

Westbrook Council of Beach Associations
Minutes
May 1, 2023

The Westbrook Council of Beach Associations (WCOB) meeting was called to order by President Pat Marcarelli at 7:03 P.M.

The following people were in attendance:

Pat Marcarelli	President
Cindy Howard	Vice President
Pauline Peterson	Secretary
Mary Jane Monahan	Coral Sands Beach
Jack Zamar	West Beach
Michael Tosatti	Grove Beach Terrace Association
Paul Beaulieu	Grove Beach Terrace Association
Andrew Calderoni	Chapman Beach
Amy Palumbo	Middle Beach
S Marcarelli	West Beach

The business meeting began at 7:05PM. Officers in attendance were President, Pat Marcarelli, Vice President, Cindy Howard, and Pauline Peterson, Secretary. Steve Smith, Treasurer was absent.

Pat thanked everyone from all Beach Associations for attending. Pat stated that the minutes from the September 7, 2022 meeting are posted on line. A motion was made to accept the minutes. Treasurer's Report from the September 7th meeting were accepted. Steve Smith was absent. A treasurer's report will be reviewed at the June meeting. Pat did state that the WCOB had a few expenses over the winter. Pat stated we did some advertising and donations were made to the Polar Plunge and Project Graduation.

Harbor Committee:

Andy Calderoni reported that the committee met last week and has received 80 beach mooring applications. Many of the applications are being held up because there is not enough information on them. So please get to your association members and let them know to fill out everything on line. One of the items that is holding things up is the location of the mooring is missing. The Harbor Master needs the location of your mooring. You may use your cell phone to locate it. The Harbor Committee is working on developing a map where all the boat moorings are located in town. Contact Harry Plaut, Harbor Master with any questions.

Andy stated a new document is coming out next month on: 'what is to be expected in bad weather especially during "name storms" or during storms.' The Harbor Commission will require boats to be removed from beach moorings during "name storms". Harry Plaut is finishing the document and it will be posted on line and emailed to all boat mooring applicants. There is now a buoy off the Menunketesuck Island which will better show the shoal of the island. Lastly, Andy reported that we have a new police boat that can go under the "singing bridge" and go up the river. It will be commissioned soon with a ceremony at Pilot's Point where the boat will be kept. Get your orange notification stickers for your kayak, canoe and jet skis from Pat.

Police Advisory & Traffic Boards:

Eric Peterson reported that a request was made to review traffic problems on Riverview Road. Members will assess the situation before their next meeting. A request for speed signs on Menunketesuck was amended to reflect speed limit signs also for Old Mail Trail.

The Board also voted unanimously to request CT DOT to make the intersection of Boston Post Road and Goodspeed Drive be designated an official school zone with appropriate signage and flashing lights. CT DOT is putting a traffic signal lights at the intersection of I 95 South and Rte. 145 to alleviate traffic issues especially from the Lee Co.

A request to CT DOT will also be made that the intersection of Pequot Park and Route 145 South be monitored for a future traffic light, request that the road be widened at Route 145 South and that additional appropriate striping be updated for the bridge over I-95. It was also requested that the north bound I 95 exit ramp/145 intersection be monitored for a second signal.

Alleviating Hunger:

Tony Cozza is absent. On July 8th 9-1pm "Fill A Boat". The new police boat will be on the Green. A coast guard boat may be on the green. We are still waiting to hear back from the coast guard. We will need volunteers on that day. Mark your calendars. We raise a lot of money and food for the Shoreline Food Pantry. We need your help.

Scholarship Committee

Joe Marino and Steve Smith are absent. They are in the process of working with the Westbrook High School Guidance Dept. Applications are out. If you know of anyone, encourage them to apply. A decision will be made by the school committee. Hopefully, a decision will be made by the June meeting and we can invite the recipient.

WEIA – Andy Schatz, Tony Cozza and Jim Crawford work on this panel. It is a careers' pathway program for our students. Westbrook has been recognized nationally for our program working with local businesses. We have students doing internships in town. We have a partnership with EB, Lee Co and several other firms in town. The Town has been nominated for a National Award this year at the national convention in San Diego. We are hoping Westbrook gets recognized. Thank you to our partners at the Board of Ed and Westbrook High School.

