

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
June 15, 2020  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

5:30 pm – Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order

**Present:** Andrew Robertson, Chairman; Richard Pitman, Vice Chairman. Fred McGarry, Cindy McHugh, Alden Dill, Selectpersons.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

Chairman Robertson will forego the pledge as this meeting is a ZOOM meeting and get to the meat of the matter.

He stated that he talked with a couple of them, Dick who called him. Sorry to spring the meeting on them with short notice but he wanted to talk a little more about Veasey Park, in particular, and there is one other item too, that he thought that they should discuss. It's not quite as volatile as Veasey Park.

He reasons for speaking about Veasey Park obviously is the public outpouring of their non-support of the Board's decision which is not the end all to what they needed to do but he did do some checking around in neighboring towns.

Nottingham's beach is closed but they are discussing at their meeting this evening. Northwood is open with no lifeguards and no swim lessons. Epsom is open but they have canceled their swimming lessons and he believed that they have never had lifeguards at their park other than swim instructors. Strafford's beach is open and they are conducting their swimming lesson program, they decided.

He didn't know what the Board feels. The more he thought about it, he wondered if they might consider. Their prime concern was the employees and the facility. He didn't know if they wanted to consider leaving the beach open with a "swim at your own risk" type policy or if the Board's opinion remains the same.

He wanted to discuss it, particularly with how much community interest and output there was regarding their decision. He would note that obviously, the state beaches are open with sunbathing. Bear Brook State Park is open using their day reservation policy.

His personal thought, and he knew that they received a couple of suggestions that they devise a reservation policy with supervision and time limits on visits, that sort of thing. To him, that seems like it might be really, really difficult for them to enact. It would be difficult for any employees that they may put down there and would likely cause more bad will than it would do good and he guessed that his thought was if they were going to consider opening Veasey, it should probably be to use the paddle launch at their own risk, use the beach at your own risk, post some guidelines about distancing, that sort of thing.

He didn't know what the rest of the Board felt but he wanted to talk about it.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he agreed with the chairman 100 percent as to what he just said.

Selectman Dill stated that it was pretty much his thought too. When they first got the stuff from the Commission, that was an option, open it, no lifeguards, no swim raft, etc., no grills, he remembered them saying in that letter. He thought that this was probably their best option.

Chairman Robertson stated that he thought that Travis' first message to them was, before they made the recommendation did, his first message to them was to open it and keep use limited, encourage people to come down, swim and then go home, not come down, have a BBQ, invite your friends down to hang out with them, that sort of thing and he thought that this message might be something workable. They board things up. There would be no lifeguards there. The only staff, if they wanted to do it that he would see would be to work with Parks and Rec to have someone down there to check stickers on cars as they come through. If that's not feasible, just swim at your own risk.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that she was thinking about that and even a lifeguard that is not wearing "lifeguard garb" as a parking attendant, that way they would still have a job.

Chairman Robertson stated that he didn't know who they had as employees that are interested between potential lifeguard candidates that are not going to have a lifeguard job and/or Parks and Rec people who won't have a job as summer programs have been curtailed. That would be the only staff that he would have there. Just someone to check to make sure that they had Deerfield Resident stickers because once word gets down to the dam that Veasey Park is open and there is nobody there, they might see an influx of folks from elsewhere.

Selectman McGarry stated that he would agree with having somebody there. He thought that this person should be able to take and watch the parking to make sure that people are parking in the right spot and they may have to limit the number of vehicles in there at some point or he thought that there would be a problem.

Chairman Robertson stated that he would say, and this is his own personal observation over the last few years, but he has never seen the parking lot approach full in the last five to ten years. Even on fairly hot days, there has generally been plenty of room to distance in there.

The other thing that he thought would be good about opening it is that the dam is definitely being overused. They have people swimming while people are trying to launch motor boats. They clearly have people drinking on the dam as well as swimming and maybe beaching their boats on the sand in front of it and it has been extremely difficult for Deerfield residents to get their kayak or canoe in at the state ramp simply because someone is using it and he thought if they could direct some of our residents away from that area and let them use our kayak/canoe launch at Veasey, it would help that situation too to which the vice chairman agreed also and stated that it is a major concern right now of getting them out of there (dam).

