

Minutes of BPBCA Zoning Commission April 11th, 2025, Regular Meeting - 04/11/25

Date and time: 04/11/25 6:00 PM to: 04/11/25 6:56 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Jim Ventres, Zoning Enforcement Official, Jim Fox, Chairman, John Horoho, Secretary, Betsy Klemmer, Regular Member, Mike Walsh, Regular Member, Joseph Katzbek, Regular Member, Keith Turner, Alternate, Gale Shepard, Alternate, Absent:, Jason Bookmiller, Alternate, Arlene Garrow, Zoning Liaison

CC: Jim Schepker, BOG Chair

Location: BPBCA Clubhouse, 6 Sunset Avenue, Niantic, CT, 06357

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note Chairman Fox called the Regular Meeting of the Black Point Beach Club Association Zoning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. and did roll call; a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2-1. BPBCA March 21st, 2025, Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Note see attached minutes.

 [Minutes_of_BPBCA_Zoning_Commission_Regular_Meeting_03_21_25.pdf](#)

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Walsh moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 21st, 2025, as presented.

Mr. Horoho seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

3. Public Delegations

Note Public Delegations is the time when members of the Black Point Beach Club Association are invited to speak to the Commission about certain matters. Items, referrals, or applications subject to a decision by the Commission, a public hearing or any matters in litigation may not be discussed. During delegations, the members of the Commission will not directly answer questions or make comments.

Note There was none.

4. Reports

4-1. Communications and Correspondence

Note There was none.

4-2. ZEO: Jim Ventres

Note see attached ZEO report.

 [ZEO_Report_March_2025.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Ventres referenced his attached report noting that projects continue. He shared a brief update about a party who is rebuilding their 4-season room. He explained that they're rebuilding exactly what was there before and that they have secured the East Lyme permit.

4-3. Ex-Officio: Arlene Garrow

Note Stepping in for the absent Ms. Garrow, Board of Governors (BOG) Chair Jim Schepker was present at the meeting. He announced that budget planning would be the focus of next week's Special Meeting and reminded attendees that the next Regular meeting is scheduled for April 24th.

Mr. Schepker also informed the group of Ms. Garrow's resignation from the BOG, effective after the Annual Meeting, citing her demanding work schedule as the cause. Regarding the upcoming elections at the May Annual meeting, he stated that he was unsure of potential candidates but noted the possibility of up to three vacant Board positions.

4-4. Chairman: Jim Fox

Note Mr. Fox underscored his personal preference to generally avoid public speaking. He pointed out that approximately 49% of constituents are often dissatisfied with Board decisions, emphasizing the inherent difficulties leaders face in reconciling varied stakeholder needs. Despite this personal guideline, he mentioned that he made the choice to speak at the previous BOG Meeting.

He acknowledged that the topic of hedge heights is complex and has become a matter of personal significance for him. He stressed the importance of improving public awareness that this issue is now under the purview of the BOG. Furthermore, he stated his commitment to not publicly contradict the Board's decisions, particularly in a meeting setting.

Note Mr. Walsh noted that hedge maintenance is common especially when asked, but those who complain tend to stand out and Mr. Horoho felt that no one could take exception with what Mr. Fox said.

5. Old Business

5-1. Review of current Zoning Regulations.

Note Mr. Fox recalled that their previous meeting provided a chance to thoroughly discuss the current regulations, observing that there is very little that they haven't touched. He inquired if there were any additional points that others felt needed consideration.

Note Ms. Klemmer said she was reading through the regulations on signage and wondered if they want to include light pollution.

Note Mr. Ventres replied that light pollution is in the Building Code, so he already has a means of directing people to fix it.

Note Mr. Katzbek briefly discussed how there are now lights on the market that point downwards.

Note Mr. Turner inquired about regulations concerning cameras aimed at neighboring properties. Mr. Ventres responded that while cameras should not be pointed into private residences, any concerns about this issue fall under the jurisdiction of the Police Department.

Note 1. Hedge Heights and Intersections-

Note Mr. Fox cautioned that the Board of Governors (BOG) has not yet decided on actions concerning the ordinance. Nevertheless, they will continue their review of the relevant regulations, with the aim of enhancing public safety.

Note Mr. Ventres and the Board discussed building and fence alignment and some of the following was highlighted:

- *Fences must be properly placed relative to property lines.

