

Town of Rockport

Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting September 16, 2013 - B

The committee convened at 7:00 pm in The Community House with the Board of Selectmen, and adjourned at 9:40 pm. Chairman Wally Hess presided. Carl Engel, Frank Hassler, Michael Lamoureux, June Michaels and Laurene Wessel attended. Selectmen Battistelli, Murphy and Sheedy attended, as well as over 60 members of the public and prospective member David Coyne.

Recommendations to Board of Selectmen on Long Beach

Wally Hess moved, Michael Lamoureux seconded and the committee voted to approve the final version of Frank's power point slide presentation to the Board of Selectmen and public. Wally Hess then made that presentation.

Notes from meeting with Selectmen 7:00 to 9:20 pm.

The Board of Selectmen are meeting Saturday September 21st to discuss Long Beach.

The Board of Selectmen will vote on the lease terms Tuesday September 24th.

**The Finance Committee might develop a list of the major uncertainties regarding both the seawall and the rents, and see if we can carve out a few issues to resolve one by one.

Several members of the public audience spoke.

Susan Hand asked if the Town is considering alternatives to replacing the wall since it may not be viable at any height. Sandy Jacques also asked if there are alternatives to a concrete wall.

Steve Lundell asked if the seawall and rents are in fact linked since the high cost of the wall affects the FinCom's opinion on revenue needs.

Eric Hutchins asked if the Town was including Cape Hedge Beach in the sediment study since the migration of pebbles inland could open Long Beach to nor'easters. DPW Commissioner Jim Gardner said the study includes Saratoga Marsh but not Cape Hedge. We have 4 reasonable bid proposals.

Steve Sheehan, 12 LB, said the seawall protects more than the cottages on LB; it protects the marsh and Thacher road and houses on the other side of the marsh.

Someone suggested putting rent increases on new owners only after properties change hands. This would be like California's Proposition 13 which is a disaster.

Toby Arsenian asked where the figure of \$22 million came from. The FEMA maps show all of Thacher Road and Saratoga Marsh under water. He asked if the Selectmen are including the impact of rising sea levels on the whole town not just LB. Erin Battistelli said the rough figure consists of \$14 million for the wall, \$6 million for erosion control, \$1 million in beach replenishment and \$1 million

for project management.

Someone pointed out that when properties are sold at more than the cost of the house built on them, it is a windfall profit for the cottage owner, not the town.

Bob McKew, 27 LB, said this was a very divisive issue in the Town. The figures are voodoo economics and why did the Selectmen not start the lease review process five years ago.

Erich Cassidy said he wants a long-term lease.

Mrs. Ackerman, an owner since 1921 said she pays a lot to the Town and barely uses her cottage.

Herm Logan said erosion is a multi-year phenomenon so a one-year study is insufficient. He asked what parameters the Town will use to determine fair market value and the requirements for a seawall.

Selectman Mina Sheedy suggested a board of appraisers with one chosen by the LB Association, one by the Board of Selectmen and one by the Town Administrator.

Erin Battistelli said the wall protects the properties on the other side of the marsh.