

**GIANTS NECK BEACH ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING
JULY 16, 2016**

BOG Members Present: John Wohler, President
 Peter Knowles
 Christine Paul
 Tim Mahoney
 Brooke Mallory
 Nazz Paciotti
 Louise Wilcox

1. CALL TO ORDER. President Wohler called the Giants Neck Beach Association Membership Meeting of July 16, 2016 to order at 9 a.m. A quorum was established.

2. AMENDMENT/ACCEPTANCE/ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

MOTION (1): Nazz Paciotti moved to amend the July 16, 2016 Agenda to add as 4a. President's Report. Seconded by Joan Malone. Approved by unanimous vote.

MOTION (2): Ms. Hotarek moved to accept the amended Agenda as proposed. Seconded by Irene Makiaris. Approved by unanimous vote.

3. PRESENTATION BY MARK NICKERSON (1st Selectman of East Lyme) on the Town's new Blight Ordinance.

First Selectman Mark Nickerson was introduced to the membership.

Mr. Nickerson reported the town recently passed a Blight Ordinance. It is a very cumbersome ordinance in the State of Connecticut. It takes no less than a year for notification and can cost thousands of dollars in legal costs and to fix up and put a lien on the property. This is meant to be a tool to be used in extreme cases. Mr. Wohler stated we have adopted the Town's Blight Ordinance.

Mr. Nickerson left copies of the Blight Ordinance forms for individuals who believe they have identified a blighted property to submit to the Town's Zoning Office. There are provisions for elderly homeowners who may be unable to comply on their own. Mr. Nickerson stated he is aware that these blighted properties can bring down the property values of neighboring properties.

Mr. Hotarek asked how many forms have been submitted to date? Mr. Nickerson replied a dozen and a half. Mr. Malone asked if the Zoning Enforcement Officer has anything to do with

this matter? Mr. Nickerson replied this ordinance covers the entire Town. Mr. Paciotti stated Town residents have to comply with all Town Ordinances.

Ms. Paul asked how are absentee property landlords handled? Mr. Nickerson replied if the property turns into blighted property, the owners have to comply with the ordinance.

Mr. Wohler asked if the names of the blighted property owners will be published? Mr. Nickerson felt it is a privacy matter and owners' names would not be published. There are situations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that are open to the public inquiry. Ms. Shea believed a list should be public information under FOIA.

Mr. Paciotti stated a neighboring property owner needs to submit a form regarding blighted property. Mr. Nickerson was asked if a report is submitted, will there be communication back to that individual on its status? Mr. Nickerson agreed to make sure the Blight Enforcement Officer notifies the individual who filed the complaint.

Ms. Wohler asked if outreach will be done to assist homeowners who are unable to comply? Mr. Nickerson replied the Town has sent letters to homeowners to request that the properties be cleaned up. He suggested that outreach can be done by church groups, etc. Ms. Shea stated Stonington had a Blight Ordinance for commercial properties. Mr. Nickerson replied that the Ordinance applies to all properties but complaints have only been on residential properties at the moment. Mr. Bruno stated he hopes there is enforcement. Mr. Nickerson replied enforcement is difficult.

Mr. Nickerson stated the town has purchased the Mobil Station on Main Street. Celebrate East Lyme begins at 3 p.m. today. Norwich Orthopedic has opened in East Lyme. More than likely COSTCO will be built. It plans to have double-walled fuel tanks in a containment with monitoring wells.

Ms. Berger asked if the Town plans to bury utility lines? Mr. Nickerson replied it costs \$100,000 per pole to put the utility lines underground so there are no plans to do so at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 18, 2016 MEETING.

The following correction was noted: On page 7, under Ponds the sentence should read: "Jim Beaulieu of the Pond Committee reported we have our permit surveys completed."

MOTION (2): **Ms. Wohler moved to approve the Membership Meeting Minutes of June 18, 2016, as amended. Seconded by Ms. Berger. Approved by unanimous vote.**

4a. PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Mr. Wohler thanked the Pattagansett Women's Club for hosting the presentation last night by Mark Milewski on his adventure climbing Mt. Everest.

At the June meeting, the Board felt it was advisable to look into increasing our umbrella insurance policy coverage from \$1 million to \$5 million. Mr. Wohler signed the contract at an increased annual premium cost of \$300 to increase our insurance policy to \$5 million which includes all litigation cost coverage in addition to the policy coverage. He thanked Wayne Dow for his help.

Mr. Wohler reported the Association Cottage is currently not generating any cash flow. The concern is that more repairs may be needed. The Board is looking into whether there is a better way to financially keep that property. Bob Mercier is willing to chair a task force of non-Board members to look into this matter. In the Spring, we expect to come back to the Association with the task force's findings. If anyone is interested in working on the task force, contact Bob Mercier. Mr. Beaulieu asked if the task force will consider hiring a home inspector? Mr. Wohler stated that the task force was given a \$1,500 budget which included the hiring of someone to inspect the Association Cottage.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Ms. Malone reported as of June 30, 2016 the General Fund had \$42,621.69 and the Capital Fund had \$170,961.64. We received \$42,682.16 in 2016 tax payments to date. All taxes from 2015 have now been paid.

Ms. Malone asked that any invoices for the June 30, 2016 year end be sent in.

She thanked the PWC and MBB for contributing towards the Clubhouse renovation and Louise Wilcox for her work on the project which was \$42 over budget when completed. We did not plan on having to spend an additional \$1,500 for our portion of refinishing the wood floors in the Clubhouse, which is not included in the overage amount. All expenses for the Clubhouse have been paid. We estimate \$8,500 to \$10,000 in surplus for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Ponds. Jim Beaulieu of the Pond Committee reported there has been activity on the pond. Our engineering consultants propose new two foot contours for the lower pond. Once the evaluation is completed, we will determine the method to pursue. We are going to maintain the quality of that pond. We hope to have adjustments made to the contour maps to present to the contractors and obtain their quotes.

