zoning commission will vote on whether to extend the moratorium to 12 months. Please plan to attend this important, critical meeting.

Jack is President of the Westbrook Citizens. This is not a political action organization, but a group of residents and businesses on Route 1 who are not for cannabis or against cannabis but who are against cannabis in a mixed residential/commercial district. He mentioned the importance of having a good dialogue with all parties, and he believes that we're heading in a good direction.

John Hall, First Selectmen addressed the flooding on the town beaches. As soon as the town found out about the debris on the beaches, the town crew rented machines for the town to use and hired subcontractors to come in with machines to clean up the debris. It was a 3-day major effort with big equipment. The town spent \$28,000 on contractors and rental equipment to respond to this disaster and another \$25,000 to chip the wood at the transfer station. The funds will likely come out of the contingency budget. John has reached out to State Senator, Norman Needleman, about potential reimbursement from the state. He is not optimistic about the reimbursement, but asked that all beach associations track their clean up expenses and keep their receipts. John mentioned that in all the years he has lived in Westbrook, this is the first time he has ever seen anything like this, with this degree of magnitude.

John also mentioned that the Town hired a full-time police officer. She will train for 3 ½ months at the academy before joining the Westbrook police force. She will work the late shift (6pm to 2am or 7pm to 3am) Westbrook will have 3 full time constables and 6-7 part-time officers, all positions will be filled.

Cindy mentioned that the WCOB President & Secretary positions are up for election this year. Pat would be willing to stay in the position for another term. We need new people. Please consider volunteering.

A discussion followed regarding the October meeting. It was voted that we would have a meeting in October if Pat can secure a speaker re: Coastal Resiliency, if not, the meeting will be cancelled.

Next meeting: Monday, September 11, 2023 at 7 pm in person at the Town Hall, downstairs in Conference Room A.

There was no other business discussed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Pauline Peterson
Secretary