

POALH Board of Governors
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 pm by Cindy Biancamano at 15 Lookout Drive, East Haddam, CT.

Board members in attendance: Cindy Biancamano, Angela Buccheri, Hema DeSilva, Dave Edgington, Jason Griffing, Corinne Halliday, Evelyn Passan, Gary Petersen & Kathy Sabo

Association members in attendance: Lee Griffin - Treasurer, Ed Bader - Tax Collector

Minutes: *Jason Griffing made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 13, 2020 board meeting. Hema DeSilva seconded. A vote was held and Cindy Biancamano, Angela Buccheri, Hema DeSilva, Dave Edgington, Jason Griffing, Evelyn Passan, Gary Petersen, & Kathy Sabo voted yes. Corinne Halliday abstained. The motion carries with 8 yes and 1 abstention.*

Board Member Positions: Cindy Biancamano inquired if anyone wanted to fill the position of president. It was discussed that Cindy should fill that position. Corinne Halliday indicated she would like the vice president's position. *Dave Edgington made a motion to appoint Cindy Biancamano as president and Corinne Halliday as vice President. Gary Petersen seconded. A vote was held, and all board members present agreed (9 yes). Dave Edgington made a motion for Kathy Sabo to continue as secretary. Jason Griffing seconded. A vote was held, and all board members present agreed (9 yes).*

Public Comment: None

Financial Reports:

- **Treasurer:** Lee Griffin handed out his treasurer's report to all board members present. Since the last board meeting, we have received \$13,018.28 in income. Expenditures were \$50,980.26. Account balances as of August 11, 2020 are \$234,898.38 and bank statements have been reconciled. *Dave Edgington made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Jason Griffing seconded. A vote was held, and all board members present agreed (9 yes).*
- **Tax Collector:** Ed Bader reported that tax collections for July 1, 2019 are at 99.5 % due to one delinquent property tax account unpaid. Ed was advised by our attorney that this taxpayer filed bankruptcy two years ago in New York. Under the bankruptcy law we must withdraw the auction process against her. Our attorney is determining whether we can be added to the bankruptcy proceedings which would get the association monthly payments instead of waiting four more years before we can take any action against this property owner. Our attorney will keep us advised of the actions we can take to recoup the unpaid taxes which now amounts to two years of taxes plus interest and lien fees. The owner is in arrears in the amount of approximately \$600.00 plus interest and lien fees. The property owner never disclosed the bankruptcy filing to the association. Under law they are supposed to disclose the filing to all creditors, but we were not notified. Collections of July 1, 2020 tax revenues are at 84% of billed tax revenue. The remaining property owners are taking advantage of the additional 60-day grace period which ends on October 1, 2020. Any July 1, 2020 property taxes not received by October 1, 2020 will be deemed late and be charged interest at the rate of 1.5% per month from July 1, 2020 through the date paid. An e-mail blast is being sent out each week in September reminding taxpayers to pay their tax bills by October 1, 2020 or face the statutory 1.5% interest charge per month from July 1, 2020 until paid. If bills are not paid, then the auction process will begin. It appears that the governor's executive powers will be continuing but it is unclear which ones will stay in effect. *Jason Griffing made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's Report as presented. Dave Edgington seconded. A vote was held, and all board members present agreed (9 yes).*

Committee Reports:

- **Properties:** Gary Petersen reported there was quite a bit of tree damage on association property from the tropical storm. Tomorrow's Trees will remove trees that came down near the tennis courts, on the LakeShore/Ridgewood right of way and hanging branches at second beach. American Pride (landscaper) will take care of brush that came down during the storm. Gary is working on the coordination of getting a tree removed from the water that came down on Reserve Beach and fell into the water. He has scheduled a work party for October 3, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. to remove the rafts and swim lines. He is getting stone delivered to fill in the washed-out ditch located at the First Beach boating area. He received a price to pressure wash the pavilion for \$800, sand and scrape it for \$2,000 and then stain it for \$3,450. Board members felt these prices were a little high and asked Gary to get some other quotes/prices. Hopefully this job will take place in the spring. Jason Griffing brought up the plot of land the association owns where the water tower used to be. He thought it would be a great spot for a dog park. Others commented it might be a good spot for a pickle ball or bocce court.
- **Lake Quality:** Corinne Halliday indicated that there is a meeting being held on Saturday, August 15, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. at the pavilion. The committee is set to finish the watershed management plan. This plan will help us to get

