

Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2023

Chair Lima, Commissioner Amy Billings, Commissioner Combra, Executive Administrator Nicole Morey, Wind Festival representative Holly Alamo.

Via zoom: MV Boys & Girls Club Michael Daniel, Beach Befrienders Larissa Rich, Oak Bluffs Head Lifeguard Matthew O'Rourke, Fun Zone Oliver Kennedy, African American Cultural Festival Joanne Edey-Rhodes, pINKWELL Beach Party (AKA) Kathy Lucas, Catching Royal Vibes Beach Day Kathy Wall, Beach Yoga Linda Silva Thompson and Elise Barnes, Wedding Planner Jamie Newhouse, Fan Festival Virginia Brubaker and Ann Smith.

AGENDA

2:00 PM

Open meeting 2:05 PM

New Business

Lifeguard Season Recap & Planning

Oak Bluffs Head Lifeguard Matthew O'Rourke presented a power point presentation that covered a review of the previous year including strengths, weaknesses, and areas in need of improvement for the upcoming Lifeguard season.

The good news for 2022:

- There were 8 swimmers rescued and a mass rescue.

Areas in need of improvement:

- Policies and protocols need to be developed for the lifeguards; a few issues to be addressed should include support animals, requiring bathing suit tops and flying hazard flags, to name a few.
- Necessary equipment is not available to lifeguards (handheld radios, rescue kayaks and ATV for full beach coverage) and Lifeguard stands are in disrepair.
- More lifeguards are needed, and open-water training should be done on a regular basis. Start date of lifeguards should begin before July 4th and the daily start time of guards should be adjusted for busier times of day.
- Better signage is needed for the fish pier to prevent diving and jumping from pier.
- Lifeguards should be given a calendar/schedule of permitted events on the beaches.

O'Rourke suggested that his position of Head Lifeguard start in May so that there is a better opportunity to train and organize for the summer months. He requested to attend a Lifeguard Instructor Certification course (\$450.00) to be able to recruit and train more lifeguards.

Chair Lima thanked O'Rourke for the presentation and suggestions. Although money is not available in the budget this year for all suggestions, the commissioners were supportive of the presentation and will investigate ways to find funds for safety equipment and more Lifeguards for the upcoming season. Lima added, the hiring of a Parks Director will help especially with communication.

Carry In Carry Out sign locations (Lagoon Pond, Town Beach, Eastville Beach & Jetty Beach)

Chair Lima reported that he has been in contact with Friends of Sengekontacket about installing and removing "Carry in Carry Out" signs over the next two years. The Highway Department will store the signs for the winter.

Commissioner Billings made a motion to approve sign locations. Commissioner Combra seconded. (3 ayes)

Monthly beach clean-ups proposal

Via zoom, Larissa Rich was seeking the Parks Commission support and suggestions for a newly organized Beach Befrienders group that is working with Vineyard Conservation Society. Beach Befrienders will do a soft launch on Earth Day. The group will be working with others in the community and the Oak Bluffs library will help to distribute trash pickup bags. Island Refuse has agreed to accept the special pick-up bags for free. The group also plans to encourage families and the community to “adopt a beach”. Chair Lima said the Parks Department appreciates the effort by the group but is understaffed to be able to contribute. Commissioner Combra said he supports the idea, welcomes volunteers, and suggested it could be added to the town website.

Future meeting dates

Commissioner Billings suggested meeting dates of either the week of August 6th or the week of August 20th, which would follow up on the week of heavy activity.

July meeting will be on the 24th at 4:00 pm.

Special Use Permit Applications

Fun Zone at Sunset Lake; Sunset Lake & Park – summer season (six days per week weather permitting)

Chair Lima reported that he had cc'd Oliver Kennedy on correspondence with the Conservation Commission about the Fun Zone application. He learned there are no bylaws about the use of surface waters or access to the shoreline edge of Sunset Lake and requested formal access be made to the lake for safety of the users and to protect the eco system around it. Lima relayed that Kennedy's request is out of the norm of what would be considered or approved by the Con Com. He checked the deed conveying Sunset Lake to the town and it read “park use only”. The Park Commissioners said the added traffic in an already congested area is not something they would be comfortable with. They suggested finding private property for his business. Kennedy asked to withdraw his application. Chair Lima accepted his withdrawal and the check for the application will be returned to Kennedy.

MV Boys & Girls Club Back to School Jamboree; Niantic Park – Saturday, August 26, 2023

MV Boys & Girls Club representative Michael Daniels was present via zoom to discuss permit for the back-to-School Jamboree. He requested a set up time of 9:00 am and break down by 6:00pm. There will be 7-16 teams of Middle School and High School kids taking part, they will play music half the day and lunches and drinks will be supplied for the kids and spectators.

Chair Lima made a motion to approve the Special Permit Application. Commissioner Combra seconded. (3 ayes)

MV Wind Festival; Ocean Park - Saturday, September 9, 2023 (rain date September 10)

MV Wind Festival representative Holly Alamo was present to discuss the event being held in September. Big Sky Tent Company will set tents up on the same day, remove them by 6:00 pm and trash will be removed. The program for the day will be the same as the 2022 event.

Commissioner Billings made a motion to approve the Special Permit Application. Commissioner Combra seconded. (3 ayes)

Commissioner Combra asked that Alamo check in with the Commission as the date gets closer.