Chairman Robertson asked the Board if they had a date in mind to be looking to open for swimming at their own risk.

Selectwoman McHugh stated tomorrow.

Selectman Dill asked if they had Travis on the line to which Travis stated that he was there. Selectman Dill stated that he thought that it really came down to Travis. He stated that he would not say, "Let's do it tomorrow" if Travis couldn't get it done for a couple of days.

Travis asked the Board if they wanted the ropes out to which it was answered that they thought they definitely need the ropes out. He would not put a raft out, picnic tables or anything else, just put the ropes out and let people that want to go down there and aren't concerned with health exposures.

Gary O'Connell asked if there would be restrooms to which the chairman stated that he would say no rest rooms for two reasons.

One, it would encourage people to not go down there for a two or three-hour stay. Go down, swim, go home.

Selectman Dill added that the state says that they couldn't open composting toilets at this time so that is beyond their control even if they said, open the restrooms.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that worst case, if they found out that people were using the lake for that, they could get a portable toilet.

Chairman Robertson stated that this is what the state has done. He was a little confused. He went by Wallis Sands a few days ago and closed their bathrooms and brought in 25 porta potties that they put across the back of the parking lot and he was trying to figure out how porta potties were much more sanitary than bathrooms that they could have staff wash and clean.

Mr. McCoy stated that he thought it was that they composting toilets. Many Board members agreed.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that back to the question, it would be nice if they could have it open by Friday with the weather that they are talking.

Selectman McGarry asked about the timing to get the signage up?

Mr. McCoy stated that he could coordinate with Ms. Greig on working on the signage. She has always been very helpful with helping them with that.

Chairman Robertson stated that, and he asked the town administrator that he thought that Parks and Rec have some ability with large signs as well such as the event signs that have been posted on the bulletin board in front of the G. B. White, that sort of thing.

Mr. Harrington stated that they have to get those made and that might not be done by Friday. It usually takes a little longer.

He stated that they could definitely work with Travis and assist him in any way that they could to get signs up.

Selectwoman McHugh asked if there were "swim at your own risk" signs already down there along with the lifeguard off duty?

Multiple people chimed in to say that there were.

Denny Greig stated that she just wanted to clarify the "open without anything", there is no opening that she knew of, of any beach in New Hampshire where they are opening without appropriate degrees, first of all, all state inland beaches are open with restrictions. That restriction is obviously access, don't come there if they are sick, if you answer "yes" to any questions, please go home.

The second thing is "if they are here, please socially distance themselves at least six feet.

Third, please wear a mask if they are within six feet of someone else.

So, although they say that the beaches are open, beaches are open with restrictions so she thought that the question was when they say they are "open", are they instilling those restrictions because that is where the signage comes in and she just wanted to be sure that they were clear on what they were asking people to do because just allowing people to show up on a 90 degree day with no guidance on what is expected of them or where they are expected to be and if they had 40 people standing at the water's edge within two feet of one another, she has to say, that's not what all the guidelines are talking about as they know by now. They have heard plenty of information about it so she guessed that she just wanted to be really clear on what they meant by "open".

Chairman Robertson stated that what he was thinking would indeed post, and it is fairly straight forward, the things that she just mentioned. It is on the state website with regard to social distancing, with regard to not being there if they are showing any symptoms that they are ill in regard if they are coughing or sneezing and with regard to wearing a mask if they are in close proximity to anyone or in a structure.

When he says "open with nothing else open", he means is open with ropes, bathrooms closed, no lifeguards, no picnic tables, they can go down to the beach and swim at their own risk if someone is so inclined and they will have to walk by some sort of signage indicating what the expected guidelines are and if things go the "hell in a hand basket", for lack of a better term, quickly, they would reserve the right, obviously, to shut the gate and sorry, this is not working.

Mr. McCoy asked if he could ask a question?

Obviously, when they are posting their recommended guidelines and as far as he could tell, being in the real world, as little as he has been lately, these are recommended guidelines. People go into restaurants where they don't wear masks while they are putting your food together.

