

GIANTS NECK BEACH ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 4, 2024 6:30 pm

HELEN LENA CLUBHOUSE, 31 WEST PATTAGANSETT RD, NIAN TIC CT

1. Call to Order

Paul Formica called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

2. Presidents Report

Paul appointed Rick Doggart and Steve Spano to the Zoning Commission. Paul stated, for the record, that the BOG is thoughtful in forming committees if needed to get the best answer to an issue. Geese are on the agenda, and there will be a discussion of an equitable solution, making sure everyone has the opportunity to be heard before any real decisions are made.

3. Treasurers Report

Louise Wilcox reported approximately \$70,000 in the operating account, \$60,000 in the savings account, and \$200,000 in the money market account. Taxes have been collected on all but five properties, with approximately \$3,000 left to collect. Non-property tax revenues are \$1,000.

Paul asked for the interest rate on the money market account. At 5% the account made \$600 last month (vs. \$75 per year formerly).

Nothing has been spent on capital projects this FY. Gerry asked about the spending status on capital projects and would like an update on each. If we continue to wait to get started, a couple of them may have to wait until spring.

There was a motion to accept the Treasurer's report. Gerry Van Noordennen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

BOG meeting 8/7/24. Ernie Annibale moved to approve the minutes. Gerry Van Noordennen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. Geese - discussion and possible action

Paul said that the discussion is a fact-finding mission.

Gerry got a quote from the USDA Wildlife Services Division and contacted Justin Wylie, staff wildlife biologist. The price for remediation would be \$5,400 for one year, which includes 4-5 visits to disperse or remove resident Canadian Geese and one visit to search for and remove nests. An agreement would include an option to amend if needed to extend the expiration date and add additional funds. Gerry will send the written proposal if the BOG decides to act.

Lou Piscatelli asked what the USDA does to remediate exactly. Gerry said they came out last year upon invitation and saw a couple of dozen resident geese. They can tell which ones are residents. They would do what their expert opinion and experience tell them to do. The community would leave it up to them to handle the problem.

Mary Ann asked if USDA Wildlife Services could come out and discuss other alternatives, such as dogs. There are different possibilities, and she wondered if the USDA could make a full assessment recommendation. Gerry said the USDA said that the lights on the pond moved them to another spot.

Lou said that the problem of the goose poop on the beach has lessened. So, the question remains: how do people get them from the beach and other common areas they frequent? The literature and our experience prove it can be a health issue if it gets out of control again.

Louise asked if USDA Wildlife Services anticipates having to do this every year. Paul suggested having USDA Wildlife Services return to discuss all the options.

ACTION ITEM: Invite USDA Wildlife Services to a meeting to discuss the options for geese eradication.

Lisa Doggart shared a report with various ways to control. They are encouraged to remain in the area based on how their vegetation is made available.

Mary Ann discussed the survey. There were 94 actual responses. The first question (I FAVOR REMOVING THE RESIDENT GEESE FROM GNB THROUGH THE USDA WILDLIFE SERVICES, INCLUDING EUTHANIZATION IF NECESSARY.) was 57% yes, 37% no, and 13% no answer. The second question (I WANT TO PURSUE ALTERNATE MEANS OF MANAGING GEESE - NOT EUTHANIZATION) was 41% yes, 40% was no, and 19% didn't answer. There were comments (attached to minutes).

Lou said that to discourage them from staying, the community should consider a combination of things to prevent them from being here. They come back to feed at Mothers Beach.

Paul asked about the duck population and whether the lights have affected birds. Lou responded that ducks are migratory, but geese aren't.

Paul said that Ledge Light tested the waters early in the year. He would like Ledge Light to verify that everything is okay. Paul wants to have as much information as possible, including some history, to create a thoughtful plan.

ACTION ITEM: Reach out to Ledge Light.

Paul suggested forming a committee. MaryAnn suggested speakers to educate. Lisa Doggart agreed. Paul asked Gerry to contact USDA and ask about other options.

Paul asked for clarification about how to join the mailing list. Mary Ann described how to sign up for emails.

Public Comments Regarding Geese

Matt Ravosa spoke from Zoom to agree wholeheartedly with the suggestion of a multifaceted approach. The geese will come back. With a PhD in biology, he knows more about what he's talking about. Matt suggested that www.geeserelief.com provides information on methods to deter. Matt hopes that the

very last thing considered is euthanasia. He is happy to be involved. It's important to him to give back. Geese mostly like grass. The GNB community provides a great deal of lawn grass, which is a highly desirable diet for them and their location because they can see their predators.

Matt stated that grasses need only be high enough to be a deterrent, and that's not super high, but it may make for an undesirable-looking lawn.

Gerry asked whether dogs scare geese and other ducks as well. Matt suggested referring to www.geeserelief.com for an answer.