African American Cultural Festival; Hartford Park, Friday, July 28 to Saturday, July 29, 2023 (rain date August 5)

Via zoom, Joanne Edey-Rhodes was seeking the Parks Commission support and permission for an event arranged by The Cottagers. The event will have vendors under 10 x 10 pop up tents, educational talks, activities for kids and food will be sold inside Cottager Corner prepared by Chef Dion in his kitchen at the VFW. Commissioner Billings asked to clarify the request on the permit application for the “entire park”. The “entire park” cannot be exclusively given for any event as it is always available for public use. Billings suggested port-a-potties be put on the cottager’s property as opposed to the park and Edey-Rhodes should check in with the neighbors to make sure they are okay with placement and have them removed at once after the event. She added, **there is a seven-dollar fee per table in the park.**

Commissioner Billings made a motion to preliminarily approve the event. Commissioner Combra seconded (3 ayes) and added that Edey-Rhodes will need BOH to sign off and then return to Parks Department before June.

pINKWELL Beach Party (AKA); Town Beach - Thursday, August 17, 2023

Via zoom, pINKWELL chairperson Kathy Lucas was seeking the Parks Commission support and permission for the events 9th season. Lucas said event plans are the same as 2022. Lucas plans to work with the Police for traffic control, attendees will do garbage collection, Dottie’s Potties will be delivered, and attendees will be invited by email only (there will not be any marketing or advertising of the event). Chair Lima stressed there cannot be any double parking and suggested checking in with the Police Chief and Lt. Currelli. He reminded Lucas that generators must be far away from Lifeguard stands, only personal pop-up tents are allowed on the beach and guests should be reminded to park with care in the area. Lucas will go to the Select Board for an Amplified Music Permit.

Commissioner Combra made a motion to continue the permitting process for the event. Commissioner Billings seconded (3 ayes).

Pinkwell Beach Party (Tanya England); Town Beach – Thursday, August 17, 2023

No one was present for the event application. Commissioner Combra made a motion to deny the event. Commissioner Billings seconded (3 ayes).

Catching Royal Vibes Beach Day; Town Beach – August 14, 2023

Via zoom, Karen Wall was seeking the Parks Commission approval for the events 3rd year. Wall will arrange port-a-potties and Police detail.

Commissioner Combra made a motion for final approval for the event. Commissioner Billings seconded (3 ayes). Chair Lima asked that Wall confirm with Parks commission after hearing back from the police department about detail.

Beach Yoga; Town Beach – May 1 to September 4, 2023

Via zoom, Linda Silva Thompson and Elise Barnes returned before the Commissioners for the application for Town Beach free yoga for the summer. Chair Lima said that he spoke with Town Administrator Deb Potter and Assistant Town Administrator Wendy Brough, who felt by submitting the application it would

hold them responsible for the yoga group and although it is a benefit for the town and visitors it may eventually have to go out to bid.

Chair Lima said communication will be easier since the Park's Commission now has contact information. He said if the application is approved, they may have to cordon off an area for yoga during peak times, beach entrances must not be blocked, and organizers must not "shush" the lifeguards. Other permitted events have been granted use of the beach and the yoga group may have to move down the beach for those events.

Commissioner Billings expressed concern about yoga seven days a week in August and whether "donations" are being accepted. Billings said she would like the application amended to Monday-Friday in August. The applicants said they would abide by no "donations" and that all are welcome. Commissioner Combra said he was not against instructors being tipped as the event is advertised as free. Barnes said she was not comfortable having classes less than seven days and would agree to move down the beach if necessary.

Commissioner Combra made a motion to approve the yoga application with days and times as written and without a fee. The Board will review next year. Chair Lima seconded (2 ayes – Lima and Combra, 1 nay Billings). Chair Lima asked for a schedule and on-site contact information.

Donnelly & Larry's Wedding Ceremony; East Chop Lighthouse – September 30, 2023

Via zoom, Wedding Planner Jamie Newhouse provided a site plan for the 20-minute ceremony with 250 guests at the lighthouse. Transportation will be supplied for the arrival and departure of guests and welcoming champagne will be served. Although the Museum has a policy of "no alcohol", Newhouse was told by the Museum they would allow it outside of the lighthouse if the Parks' Commission allowed. Newhouse expects one hour from start to finish for ceremony, a minimal number of cars and buses will not idle but will return when ceremony is done. Commissioner Billings said Newhouse will need to go before the Select Board for one day alcohol permit and amplified sound for vows.

Commissioner Combra made a motion to continue the permitting process for the event. Commissioner Billings seconded. (3 ayes).

Sport Fishing Championship/OB Bluewater Classic Fan Festival; Washington Park - Thursday, July 13 thru Saturday, July 15, 2023

Via zoom, Virginia Brubaker of Fan Festival was seeking the Parks Commission support and permission for an event in Washington Park. The event would be in conjunction with Oak Bluffs Bluewater classic. Fan Festival would like to have vendors tables, a live video screen of anglers on the water, serve beer and wine and a beach cleanup. Commissioner Combra said serving beer and wine would require going before the Select Board and a video screen would require electricity from a pole/outlet rather than a generator.

Porta-a-potties would be needed, pathways may not be blocked, the park would be open to the public during the event and if beer and wine were served, a fencing diagram would be needed.

Commissioner Combra made a motion to authorize to continue the application process. Commissioner Billings seconded. (3 ayes). Combra asked Brubaker to return to the Commission after going to the Select Board.

Old Business

- Park Director job hiring update – Wendy Brough has received 2 applications and would like to schedule interviews on the 24th of March at 3:00 or 4:00 pm.
- Healy Square relocation of trees – Commissioner Combra reported that payment for labor will be paid out of the Revolving Fund.

- FY 24 budget - no update
- FY 23 budget/CIP - no update

Updates/Comments

Via zoom, Ann Smith inquired if there were updates on Oyster Fest. It is being reviewed by the Board of Health. Smith asked that a debrief be done after all summer events.

Previous minutes; July 25, August 22, September 19 & October 3, 2022

Commissioner Billings made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Combra seconded. (3 ayes)
Commissioner Billings made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Combra seconded. (3ayes)