

Westbrook Council of Beach Associations

Minutes

August 12, 2024

The Westbrook Council of Beach Associations (WCOB) meeting was called to order by President Pat Marcarelli at 7:05 PM.

The following people were in attendance:

Pat Marcarelli	President
Cindy Howard	Vice President
Steve Smith	Treasurer
Ann Cole	Recording Secretary
Gary Bazzano	Grove Beach Point
Paul Beaulieu	Cedar Crest Beach
Ron Botelho	Coral Sands Beach
Andy Calderoni	Chapman Beach
AnnMarie Ferreira	Middle Beach
Jackie Keith	Pilots Point
Steve Mason	Stannard Beach
MaryJane Monahan	Coral Sands Beach
Lucy Nobile	Pointina Beach
Tom Nobile	Pointina Beach
Amy Palumbo	Middle Beach
Rick Parks	Old Kelsey Point
Michael Tosatti	Grove Beach Terrace
Jack Zamary	West Beach

President Marcarelli thanked all for attending.

**Minutes Approved**

Motion made, seconded, to approve the minutes of July 1, 2024. Unanimously passed.

**Treasurer's Report**

Steve Smith reported there is \$2,170.96 in the checking account and \$6,400.58 in the savings account as of August 12, 2024 for a total of \$8,571.54.

Motion made, seconded, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Unanimously passed.

## Report of Officers'

Steve stated that he is waiting on dues to be paid from 5 associations at this point. A reminder email did go out.

## President's Report

**Scholarship Recipient:** Pat updated everyone on our high school scholarship recipient winner Dev Patel. Dev was unable to attend our last meeting due to his work schedule, so Pat was able to meet with him at the Elks Club, have a photo shoot, and present him with the \$500.00 check. Dev and his family were very grateful to the COB. Dev plans to attend UConn in the fall to become a pharmacist. His future endeavor is to work back here in his hometown.

\*Cindy Howard joined the meeting at 7:12PM.

Pat commented that the Harbor News Magazine lists all the scholarships awarded, but left out our Council of Beaches scholarship. Needless to say we were disappointed with the way this was handled.

**Harbor Commission:** Andy Calderone stated that the permitting process is running smoothly with no problems. Moorings are getting very organized and we have a harbor commission boat and a Westbrook police boat, both of which are docked at Pilot's Point. Andy said that Harbor Master Charley Sorley is doing a great job and the Harbor Commission Meetings are a pleasure to attend.

Pat thanked Andy and the rest of the Harbor Commission for looking out for us and doing a great job.

**Alleviating Hunger-Food Drive:** With Tony Cozza not being able to attend this meeting, Pat reported on the July 13th food drive: "Hats off to everyone who participated on the rainy unpleasant Saturday but it ended up being a record for money raised and food donations collected". Approximately \$15,000. was raised and over 2400+ pounds of food was collected and donated to a very grateful food bank. This food collection was the largest ever for the Town of Westbrook. This is the biggest charitable event the COB does.

**Ad Hoc Committee-Cannabis Shop:** Pat said that Jack Zmary, President of West Beach Association, took the lead on the Ad Hoc Committee and gets all the credit for the positive accomplishment of not letting cannabis shops open businesses on Route 1 in Westbrook. Jack stated that this was a truly great collaborative effort with the townspeople's involvement, and the essence of this was all about the zoning regulations for cannabis businesses. Westbrook does not have a main street, so Route 1 is basically our main street and it made no sense how things were zoned. Our bordering towns have cannabis businesses, but none on their main streets and the zoning did not take into consideration the sensitivity to our neighborhoods. The plan for conservation and development states that zoning take into consideration the sensitivity to neighborhoods. This important win is filed with the Superior Court.

All associations have benefitted from this proposal of not allowing cannabis businesses to

open on our Route 1 corridor. Hopefully this is the last time this topic has to be brought up for discussion. The only possible area now where cannabis shops could possibly open would be on the turnpike interchange area.