Lou asked if a 1-2 foot hedge would serve the same purpose. Matt said they would fly over to the lowgrass spot. Minimizing low-lawn grass is the best answer. You asked what we could do to allow people to have nice lawns while still deterring geese. Matt said that anything other than low-lying grass helps solve the problem.

Susan Williamson said she is from Westchester and knows a place where dogs have eliminated geese.

Mary Jean Agostini opposed any means of goose round-ups other than cleaning the beach every day in the summer. Geese's round-up methods are inhumane. She has sent alternative methods via email to BOG (attached to these minutes). The pond has no waterfowl due to the lights, so she suggested putting lights on the beach. She intends to reach out to the media and animal rescue organizations to bring attention to the plans to cull the geese at GNB. Gassing is barbaric and medieval, and Mary Jean provided reports that described it.

Jim Beaulieu, pond committee chair, says the upper pond doesn't have the problem because it doesn't have the low grasses. It's incorrect that all geese are migratory. Jim feels we have tried all the solutions except dogs. In Jim's 30 years at GNB, the community has been unsuccessful at getting residents to participate in the recommendations to control the geese problem. There is no reason to assume that after 30 years, we will change our ways. There is no recourse for people who do what they want, whether good or bad for the environment. He has put in more fences in 20 years. Until there is a behavioral change, nothing will change.

Mike Heenehan agreed with most of what Matt said, except that he has observed the geese eating eel grass with each high tide and algae. Grass might be predominant, but they are eating algae and eelgrass. Cleaning the beach once a week helps. Beach cleaning is on budget. He wants to thank the volunteers.

Gerry asked if there is still a budget for beach cleaning and if there is still money to clean up after a storm. Two emergency cleanups have already happened, and there is no money left in the budget to clean up after another storm before next spring.

People interested in joining the geese management committee should let Mary Ann know.

6. Committee Reports

Lisa Daggart said the Beautification Committee planted some plants in the memorial garden. Someone is interested in buying a new bench.

7. Public Comments

Gerry got a quote for speedbumps from Uline. The cost ranges from \$120 to \$200 for various heights and lengths of 6 feet. The board wants to consider this when it moves forward with slowing people down on the road. He suggested asking the highway department in town what they recommend for how many we need. It seems like a simple, low-cost solution.

Ernie asked if speeding is a big problem. He doesn't really see the problem. Members of the public weighed in that it is and also that it is not a problem. Lisa Doggart says people have come to her to talk about the issue. At the intersection of Ridgewood and Niles Creek, people don't stop. Recently, seeing scooters not stopping is a concern.

Jim Beaulieu thinks that a couple of speedbumps might get people's attention.

8. Board Comments

Mary Ann said that there have been a couple of serious email scams. Annah Perch, the website administrator, is looking at solutions so that email and other personal information is not so evident on the website for scammers to acquire.

Mary Ann had comments on the issue of beach access enforcement. At the last meeting, the possibility of an enforcement officer and beach badges was discussed. She thinks that the community needs to get a handle on enforcement over the winter so it is ready for spring. Paul suggested putting it as an item on the next agenda. Paul spoke with the Giants Neck Heights President, who has received complaints about members of GNB dealing with the enforcement officers at GNH. The two beach associations will work together. Paul thinks it's a good idea to have a checkpoint. Ernie felt there needs to be more discussion about enforcement. Having the kids doing the enforcement is a concern.

Lou said that other beach communities have stickers on their cars. He doesn't think they've ever tried that. The main complaint seems to be non-community members coming in cars and dropping people off. They need a sticker to drop people off, or they don't belong. Ernie thinks we still need a badge for the beach. The enforcement person would have to walk up and down the beaches and check for badges.

Mike Heenehan said the GNBA owns part of the GNH beach, so it should be fine for a GNB resident to use it.

ACTION ITEM: Add the discussion of enforcing the ban on allowing non-residents on the beach to the agenda for the next meeting.

Mary Ann asked for more information about the defibrillator's status. Paul will continue to seek a recommendation for a type of defibrillator.

Mary Ann asked about the \$2500 for pond treatment. Phyllis Berger talked to Gary Goeshel about regulations for spraying pesticides. Gary suggested that if there is an application, someone would come up with something better to spray than stuff banned in Europe. There does need to be an application if there is spraying.

Gerry said there is still money for spraying the pond, and he said the contractor is meeting his regulatory requirements. However, there are differences of opinion about whether there is a regulation for applying pesticides.

ACTION ITEM: Gerry to follow up with Phyllis Berger and Gary Goeshel regarding pesticide application.

9. Adjournment

Mary Ann Heenehan moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Gerry Van Noordennen. The meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.

Next meeting - BOG - October 2, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
Annah Perch
Acting Recording Secretary