grant money for certain projects. There should be some good reports by the end of the year regarding what we are finding with the water quality and algae testing. Northeast Aquatics is doing sediment testing in November to help us determine phosphorus and nitrogen levels in our lake. Early next spring we will have a report which should be a little more meaningful due to the year and half of testing that will be reflected in the report. There are a couple of new families which have an interest on being on the committee. The committee is looking into an erosion project at First Beach as there is an asphalt spillway that was put in by the town which is causing a problem. There has been a little bit of an algae bloom the last couple of days and the water clarity this summer has not been great. Hopefully a good normal winter this season will make a difference.

- **Strategic Planning:** Hema DeSilva reported the article he put in the newsletter has not elicited any responses from association members regarding projects they would like to have the committee pursue. Hema stated the last list was completed in 2015. Hema will send a list that the committee has compiled to board members for their review. He would like to see younger families getting involved. He indicated he believes the right of way issues need to be sorted out and improvements to the 10-foot walkway at Glimmer Glenn. Angela Buccheri asked if a survey would work to get input from the association regarding this topic. It was decided that after the strategic committee whittles down the list of capital improvements, we can survey the association.
- **Events:** Angela Buccheri volunteered to be the events chairperson. Board members will email ideas to Angela. Angela inquired about purchasing a projector and screen for movie night. It was noted that money to purchase items that last over 7 years can come out of capital expenditures. Angela will form a committee for events which she will oversee. The events calendar should be ready for March to be included in the spring packet mailing. Concerns for Covid were brought up. It was decided to put events in place and then cancel if needed. Lake Hayward Days is part of events.
- **Public Safety:** This chairperson handles parking passes and getting police coverage for certain times and events. Lee Griffin indicated he would take over the parking passes. Cindy Biancamano will reach out to Bonnie Sudell to see if she still wants to chair this committee. If Bonnie does not want to do it then Cindy will do it. It was discussed that it would be prudent to hire a private company instead of using police officers.
- **Technology:** Evelyn Passan is taking over this position. She will meet with Jan DePratti for the transition. Evelyn inquired if proofreading the newsletter was part of this position. It was discussed that it is more of making sure the article is appropriate for the newsletter as opposed to actually editing it. Then it was discussed if Mike Trocchi was continuing on with the newsletter. Cindy Biancamano will contact Mike Trocchi. Angela suggested linking the newsletter to our private Facebook page. Jason Griffing will take care of this. It was also noted that board members should stay away from getting involved with commenting on the unofficial Facebook page. Jason Griffing will try to make all board members moderators of the POALH Facebook page so they can post informational items on there.

Old Business:

- **Coronavirus Update:** Cindy Biancamano indicated the only new thing regarding Covid was that fact that the board would still be allowed to meet virtually which would be good for the winter months.
- **Board Meeting Calendar:** It was discussed and decided that all board meetings would be held on the third Wednesday of every month excluding December. Cindy Biancamano will put the calendar together.
- **Dam Reconstruction:** Gary Petersen reported that the committee has a meeting on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. Hema DeSilva left a message for Brian Smith the Colchester state representative for help in getting funds for this project.
- **Rights-of-Way & Encroachment:** Gary Petersen feels that we have a survey that it is our property and the current property owner refuses to come forward with a survey. Gary understands that if you get a survey done and it is different than ours then the surveyors meet and it almost always can be resolved by both surveyors without having to go to court, etc. We cannot resolve this matter with the surveyors if Mr. Byron refuses to get a survey. Ed Bader stated we are a municipal tax district and the encroachment issue does not apply to us. The association owns that piece of property. The problem that Mr. Wright has is that he has encroached on Mr. Byron's property. Ed Bader further noted the association is going to take back the 15 feet that Mr. Byron has encroached on our property. Mr. Byron is legally entitled to a 15-foot strip of property to the lake. That means that Mr. Wright has encroached on Mr. Byron's property. Kathy Sabo felt we are moving lines that will affect many other property owners as well. Gary Petersen and Ed Bader felt this not to be true. Evelyn Passan abstained from this conversation. Cindy Biancamano feels that we need to have a conversation to know what we are going to do about the situation. Are we going to take him to court and how much is it going to cost? We cannot make him get a survey. We cannot offer to pay for his survey. Is there an amicable way we can rent that property to him? Gary Petersen feels that we have a survey showing it to be our property and if they want to take us to court than that is their decision. It would be a lot easier and a lot cheaper if Mr. Byron just got a survey and then the surveyors worked it out. Jason Griffing would like to separate the two issues of the right of way and the lake front property in that association members can traverse the right of way with no problem and the association does not own the property, so it is a nonissue. Gary Petersen feels it is all one issue. Cindy Biancamano inquired what we are asking