Mr. Beaulieu stated he appeared before the Inland Wetlands Commission. They walked the property and they had no objections to reissuing the permit. There is an issue they observed over the years that people have been throwing trees and brush within 100' of the wetlands. Gary Goeschel, Conservation Enforcement Officer, will send a letter to the Board to explain what

should be done. It was further advised that the Association should advise abutters to the ponds to reduce the use of phosphates and nitrates in the watershed area. It was noted that we do not have a permit for the lower pond. The Watershed Management Plan currently covers our operations. The Inland Wetlands Commission wants to know if we want to obtain a permit for the lower pond.

Because of budget cutbacks, DEEP felt issues on the use of chemicals for phragmites should be passed to the local Inland Wetlands Commissions for review. Mr. Bettera asked what will be the new level of the pond? Mr. Beaulieu replied it will be the level of Mother's Beach. We would remove no more than 2' from the existing level. Mr. Paciotti asked if the water will go a couple of feet deeper than it is now? Mr. Beaulieu replied it may not go down at all. Last year, there were a number of cattails which are native. DEEP and Wetlands do not consider those problematic. Dredging will take care of some. Cattails cannot live in deep water. Ms. Mallory stated when the dredging of the upper pond and subsequently dredging the lower pond was discussed, she thought the conduit was very important to the flow of the water. Are we addressing the conduit? Ms. Shea stated that is a Town project when money becomes available.

Ms. Mallory asked if we dredge the lower pond, shouldn't we take care of the conduit first? Mr. Beaulieu replied a new culvert will be above existing water level of the upper pond. Habitat around that pond will become stable. That pipe is for surges so that water flows to the lower pond. The water from the upper pond will be clean water coming down through the rip rap. Mr. Beaulieu stated the pipe will be fulfilling the legal requirement. Ms. Mallory thought you had to have that flow to keep the lower pond cleaner and deeper. Ms. Mallory asked are we treating the upper pond? Mr. Beaulieu replied the State feels it is okay. Any treatment needs to be approved by the Town. Ms. Mallory felt you will have to be treating it constantly. Mr. Beaulieu agreed. Ms. Bettera felt the lower pond is dying. The lower pond is filled with debris. She suggests bringing in a company to take care of it. Mr. Beaulieu replied a Professional Engineering Company is taking care of it. They will take care of permits for the dredging. We will need to get three quotes. We also have financial constraints. Mr. Paciotti added we do not have sufficient money to go through the dredging process now. Ms. Malone asked when will it be done? Mr. Beaulieu replied Fall of 2017. Mr. Paciotti added the permitting process is needed to get a contracting company to dredge the pond. Ms. Malone suggested obtaining the cost so we have it in September. Mr. Wohler added we have been setting aside money for a number of years. Mr. Paciotti stated we have no approval from the Association to do this project yet.

Ms. Wilcox asked if it were possible to get an estimate prior to getting the permitting done? Mr. Beaulieu replied the permit states how many cubic yards can be removed. He received previous estimates of the cost to be approximately \$250,000.

Recreation. Carol Davis of Recreation reported we had a good turn out on July 4 for the Bike Parade. We need more participants in programs. We offer ping pong, bingo and craft night, as well as tennis.

Clubhouse. Louise Wilcox made a plea for additional committee members.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC.

Ms. Horton asked will the Blight Ordinance complaints be handled by individuals or as an Association? Mr. Wohler felt the form gives any individual the right to submit a complaint to the Town. At our Board Meeting in June, we agreed to invite Mark Nickerson to give input on it. In August we as a Board will discuss our action plan. Ms. Malone felt it should come from the Association, because we all benefit. Mr. Paciotti asked are we going to solicit views as to which properties we will submit. Mr. Paciotti felt there is confidentiality. Ms. Horton felt it is probably up to individuals rather than the membership.

Ms. Raffa felt often times when you go to the Town with a problem or question they direct you to the Association first and then the Town. Mr. Fox stated you are a taxpayer of the Town. It's the individual's responsibility. Mr. Wohler hoped you would have a line of communication with the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Ms. Mallory stated it costs \$30,000 for cleaning up the property and legal costs and then you have to wait until the property is sold to collect the lien. Mr. Paciotti felt the process is to get the property cleaned up. Mr. Beaulieu suggested talking to the property owner and asking if we can help them. Mr. Wohler added Mr. Nickerson indicated that the Town has sent out letters. Ms. Wilcox asked, if the neighbors complain, can they remain anonymous? Ms. Wohler did not feel they should be. Ms. Horton felt there should be an approach, perhaps by the Board, but the property owner should know who made the complaint.

BOG member Tim Mahoney left the meeting.

Mr. Paciotti felt we need a Blight Committee. Mr. Malone felt we have a Zoning Commission. He was reminded we don't have an Enforcement Officer.

Ms. Beaulieu asked when will the railing at West Beach be fixed? Mr. Paciotti replied not until the house next door is constructed. There is a space issue to be able to get a tractor down there to clean the beach. Ms. Raffa agreed a tractor cannot get down there but suggested the railing be moved to the other side of the steps. Mr. Paciotti added Harry Plow felt equipment cannot get down there.

8. ADJOURNMENT.

MOTION (3): **Joan Malone moved to adjourn the Membership Meeting of the Giants Neck Beach Association of July 16, 2016 at 10:45 a.m. Seconded by Irene Makiaris. Approved by a unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Ghersi, Recording Secretary