New Business:

1. WCOB was asked to sponsor a Blessing of the Fleet. This has not been done since 1988. Rev. Janet Hicks from the Congregational Church brought up the idea. The First Selectman was on Board and David Russell will lead the committee. We will plan on this event for July 1 at 9am. We will plan to have the boats in formation at that time. Town of Clinton is on board. Rev. Hicks will be out on the jetty at Duck Island and the boats will parade by her and receive a blessing. This will not be a lengthy affair but as boats are passing through, they will get a blessing. Rain date is Sunday morning. Volunteers are needed. Please reach out to Pat if you can help. Printed posters will be posted at the marinas in due time.

2. Paul Beaulieu reported that any associations that are in a special tax district will be fined \$100 if you do not file your form M-1 by July 1st. File your M-1 form with OPM form by July 1st. It was mailed May 1st to all the special tax districts.

3. Seaweed Mitigation – The Town of Westbrook has a two-year special permit to mechanically remove seaweed for the public beaches only. First Selectman, John Hall, is working with Pat to see if permit can extend to private beaches so that they could hire someone to do this. More to come on this. Just a note that there are certain times of year you cannot mechanically rake the beaches because of the horseshoe mating season. All jetties are now complete. Middle Beach jetty is now complete.

4. Cannabis Update– Pat reported that a cannabis shop applied for a permit in a retail/residential area on Rte. 1 in the fall of 2022. A group of residents lead by Dave Russell and Jack Zarmy formed the Westbrook Citizens . Jack Zarmy reported on what has been taking place, where things stand and what the future may hold. Here is a summary:

At the last Zoning Commission meeting, Dave Russell did an outstanding presentation on requesting that the neighborhood commercial district (most of Rte 1) be removed as an area that allows cannabis retail sale. All of you as residents need to keep your eyes on this one, because this is where the town has permitted Retail Cannabis to be sold. Right now, this is the area near West Beach but could come near you soon. It is a mixed residential district and Westbrook is the only town in State of CT where zoning has allowed cannabis retail to occur in a mixed residential area. This is relevant because cannabis retail sale is right next to homes. There are apartments upstairs of the proposed location with potentially children living there. In addition, there is a bus stop right in front of the approved (no longer proposed) location. There are security concerns. They must vary delivery times according to State laws. The reason for varied delivery times is because this is a high theft target since they carry primarily cash or cannabis. Retail cannabis cannot be purchased with credit cards, it is an all-cash business. The delivery van that comes and goes is carrying cannabis or cash. It is amongst the highest target theft on CT roads. This is occurring in a neighborhood next to a bus stop. Our contention all the way through this process has been you can believe what you want about cannabis good or bad, but we can all agree that it should not be occurring in a residential area and uniformly the feedback we received is that all are in agreement with that. Other towns in CT are locating cannabis shops in industrial and business areas. No other town in Connecticut is doing so in a mixed residential district.

2. The applicant, after they were approved, came back and asked that their application be modified. They want to modify the parking area, the delivery times, and there is a generator that the land owner installed in front of the building and never received zoning permission. Our position as citizens is that the applicant is making the case for us. These are concerns we have had from the beginning and now the applicant is basically agreeing with us that parking is a major issue, delivery times is a major issue and the generator in front of the building is a major issue. No property owner in the Town of Westbrook would ever be allowed to install a generator on their front lawn. So, this property owner installed a generator, never obtaining zoning permission. The applicant's modified application is going to Public Hearing on May 22th at 7pm. The Westbrook Citizens consisting of 30 families and businesses all contributed monies to fight this cause. We hired an attorney, Rob Rimmer of Old Saybrook and we will be making a presentation on May 22nd going into great details as to why this modified application should not be approved. We ask that you convey to your membership that this is an important zoning meeting that everyone should attend because if this modified application is approved, the likely hood of this going forward is still stronger. If it is denied, this may go away.

Lastly, Westbrook Citizens filed an appeal with the State of CT Superior Court to fight the approval of this cannabis shop in a mixed residential district. We will not hear anything for a year. There are many ins and outs on this. The next shop can move within 5000 feet of another location which would be

Trolley Square near Westbrook/Old Saybrook town line. There is a proposal/application for a food / beverage cannabis shop in an industrial zone off Pond Road.

Jack Zmary asked that you ask your association members to plan to attend the Planning & Zoning Meeting on May 22, 2023 at 7pm at the Town Hall. We need your support.

5. Michael Tosatti asked if WCOB would consider sponsoring Eagle Scout Project to create a compost system for the community garden at YMCA. Pat stated when he is ready, we would invite him to a meeting.

Next meeting: Monday, June 5, 2023 at 7 pm in person at the Town Hall, in the Multi Media Room.

There was no other business discussed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Pauline Peterson

Secretary