the property owners to move? Gary Petersen indicated they have been asked to move the fence, walkway and mailbox. Corinne Halliday thinks legally we cannot just tell them it is ok to just use our property. Ed Bader stated that Mr. Wright is not our problem, but it is Mr. Byron. Mr. Byron's property will start 15 feet from the association's property line. Jason Griffing inquired if we send a letter asking Mr. Byron to remove his property what is our legal next step. Gary Petersen stated that the association can remove it. Hema DeSilva wanted to know about a previous survey that was done from the clubhouse to the north end and none of these changes needed to be made. He noted that there seems to be a disconnect somewhere of the survey coming from the opposite end. Cindy Biancamano also heard that the surveys from each end did not line up. Gary Petersen feels the surveys today are more accurate than those done many years ago. Cindy Biancamano and Dave Edgington feel that surveys done going either way should line up. Hema DeSilva feels that the maps at the town hall are approximations. They seem to show 50 feet plus or minus. Gary Petersen feels that if we let this problem go then we will have more problems in the future. Cindy Biancamano brought up the question of where to go from here? Jason Griffing suggested sending a letter, but it should come from the board, not just the president. Angela Buccheri feels it should come from an attorney. Dave Edgington asked what our attorney's advice is for the next step. Ed Bader stated that our attorney indicated we are in the right and we should send a demand notice to remove the property and then take further action. Angela Buccheri feels that we need to know exactly what those steps are, how to proceed with those steps and exactly what the costs of those steps will be before making a decision. Dave Edgington asked if our attorney could come to the next board meeting so that we can sit and ask him pointed questions. Cindy Biancamano will contact the attorney and inquire if he could attend our meeting electronically. She would also like all the board members to come up with a list of questions ahead of time that we would like answered. She will compile the questions. Jason Griffing also commented that we need to be forward thinking in whatever we come up with as we should use the same protocols in the future. Gary Petersen reminded the board that a letter was already sent back in May of 2020 asking the property owner to remove the stuff from our property by May 31, 2020. Jason Griffing also noted that perhaps the attorney could not be present at night so we may have to have the meeting during the day. Angela Buccheri also noted that that the meeting with the attorney could be recorded if everyone sends their questions ahead of time and board members who could not attend could listen to the answers to the questions on the recording. Cindy Biancamano asked if we had money budgeted for an attorney and yes, the association does.

- **Swim Lessons:** Cindy Biancamano brought up that at this time we do not have an instructor. Kathy Sabo indicated that there was an association member who volunteered to look into getting a swim instructor for next year who Bonnie Sudell was going to contact. Cindy will call Bonnie to see if this is in motion.
- **Signage:** Cindy Biancamano brought this topic up to the board raising the question if we really need to pursue signage enforcement. The board discussed it and thought it was not imperative to pursue at this time.