- *The current understanding is that fence height isn't a fixed measurement, but there's a complication: it significantly exceeds the road level.

- *Measurements are taken from the street, with road elevation drops affecting fence height.

- *Some installations are not compliant with standards.

- *Mature plantings encroaching on roads.

- *Hedges often not on one's property.

- *Concerns about telephone poles and survey validity regarding property boundaries.

- *Ongoing debate on whether measurements should start from the property line, corner, or curb.

Task ☐ Mr. Fox asked Mr. Ventres to develop some potential language to improve measuring, which they can consider at their next meeting. Mr. Horoho added that simplicity would be ideal.

Owned by Jim Ventres, Zoning Enforcement Official due 05/16/25

Note Mr. Turner said he understands the idea of plantings being a certain number of feet from the curb, but are there any corresponding regulations for plantings closer to a property's interior?

Note Mr. Fox discussed how these matters only fall under their purview if they directly affect safety.

Note Mr. Walsh noted how far the plantings come out on one of the boat launches which led to a brief discussion about existing non-conforming uses and how the Sea View intersection is very busy.

Note 2. Signage Regulations-

Note Mr. Ventres provided signage language and definitions for review.

 [signage.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Ventres discussed how this is more of a business district issue. They don't allow dynamic signs, and they're shut off at night. He and Mr. Fox discussed a strategy to address the situation; Mr. Ventres will contact the owner to determine the sign's dimensions, given its status as a pre-existing nonconforming structure, and will then report back, provide an update, and they can discuss it further.

Note The Commission discussed how the emphasis is on maintaining historically acceptable design and preventing drastic changes by any future new owners.

Note Mr. Horoho said the hours that the sign can be illuminated should be included and Mr. Fox suggested they simply say, "during hours of operation."

Note 3. Solar Arrays and Detached Structures-

Note Mr. Fox noted that they discussed this item, but their Regulations already address it. Mr. Horoho replied that he believes they were going to clarify the language and potentially add coverage to it.

Note Mr. Fox said he and Mr. Ventres discussed permits and whether they included penalties. Mr. Ventres said some towns (Crescent Beach) double their fees if a contractor begins work without a permit.

Note The Commission discussed multiple cases of the same Contractor failing to secure the required permits.

Note Mr. Fox suggested aligning their approach with the town's regulations and after further reviewing their own Regulations, Mr. Horoho pointed out that they do in fact have a penalty fee.

Task ☐ Mr. Ventres said he will update the permit application.

Owned by Jim Ventres, Zoning Enforcement Official

6. New Business

6-1. Member terms expiring in 2025

Note Mr. Fox informed the Commission that his term, along with those of Mr. Turner and Mr. Bookmiller, is set to end on July 31st. Mr. Turner indicated his willingness to continue serving. Mr. Fox mentioned he would reach out to Mr. Bookmiller to ascertain his intentions. Mr. Fox inquired if the other Commissioners believed he should also stay on, and they all affirmed that he had much more to offer and unanimously expressed their strong support for him to stay on. Mr. Fox replied that he too would like to continue to serve.

Note Mr. Fox will ask the Board of Governors (BOG) to consider these reappointments after the Annual Meeting and the budget vote have taken place.

Note Mr. Schepker mentioned that the Board of Governors (BOG) plans to revisit the visibility ordinance, which was previously postponed because Ms. Chapin was away. He also announced that the First Selectman and the new State Representative are scheduled to speak at the Annual Meeting. Additionally, he noted that the implementation of remote (virtual) voting is being handled by local volunteers.

Note Mr. Schepker inquired about non-conforming structures and Ms. Klemmer explained that a property expansion must remain within its boundaries and Mr. Fox added that an expansion must not increase the degree of non-conformity.

Note Mr. Schepker and the Commission briefly discussed the Commission's previous suggestion for a traffic study. Mr. Turner said they need to ensure that any street design changes do not force vehicles or golf carts onto unsuitable routes. Mr. Fox clarified that one-way streets are the purview of the BOG.

7. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Walsh moved to adjourn the April 11th, 2025, BPBCA Zoning Commission Regular Meeting at 6:56 p.m.
Mr. Horoho seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note The next Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for May 16th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task ☐ Mr. Fox asked Mr. Ventres to develop some potential language to improve measuring, which they can consider at their next meeting. Mr. Horoho added that simplicity would be ideal.

Owned by Jim Ventres, Zoning Enforcement Official due 05/16/25

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