So, they aren't going to be asking their employees to enforce anything other than resident stickers and possibly, if they are limiting capacity. Would they be asking them to screen everybody that walks through to which both Denny and the chairman stated no, they wouldn't foresee anything. The only enforcement for the employees, that the chairman would see would be if they checked resident stickers. Travis was absolutely right, these are recommendations, it is not legal advisories, they have no enforcement capability and the staff that they have to put down there if they decide to do to have staff members there to check parking, are not going to be in a position to enforce social distancing, enforce mask wearing, that sort of thing.

Mr. McCoy also asked if there were going to be limiting capacity?

Chairman Robertson stated that at this stage, they have not talked about that.

Selectman Dill asked what the capacity was and Travis stated that the comfortable capacity is between 75 and 100.

Selectman Dill stated that this doesn't leave much room, does it to which Travis agreed that it didn't.

Mr. McCoy stated that if they limited it to two-thirds, they are still kind of pushing the envelope and there are days when it is packed. Most of the time, it is not, probably won't be an issue, but he did anticipate and he has heard people say that this beach is open, that beach is open, they kind of are.

Northwood is open for five hours a day and weekends. Some places are fully open, some aren't but people from other towns are going to look to swim here. He thought that the amount of traffic through...

Chairman Robertson stated that his comment about using potential lifeguard staff that aren't going to be lifeguarding or Parks and Rec folks to check parking stickers.

He would stay though, the overwhelming number of people on social media to open the beach, there were a fair number of people and people that contacted him and said that they didn't care what they did, they were not going to the beach until this is over and he hoped that some of that attitude might mitigate numbers they have and use of the beach.

Selectman Dill asked if there was any way that they could limit capacity and have it feasibly work?

Chairman Robertson stated that they would have to have a parking attendant. He thought that the easiest way to do it would be to decide on a number of cars and have the parking attendant close the gate or have a sawhorse or something saying that the beach is at capacity.

Again, they would probably need two at least to do that kind of thing and hopefully they wouldn't have any angry situations.

Selectwoman McHugh asked why they couldn't open it up and assess the crowd after that? If they open it up and see that there is a lot of people going and now, they need a capacity limit to which the vice chairman also agreed.

Someone on the line asked that if that is on a Saturday, would that mean that they would call them on the weekend or wait until the weekend is over? The only problem with assessing afterwards is that it really doesn't solve the issue.

Chairman Robertson stated that they really had to move into this with assessment guidelines ahead of time he thought or again, just go to a "no services, swim at your own risk" and hope the people have the good sense that if they pull up and the parking lot is full is to think that no one is distancing and it is going to be impossible to distance, they will turn around and go home.

Selectwoman McHugh added to leave it up to them.

Vice Chairman Pitman thought that Mr. McCoy was really light on those numbers. He has been there enough and gone by enough. Seventy-five people in that park is not a lot of people and the other thing is, if they try to track vehicles, he thought that six to ten could be there with kayaks or canoes and have nothing to do with beach so they are going to have to decide on who is going down by the water and who is going to use their boat.

Mr. McCoy added and who is doing both.

Chairman Robertson stated that they bring their boat down, come back, throw your boat on their car and then go for a swim.

A person on the line added that the Commission has talked about circling a ten-foot radius, a whole bunch of those on the grass area that somebody could look at and say okay, but that is not going to solve the situation as to people standing at the water's edge, watching their children in the water.

Chairman Robertson stated that he didn't want to close down a good discussion about this but where is the Board at this point? He thought that they had a couple of decisions. They either had to devise some kind of limitation plan, if that is what they wanted to do, understanding that they need some staff for that or open the beach with a "swim at your own risk, no services provided" and obviously they would place the appropriate signage advising of the distancing guidelines and sound practice.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they had a little time too. There isn't a lot of people using the beach. The water is still a little cool. It is going to warm up quick but at least they could get started and see how it works out. He would be in favor of that.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that she wanted to open it up and say to swim at their own risk and put the signage up. People can decide if it is too busy for them. Take the picnic tables out so it gives more room for people to get away from each other and hire she thought, and if Travis and the Commission has lifeguards that wanted to work doing that, give them the first opportunity to be the parking lot attendant and then move onto Parks and Rec if they didn't have enough lifeguards to do it but not wearing lifeguard garb at all, so there are no lifeguards there, don't come in looking like a lifeguard and Travis added, as general staff and Vice Chairman Pitman agreed.

