

Black Point Beach Club
Master Plan Steering Committee
2023-04-19 Meeting Notes

A Master Plan Steering Committee was held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. The meeting was held over Zoom. The recording of the meeting is available through the Black Point website.

Attendance:

Colleen Chapin, Arlene Garrow, Ed Zito, Peter Baril, Rick Diachenko

Phil Lombardo, Frank Carmon, Al Galati were unavailable for this session.

S/L/A/M Consultants – Mike Zuba and Patrick Gallagher

Approximately 20-25 additional members of the public were also in attendance.

Agenda:

Review Draft Goals with supporting Objectives and Strategies

Presentation:

The S/L/A/M consultants provided a presentation with a brief overview of process and then initial recommendations for Objectives and Strategies to support the draft goals established in January. The presentation is available as a separate PDF file for download from the Black Point website. These notes will highlight elements of the presentation and include comments, questions, and insights offered during the session.

Master Plan:

- Reflects community's values and priorities in defining a strategy and roadmap in sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in the community.
- Process identifies assets, short term needs, and long-term improvements.
- Roadmap of actionable items and a timeline for implementation.
- Iterative and continuous process that can adjust to changing events over the initial ten-year plan window.

Note 1: Some recommendations are already in process in some capacity. There may be opportunities to adjust actions underway by formalizing processes and/or reviewing progress on an annual basis.

Note 2: These are all DRAFT ideas and recommendations. These – and others – will be reviewed with the community to solicit input on general prioritization and new ideas and recommendations.

Goal 1: Improve the Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Accountability of the Association

Objective 1.1: Enhance Capacity to Fund Major Capital Projects

- Create and maintain an up-to-date Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to guide and prioritize use of Capital Improvement Funds. This should focus on critical infrastructure that has community-wide benefits.
 - *In process based on 2020 review of infrastructure assets; annual review to ensure accuracy and effectiveness. Opportunity to develop actionable prioritized plan for addressing the infrastructure.*
- Establish a dedicated Capital Improvement Fund for critical infrastructure projects that have community-wide benefits. Consider funding this program through annual contributions as opposed to large one-time assessments.
 - *In process; opportunity to review to ensure that current collections and anticipated outlays are aligned with updated cost expectations and prioritized repairs and maintenance.*
- Create a policy framework regarding the use of Capital Improvement Funds.
- Explore alternative mechanisms for funding long-term financial obligations (e.g. line of credit, loans, etc.).

Objective 1.2: Explore Alternative Funding Mechanisms and Revenue Generating Opportunities.

- Consider establishing user fees for certain facilities and programs (e.g. recreational facilities & programs, boat storage), with stipulation that funds are used to maintain and improve those facilities/programs.
- Consider private fundraising as way to fund smaller capital or maintenance projects. Commemorative items such as bricks/plaques and naming rights should be considered as potential fundraising tools.
- Revisit the Association Application process for renting the clubhouse. Consider loosening some of the requirements in order to facilitate greater rental use, which could create additional revenue for facility improvements.
- S/L/A/M to follow up with potential grant funding opportunities as reviewed recently with Guilford.

Goal 2: Strengthen and Build Organizational Efficiency and Structure to Support a Proactive, Collaborative, and Accountable Association Governance

Objective 2.1: Maintain Up-to-Date Bylaws, Rules, and Policies

- Establish an Ad Hoc Committee to review Association Bylaws, Beach Use Rules, and Policies, as well as enforcement strategies. Conduct public outreach as part of this effort and develop recommendations to the Board of Governors for implementation.

- Maintain current rental policy in the near-term. However, this policy as well as enforcement mechanisms should be revisited periodically, with input from Association members, to ensure that it is meeting intended objectives.
- Periodically review the zoning regulations and enforcement strategies and update as necessary.
 - *Always in process*
- If necessary, coordinate with the East Lyme Building Department and Fire Marshal to address any blight issues that pose a threat to health, safety, or public welfare.
- Consider changes to the Business Zone regulation to allow greater flexibility in uses to improve marketability of the property.

Objective 2.2: Promote Civic Participation

- Implement hybrid meetings.
 - *A work in progress.*
- Consider hosting an annual “Volunteer Fair” to market volunteer and civic opportunities to residents. This could be used to improve civic awareness of association governance and recruit new and prospective board and commission members.
- Upgrade BPBCA Website to improve user friendliness and interactiveness.
 - *A work in progress.*
- Create off-season electronic issues of the Black Pointer, making it a year-round publication. Continue print publications during the summer season.

Objective 2.3: Strengthen Partnerships between the Association, the Town of East Lyme, and neighboring Beach Associations

- Designate a Liaison who can represent Association interests to Town Departments and elected officials and communicate relevant Town news to residents.
- Partner with the Town of East Lyme on grant opportunities, specifically those pertaining to coastal resiliency and Town-owned infrastructure (roads, stormwater management, sewer).
- Ensure greater Association participation in the Town’s next Plan of Conservation and Development, Hazard Mitigation, and Coastal Resilience Plan updates.
- Consider strengthening partnerships with neighboring beach associations in the areas of collective purchasing and equipment sharing.

Goal 3: Invest in and Improve the Waterfront to Support Long-Term Resiliency and Community Access

Objective 3.1: Modernize and Maintain Groins and Piers

- Leverage existing engineering reports and conduct additional studies to better understand and document conditions and prioritize projects.
- Conduct preliminary design and develop cost estimates for priority projects identified.