Cindy Howard asked if there was anyone in charge of bringing in good businesses? Answer being we have an economic development commission and a Town Planner, Peter Galespi.

Everyone thanked Jack and Dave Russell for the great work on the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Dunkin Donuts Building - Krauser's redo:** Pat explained the happenings of the vacant Dunkin Donuts property. The town issued a cease and desist work order because an interior work permit was issued, not an external permit. They did start doing some external work. There were also discrepancies/confusion on the signing of the paperwork at town hall. The town told Krauser's that there is no guarantee they will get a permit to open up; possible reasons being that the property is in a residential and historic area.

The group discussed the overflow beach parking situation with Dunkin Donuts' landlord being liable for people parking there illegally. The police department is aware of this situation.

**Westbrook Outlet Apartment Project:** Pat said this project will happen in the future as an apartment complex, not something over-the-top and extreme as originally projected. The group discussed the possible impact on our beaches, the traffic concerns, and most importantly zoning commission concerns related to what is best to benefit the taxpayers of Westbrook. After lengthy discussion, the Council of Beaches made the following motion, to forward a letter to Westbrook's Board of Selectmen, the Town Planner, and the developer with the following recommendation:

Motion: The Westbrook Council of Beach Associations recommends the Town of Westbrook hire, per the Town Charter, an independent consultant to ensure guidance in the re-development of the Westbrook Outlet project. This independent consultant would be hired by the Town of Westbrook at the cost to the developer. Further, it is requested that said consultant be present at future Zoning Commission Meetings where this project is on the agenda. We feel this will protect the Town of Westbrook and all of its residents and those already doing business here in town.

Motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, none opposed.

**Recommendation for the Treasurer:** The COB's finances were discussed and it was asked what we use the money in our bank accounts for. Pat answered we have our scholarship award(s), activities in town, annual food drive expenses, and community services. It was then decided to have our treasurer transfer \$5,000.00 from our current money market savings account, to a new interest bearing certificate of deposit at a higher rate of interest to optimize our earnings.

Motion made, seconded to approve. Unanimous.

**Coastal Resiliency Report:** Ron Botelho and Jack said there wasn't any new information to report on the final draft as the consultants are still going back and forth with comments.

There is a meeting scheduled for October 7th with the consultants to finalize the draft report. This meeting will take place at Town Hall in the upstairs multi-media room.

Being that our final COB meeting is also scheduled for October 7th, we will meet in the lower floor meeting room as the Coastal Meeting will be upstairs.

Pat mentioned there is also a Hazardous Mitigation Committee Meeting taking place on August 19th at the town hall. He will send out the informational flyer to everyone. This meeting is mandatory for the town to have every 5 years.

**Good & Welfare - Xmas Tree Lighting on the Green:** Pat stated that the Council of Beaches has been asked, and is honored to do the Lighting on the Green again this year. This is definitely a positive branding event for the COB.

Along with the tree lighting ceremony, we will have a food drive, and a possible unwrapped toy drive for underprivileged kids. Pat would like to see as many people there as possible.

There was also the idea of designing a float for the small parade that takes place and having people march to support us. Does anyone have a trailer for a float? Maybe have a food booth? More ideas? ...everyone agreed that this event will be an agenda item for our next meeting on September 9th.

**Misc. Topics:**

\*The Fire Dept. is going to start mapping out access points for town properties to look for boat ramp accesses;

\*The Board of Finance has helped out the Ambulance Association to the tune of approximately \$260,000 from the building contingency fund to pay off their mortgage, with another \$50,000 to \$70,000 earmarked for a forensic study. Also a new Ambulance Chief has been appointed;

\*Pat noted there was a change in the COB secretary titles: Ann will be the recording secretary, Pauline will be the publishing secretary and MaryJane the special publicist secretary.

The next meeting of the Council of Beaches is scheduled for September 9th, 2024 at 7:00PM.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Cole, Recording Secretary