Chairman Robertson asked just for clarity, could somebody on the Board make a motion along the lines of what Cindy said.

**Motion:** Selectwoman McHugh moves to open Veasey Park with the understanding that it is "swim at your own risk" and put up the appropriate signage and have parking lot attendants hired in the manner stated above.

**Second:** Vice Chairman Pitman

**Discussion:** Selectman Dill stated that they may have to do something about capacity so he hopes that the Commission can watch it for the next few days and let the Board know at their next meeting on Monday if they are approaching capacity, what they are looking like.

Chairman Robertson thought that the Board would have to watch that too. They had a recommendation from the Commission and they are basically moving away from that so he appreciates everything and anything the Commission can do but the Board is essentially changing the plans and so they will have to take a role in keeping an eye of things too.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he didn't think they would have to be there too much because after talking with Gary and a few others, they kind of had this as a backup if the Board went down that road.

He did hear that Travis signed the petition though to open the beach.

Travis added that the Commission's first choice was to open in some way, shape or form which is why they provided the Board with the three options laid out as best as they could but based on the feedback that they got back, it just didn't seem possible under the guidelines that they were under.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they should just give it a whirl.

Chairman Robertson stated that he appreciated that. If this goes a fowl, what they deem as appropriate use, they may well have to close it and that is the risk the community is looking at as they decide how they are going to use Veasey Park.

**Vote: Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries**

Chairman Robertson stated that the vice chairman mentioned Friday. If that is not a feasible time because of the signage, then they may have to kick it back until Saturday or Monday but let's do their best to shoot for Friday.

Selectwoman McHugh asked Gary or Travis what they thought to which Travis stated that it would be really difficult to get the lines out by Friday. They can try. Most of the Commissioners work. He was the only one that works from home.

Chairman Robertson asked what was a better timeframe to which Travis stated that typically, they open for the season when the kids get out of school which is typically this weekend. June 2nd would be their opening day.

Selectwoman McHugh asked if it would help if they could get someone to help him and Vice Chairman Pitman stated that they could get someone to help him.

Travis and others stated that they needed a boat and Selectwoman McHugh asked if the fire boat could come down, could they talk with the chief?

Mr. McCoy stated that he couldn't use the dinghy. They need a solid, heavy boat, something that can pull the lines. They grab the anchors and they pull the anchors out and drop them. That holds the line out taut.

Mr. McCoy stated that they were sure that they could find a boat and with everybody chomping at the bit to get it open. It was mentioned that they have had citizens step up in past years.

Chairman Robertson stated that if anyone was listening that had a boat.....

He continued and stated to move forward as best as they were able and maybe shoot for Saturday and if that is not possible, maybe Sunday.

Mr. McCoy and one other stated that they would get on it.

Chairman Robertson stated that he appreciated very much the Commission's cooperation. As they are well aware, this is a big deal to the community and has been a tough process for the Board to deal with, too.

Mr. McCoy stated that they were happy to do it.

Chairman Robertson stated that he had one other order of business. Nick Lawrence had rolled out the field usage for groups up to ten in Deerfield. That has been online and made public.

He is looking to get back to some semblance of little league using the state guidelines in accordance to the numbers they set for distancing and safety protocols and Mr. Harrington had talked to him the other day and he suggested that as long as they were having this meeting, might as well bring it up and run it by the Board before they moved ahead.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that it sounded like a good idea.

Chairman Robertson stated that he knew that most towns and larger cities, Concord, Manchester, that sort of thing, are moving forward on a limited basis. Whether they will be games or not, remains to be seen but it allows individual teams to go down with a handful of kids and have practice.

Selectwoman McHugh stated that Manchester has opened. They opened their public buildings, playgrounds, and Selectman Dill asked her again what town that was to which she stated Manchester.