New Business

- **Smoking:** Dave Edgington brought up the topic of the no smoking rule on association property. He indicated that there has been a real problem at second beach with people smoking on the beach right next to other beach goers. He feels like it is not in our newsletter and there are not any signs anywhere letting people know that there is no smoking. His suggestion is to put up no smoking signs on the bulletin board and one on each beach. Angela Buccheri feels the signage is outdated at second beach. Kathy Sabo inquired if there was a smoking area and if there could be a smoking area. Gary Petersen stated there is no smoking on association property. Jason Griffing will make signs to attach to the big sign. He also asked how do we enforce it. Dave Edgington felt at least the beginning is having the signage to refer to. Jason Griffing will send the board what we have on the newsletters and what we have on the actual signs. Then he will have the vinyl lettering added to the big signs. He will also look into a small sign from amazon to post by the picnic tables at second beach. Corinne Halliday indicated the rule is listed on every association email blast. Dave Edgington feels we need to get the rule into every printed newsletter and on the website.
- **Memorial for Sandy Zawistowski:** Cindy Biancamano thought we could get a memorial stone to place in the garden in memory of Sandy. Lee Griffin suggested that the boards on the bench at second beach need to be replaced so it would be nice to make a memorial bench for Sandy there as she was instrumental in producing the garden. It was decided that the bench would be repaired, and a plaque would be purchased to secure to the bench in memory of Sandy.
- **Geese:** Evelyn Passan reported that the committee has met with two different management companies. Nutmeg Farms would come in March and scare the geese. They find the nests and replace the eggs with wooden eggs. Her max price was about \$15,000. She had a lot of suggestions about plants to have at the lake border to discourage the geese from coming ashore as well as lakefront property owners to not cut their grass. Definitely not feeding the geese. Evelyn also met with another person whose dog actually went in the water and demonstrated the process but was located too far away to have any interest in commuting to helping us out. Critter Cops is another company that comes in when the geese are molting and rounds up the geese into a cage then takes them offsite and euthanizes them and donates the meat to shelters. Phil Sabo indicated Critter Cops would have to file a permit

with the DEEP which may alert PETA. Evelyn indicated that the geese are federally protected so you need to get a DEEP permit to do what Critter Cop wants to do but also to mess with the eggs. Critter Cop is \$3,500 to come and set up his equipment and then charges \$95.00 per geese. After speaking with a representative of the DEEP he recommends that we eliminate the problem by getting the permit. The association has done everything we needed to such as put up geese barriers, harass them, scare them with remote control boats, install sprinklers and executed water quality testing in order to apply for the DEEP permit for a roundup. We need to work as a community to get this done. DEEP indicated that if we follow the course we are on it will take years to accomplish. Nutmeg Farms will be at the pavilion on Saturday at 10:00 am to answer questions for the committee and the board is welcome to attend. Jason Griffing will put out an email blast. Gary Petersen is not in favor of euthanizing the geese. He feels that the geese population will go way down if you addle the eggs. Critter Cop has not done any jobs in CT yet only in NY. Corinne Halliday asked if we could just have people addle the eggs in March and April and just try that first. Kathy Sabo asked if we do decide to go forward with any plan, where do we get the money from? We would have to get a vote from the association to spend anything over \$5,000 so we wouldn't be able to do it this spring. Gary Petersen commented that Third Beach doesn't have a geese problem. Phil Sabo feels one reason is because there is no grass there and suggested the association beach out the grassy areas of First Beach. Evelyn Passan indicated that everyone needs to work together in harassing the geese. It needs to be a joint effort. The volunteers with dogs work well when they are consistent. Angela Buccheri agrees that having a more organizational effort with volunteers first might be the way to go. Jason Griffing suggest trying a different kind of barrier. Kathy Sabo asked if the committee could put some actions into place for next spring and summer that will not cost much utilizing volunteers. Angela Buccheri suggested that educating people on the steps the association is taking to deter the geese as it is being completed will help people to understand the lengths the association is taking to resolve the problem and will help when and if it comes to something they need to vote on. Phil Sabo suggested we not cut the grass at First Beach near the shore.

- **Other**

- Jason Griffing will put out a new contact list for the board members. Only POALH emails will be listed on the new contact list. Board members were reminded to only use their POALH email instead of their personal email when conducting POALH business.
- Dave Edgington indicated that members who frequent second beach are asking about getting a shed to put down there. It was indicated it would be a capital expense. Dave will look into it. Dave also inquired about getting umbrellas. That would have to be paid for by association members if they wanted it.
- Evelyn asked about blighted properties. It was indicated that the town of East Haddam does not have a blight ordinance, so it is difficult for the association to enforce any type of blight rules.

Dave Edgington made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jason Griffing seconded.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.