

**GIANTS NECK BEACH ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING  
JULY 16, 2022, 9:00 AM  
HELEN LENA CLUBHOUSE,  
31 WEST PATTAGANSETT ROAD, NIAN TIC CT,**

**Present:** Page Heslin  
Lee-Ann Berger  
Bill Christopher (joined at 9:45 AM)

**Absent:** Paul Formica  
Lili Plisic  
Wick Mallory  
Lou Piscatelli

**1. Call to Order:**

P. Heslin called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

**2. Acceptance of Agenda**

**MOTION:** (I. Makiaris/P. Agostini) to accept the agenda as presented.

**VOTE:** Approved Unanimously by voice vote.

**3. President's Report**

P. Heslin was happy to report that volunteers have agreed to fill the committee chair vacancies discussed at the Annual Meeting. Specifically, Michael Heenehan has agreed to Chair the Beach and Harbor Committees, and Andrew Young is our new Chair of the Insurance Committee. They both have lots of enthusiasm and energy and have already jumped in to the roles, and the Board would like to thank them for stepping up to fill these crucial roles. She further reported that the current Recreation Committee Chair has stated that she will be stepping down after this season, so we will be needing a new chair for that committee. Spread the word, and have anyone that is interested contact her.

In less happy news, P. Heslin further reported that the Board is receiving an increased number of complaints about various violations of our by-laws and ordinances, including but not limited to: drinking, partying, smoking, glass containers and dogs on the beach (whose owners on occasion have been seen leaving fecal matter behind on the beach and allowing the dogs to urinate in the water), coupled with belligerence and/or aggression when approached by anyone pointing out the rules being violated; parking on streets and other no parking areas such as marginal lands surrounding the ponds; violations of noise ordinances, particularly relating to construction; and violations of rules relating to the new court, many of which have resulted in actual damage to the surface. She noted that

some of these issues seem to be caused by “visitors” and renters, but often it is Association members as well. In addition, we are all responsible for ensuring that our guests and renters abide by all bylaws and ordinances. The challenge, as always is enforcement. We have tried until now rely on each other to be good neighbors and abide by the rules that allow all of us to enjoy the community, but for one reason or another that system unfortunately seems to be breaking down with increasing frequency. She noted that an Association member addressed the Board on this issue at its last meeting, and over the winter the Board will be considering possible approaches to enforcement. The Board would welcome input on this difficult issue from everyone – please contact any member with your thoughts. In the meantime, she urged everyone to do their part by being considerate of others and complying with our simple and reasonable rules so that we can keep this a place that everyone can enjoy.

#### **4. Treasurer’s Report**

P. Heslin presented the Treasurer’s report, as L. Wilcox was not present. The checking account currently has \$72,438.05, of which \$37,138.58 is from 2022 taxes collected to date. The capital account \$169,444.88, of which \$74,387.00 has been appropriated for previously approved projects (such as beach and pond work, new beach stairs, and new boat ramp). All prior taxes due have been collected in full, including any applicable interest. As a reminder, the last day to pay 2022 taxes without penalty is Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **5. Update on Possible Improvements/Projects at and around the Clubhouse**

As a follow-up to the powerpoint presentation given by the committee at the Annual Meeting, P. Heslin again thanked the committee (consisting of Louise Wilcox (Chair), Jim Horton, Glory Lena, Trip Hartigan, Joan Malone, and Irene Makiaris) for their hard work on the project. The presentation has also been available on the Association website since the Annual Meeting for anyone that wanted to study it in more detail. In addition, a dedicated email address was set up to facilitate comments by the membership, but none were received. She reminded everyone that there is no vote planned for today; this is just an update on the Board’s current thinking and an opportunity for discussion. To begin the discussion, she noted that the committee focused on the following areas:

- A. Safe access to the grassy area on the far side of the court;
- B. Shade and a comfortable sitting area for those using the court or playing games/recreating on the open grassy area;
- C. Storage for equipment for outside games;
- D. Expansion of existing clubhouse deck and direct access to the ground level from the deck; and
- E. Playground and landscape enhancements.

Taken together, the various recommendations of the committee represent a significant project, so the Board is currently thinking that it would be best to split it into two or more phases, both to spread out the expense and to be able to evaluate the space after each step

to help inform what – if anything – more should be done. The Board’s current view is that the logical things to include in a first phase would be: i) a retaining wall at end of the playground to level the immediately adjacent grassy area, ii) path around the end of court to the far side; iii) a pavilion to provide shade for players and spectators and also serve as additional recreational/entertainment space; and iv) a variety of portable outdoor lawn games that people can use in the grassy area. Future phases could include deck expansion, playground and landscaping enhancement, more permanent game installations, etc. Cost estimates obtained in May for the items included in the proposed phase one totaled approximately \$51,000. These numbers will of course be updated before anything is actually presented to the Association for a vote. In recognition of the fact that many people leave before the regular August meeting, the Board is considering holding a special association meeting on August 7<sup>th</sup> to maximize potential attendance for a vote, if it is ready to present the matter for a vote by that time. Information on the specific proposal would be circulated in advance of any such meeting. The matter was then opened up for discussion, which included the following comments:

Irene Makiaris feels that the playground enhancements should be included in the first phase. The bouncy horses will need to be moved for the retaining wall anyway. The benches are in severe disrepair, and there is better material now that can be substituted for the mulch we have been using.