Chairman Robertson stated that he knew that state guidelines are still saying that they prefer they not to open playgrounds. Park space, open space, that sort of thing is good. They are still issuing a hold off on playgrounds. He thought that Nick would come to them as soon as he is ready to recommend that they open them.

If they could get the fields open, let the kids play a little ball, and Selectwoman McHugh stated that she had a question on that too regarding the tennis courts. Why can't they limit that to four people on the court and open that up?

Chairman Robertson stated that he believed that they are opening the tennis courts as part of the field program. He knew that the senior exercise group is going to start holding exercise classes through Parks and Rec on the tennis courts if not this week, next week.

Mr. Harrington stated that he could give them an update on both. The tennis courts are currently open and are being used. There is signage for guidance for suggested play and how to play during the health issue. That has been up on the court for over a week now.

They are just finalizing documents which the Board will see Monday. There is an agreement for facility usage with a COVID-19 section to it that the Board needs to approve and that will be signed by the senior fitness coordinator and they have waivers for all of the participants sign their first day of class that they understand the risks that they may be undertaking by participating in the group and they will be using the basketball court, not the tennis courts.

That is all coming. He had given Nick signage to put up a week ago so they are all good.

Chairman Robertson asked for other business or new business that the Board wants to discuss.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if they had something to sign today and Selectman Dill stated that he didn't get it either.

Chairman Robertson stated that he probably didn't sign it. He knew that he saw that on his computer that he doesn't have a signature saved that he could electronically sign it.

Vice Chairman Pitman asked if it would come around and the chairman stated that it would and Mr. Harrington stated that the chairman had it now.

Chairman Robertson stated that this concludes the business at hand this evening and at this point, he would move to Citizen's Comments and if you would like to make a citizen's comment, please identify yourself for the minutes and let them know what they are thinking.

**Citizen's Comments:**

**Travis McCoy – 188 North Road:**

He just wanted to, he thought that everyone knows that they are not in this for the popularity contest but what this is going to look to a good portion of people in town is that they were asked to make a decision as a Veasey Park Commission to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and the Board accepted it and then they thought better of it and if they don't put out some sort of statement to explain that maybe this was done in conjunction with or based on further recommendations from the Veasey Park Commission.

He thought that it would be prudent just to let people know that this is something that the Commission has been looking at all along because no one really knows what, a lot of people are wondering if they even put any thought into this and they were called anything from "retards" to "fascists".

The fact of the matter is that they put out those options that wanted the Board to explore and the only document that was made available was the Commission's final recommendation.

If they could word the proclamation just so it includes, based on recommendations from the Veasey Commissioners or however it sounds good and possibly, maybe put into public record, the recommendation options that they already provided the Board.

He just felt it would take a little weight off the Commission as well.

Chairman Robertson stated that he agreed with him wholeheartedly and he could work on that with Mr. Harrington tomorrow to get something out with that regard.

He thought that people need to know, regardless of the decision, that all parties worked together on this although he is sure that she is not overjoyed with the Board's decision on this, Denny, from Emergency Management has given them advise, he believed that the Commission has talked with her as well as fire and police. It wasn't something that the selectmen and a few people from Veasey Park Commission got together and came up with a ...

Selectwoman McHugh stated that she wanted to say too, after their last meeting, there was a lot that opened up after their last meeting last week to which the chairman agreed that there was.

He continued to state that the Nottingham board is deciding what they are going to do with their beach this evening as well.

Mr. McCoy stated that this is based on the continuance of the evolving situation and that they were allowed to open under less restrictions to which various members agreed.

Chairman Robertson stated that at the last meeting he did say that they would be looking at this on a week to week basis.

Vice Chairman Pitman stated that he put in the motion, not for the summer.

Chairman Robertson called for other citizen's comments.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Pitman moves to adjourn

**Second:** Multiple members of the Board

**Discussion:**

**Vote:** Yea 4, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

**Next Meeting: Monday, June 22, 2020 at 5:30 pm**

*The Minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Dianne L. Kimball, Recording Secretary  
Pending approval by the Board of Selectmen*