- Develop a capital and financial plan for pier reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. Consider separate funds for major capital improvements and ongoing maintenance/repair. (see Goal 1)

Objective 3.2: Maintain and Improve the Beaches and Swimming Areas

- Initiate a periodic beach nourishment program. Consult with DEEP to better understand state and federal permitting requirements prior to developing and implementing a beach nourishment plan. (Note that beach nourishment is a temporary erosion mitigation strategy that typically lasts 5-years or less).
- Consider cooperative purchasing of beach nourishment services, equipment, or other operational expenses with neighboring associations that may result in lower costs.
- Consider implementing more frequent seaweed/eelgrass removal on designated beaches. Meet with DEEP to discuss potential eelgrass management strategies on the state side of the coastal jurisdiction line.
- Ensure that beach maintenance strategies do not exacerbate erosion (such as excessive removal of rocks or underwater vegetation).
- Work with the Town of East Lyme Public Works Department to ensure that stormwater outfalls along Niantic Bay are properly maintained and have proper erosion control measures in place (such as adequate dissipators and rip-rap)
- Maintain and enforce proper separation of uses at the different beach areas.
- Make accessibility improvements. Improvements may include beach grading improvements, mobi-mat expansions, and surface treatments/accessibility upgrades at beach access points.

Objective 3.3: Enhance Access to the “Backwater” on the Pattagansett Estuary

Note: Significant work was done on this item between 2008 and 2011. The project was dropped due in part cost and concern regarding the viability of the permitted option. Those permits have all expired so this would be a “new” project initiative.

- Meet with DEEP to better understand regulatory requirements to building a permanent boardwalk/kayak launch to the Pattagansett Estuary. (circa 2009 work also involved coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers)
- If necessary, conduct a site survey to determine the location of the Coastal Jurisdiction Line and Mean High Water Line.
- Based on conversations with DEEP, develop preliminary designs and cost estimates and obtain all necessary state and local approvals.
- If building an improved facility on existing association land is not feasible, consider alternative strategies for estuary access, such as leasing kayak launch rights at properties with adequate facilities along the estuary.

Objective 3.4: Strengthen Stormwater Management to Protect Water Quality

- Work with the Town of East Lyme Department of Public Works to implement stormwater best management practices, particularly for areas that outfall onto the beaches.

- Run an awareness campaign on water quality.
- Educate homeowners on Pest and Pet Waste Management and the impact of improper pet waste disposal on water quality.
- Consider strengthening stormwater management requirements in the zoning regulations for new construction. Consider requiring on-site stormwater management techniques such as rain gardens and subsurface stormwater detention/infiltration systems.

Objective 3.5: Build a More Sustainable and Resilient Black Point

- Plan for climate change and sea level rise as part of coastal infrastructure investments.
- For properties in the coastal flood zone, consider adding “freeboard” requirements in the zoning regulations to account for the 2050 sea level rise projections from the State of Connecticut.
- Improve coordination and collaboration with the Town of East Lyme in the areas of emergency preparedness and disaster preparedness.
- Consider installation of an emergency generator at the Clubhouse in order to enhance its use in emergency situations. Consider working with the Town of East Lyme on potential grant funding opportunities.
- Work with the Town to install emergency evacuation route signs.

Goal 4: Foster a Healthy and Vibrant Lifestyle for All Community Members through Safe and Comfortable Access to Resources

Objective 4.1: Modernize the Clubhouse to Support Year-Round Use

- Complete winterization improvements to the clubhouse including insulation and heating system.
 - *Work done in 2022/2023; may be additional opportunities associated with this*
- Make energy efficiency upgrades to lower operating costs. Improvements include LED lighting, weather sealing, and energy efficient appliances (when in need of replacement).
 - *2022/2023 – Replaced all light fixtures with LED; subsidized by Eversource.*
- Study potential expansion of the clubhouse building as part of a larger site/feasibility study (see Objective 4.2).

Objective 4.2: Leverage Available Land at the Clubhouse to Expand Community Amenities

- Establish an Ad-Hoc Committee to oversee a comprehensive study of the recreational/social programs and properties, inclusive of the Clubhouse Property and the Clay Courts on Nehantic Drive. This process should incorporate extensive outreach with the community to determine community-wide program and facility usage and needs.
- As part of the study, evaluate existing facility and program usage, identify site constraints and limitations, desired facilities and programs, development of conceptual plans, cost estimates for improvements, and potential funding opportunities.

Objective 4.3: Build a Connected Community Through Programs and Events

- Continue annual community-wide events sponsored by the Association.
- Bolster off-season programs and events through the provision of year-round community space at the clubhouse.
- Support existing social clubs and encourage the establishment of new clubs/organizations by leveraging space and amenities at the clubhouse.
- Celebrate the Centennial of the BPBCA through community events and the publication of historical materials/booklets.

Objective 4.4: Maintain a Safe Multi-Modal Transportation Network for All Users

- Consider strengthening enforcement procedures and regulations for traffic safety violations through partnerships with the Town of East Lyme Police Department.
- Consider the expansion of handicap parking spaces at the Nehantic Drive parking lot to support proposed accessibility improvements to the main beach (see Objective 3.2).
- Consider converting one or more lots into a designated drop-off areas for loading and unloading (for example, 15-minute maximum parking).
- Consider creating separate, designated vehicle and golf cart parking spaces at beach or Whitecap parking areas. Golf cart spaces could be restriped to smaller dimensions to create additional spaces.
 - *Work has been done on this over the past few years; opportunity to revisit that work and carry out recommendations if warranted.*

Next steps:

- Update goals, objectives, strategies based on feedback in 4/19/2023 meeting.
- In-person workshop for Members to review and provide additional feedback. Date TBD but anticipated to be early June to maximize participation opportunities.
- Develop a draft plan document and solicit final round of community feedback.
- Recommendation of final plan to Board of Governors who would then – if agreed – recommend adoption by the members.
- If adopted, the Board of Governors would work to implement the recommendations as appropriate.