Jim Beaulieu said we can’t fund this project from the capital account and maintain the desired minimum balance of \$110K.

Joan Malone is opposed to funding the first phase by special assessment, and says a permanent bocce pit must be included in the first phase.

Bonnie Henninger asked why we are doing this project. We spent a lot of money on the new court just a year ago, and damage from misuse is already being reported. If we can’t take care of that, why should we spend money on more nice things?

Linda Hotarek believes it is too soon to take any action on this. She thinks there should be a survey of all members to gauge interest in the different elements of the proposal. The Board shouldn’t just make decisions and force votes on the Association.

Joan Malone interjected that it is not up to the Board what to propose; it is up to the Association. The Board isn’t taking the wishes of the Association into consideration.

P. Heslin noted that it is the role of the Board to consider issues and then make proposals to the Association, which the Association can then either approve or reject. The Board doesn’t have authority to do anything other than present things for a vote. If a majority doesn’t approve a particular proposal, then it either dies or is modified and represented based on comments from the Association. The Board

is not forcing anything through. Any proposal presented would have been developed over the winter by an external committee comprised of a cross-section of our membership. Approval or rejection is in the hands of the Association.

Many additional comments followed questioning the need for the project at this time and expressing displeasure with considering another large expense so soon after the construction of the court. Many people endorsed the idea of a community-wide survey before any formal proposal is made to the Association.

## 6. Committee Reports

- A. **Ponds:** Chair J. Beaulieu stated that the flow between the two ponds, which is a Town issue to address, is basically done now. He further noted that it is imperative that people who live around the ponds comply with Town and wetland regulations. If our members violate those regulations we will no longer be able to self-monitor, and will be subject to fines and penalties. No one other than individuals approved by the Pond Committee should be taking any action with respect to the lands immediately adjacent to the ponds. This means no mowing or clearing, among other things. Any questions, contact Jim. P. Heslin asked if he could provide a short statement about this issue that could be circulated to the membership by email blast, and he agreed to do so.
- B. **Beach:** New Chair M. Heenehan reported that only one beach within the Association (the main beach) is officially classified as a “beach” by the state of CT. He will be working to get West Beach recognized as well. In the meantime we are not allowed to mark with buoys, etc. to delineate swimming areas for nearby boaters. Karen Joaquim asked what can be done about West Beach. It is a mess with too many rocks and seaweed and other debris everywhere. She suggested leaving rakes on the beach so that people can rake and clean while they are down there. J. Beaulieu reiterated that there are limits on what can be done and we need to comply with applicable regulations. The Beach Committee will take it under advisement.
- C. **Insurance:** New Chair A. Young reminded anyone hiring contractors to be sure to get insurance certificates establishing their coverage and – whenever possible – naming GNBA as an additional insured for purposes of the project.
- D. **Court:** Chair R. Moore reported that they have ordered rubber feet for the pickleball nets. The on-line reservation system is working well. Court is getting lost of use, so be sure to sign up on the app when you want to play to avoid the disappointment of arriving to find a full court. They are planning tournaments for July and August; details to follow. Please follow rules with respect to footwear and non-authorized activities to avoid further damage to the court.

## 7. Comments from the public

T. Bettera said that she has heard comments about potentially having kids in uniforms patrolling the beach to enforce rules and asked if that is being considered. P. Heslin said that has been suggested by an association member, and that the board over the winter will be considering various approaches to enforcement of all bylaws and ordinances.

T. Bettera thinks that we should try using airhorns to drive away the geese. Multiple people agreed that goose poop is becoming a huge issue on the beaches, roadways, and other marginal lands. Someone suggested letting dogs chase them. There are people that do this professionally.

T. Bettera also noted that she was very disappointed to see the low turnout of BOG members at the meeting. Only two were present for most of the meeting. She wants the poor attendance noted in the minutes. Several audience members agreed.

L. Hotarek presented a copy of Article 6 of our ordinances concerning motor vehicles and parking, and asked if that allows property owners to park on the marginal lands on the other side of the street from their property. P. Heslin reviewed the language and confirmed that it does not. The language specifically limits the ability of a homeowner to park on marginal lands to that strip that may exist between the paved roadway and the owner's property line, not the land on the other side of the roadway that does not directly abut their property.

Following up on the above discussion, J. Beaulieu noted that people parking on the grassy areas abutting the ponds, particularly along Lakeshore Dr., is a serious problem. He would like to see barriers put in to prevent this unauthorized parking. P. Heslin confirmed that the BOG has considered installing something there as a deterrent, particularly after hearing about the potential negative impacts on the pond. It will revisit the issue.

## 8. Adjournment

**MOTION: (T. Hartigan / I. Makiaris) to adjourn at 10:10 AM**

**VOTE: Approved unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Page Heslin, President and acting Secretary