

53 East Shore Drive
Niantic, CT 06357

May 13, 2019

Cheryl Colangelo, Chair
Board of Governors
Black Point Beach Club Association
PO Box 715
Niantic, CT 06357

Dear Madam Chair:

On Friday, May 10, 2019, I received notice of the Annual Meeting of the Black Point Beach Club Association. Included in the agenda for the annual meeting is an update by the Pier Committee and, alarmingly, the expectation of a vote on the Pier Committee's recommendations, including financing this substantial undertaking.

Having received no concrete information about the proposed pier project since the conceptual design options presented at the Annual Meeting in 2018, and with only two weeks before the 2019 Annual Meeting, *I feel I must write to express my significant concern about the anticipated vote to approve the project, the contractor, and the financing, none of which has been clearly explained to the membership.* To the contrary, it appears that the Board intends to ask the association for what amounts to a blank check. I find this approach to be completely inappropriate in light of the fiduciary responsibility that the Board of Governors has to the Association and its members.

Based on a review of available agendas and minutes, this pier project has been a matter before the Board since at least April of 2017. Mr. Steve Beauchene was tasked with "heading up the steel pier rebuild" effort and presented options at the September 2017 Informational meeting that appear to have been assembled from informal discussions with an engineer and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). At that meeting, the membership saw this project as necessary, but also complex and expensive, and strongly urged the Board to solicit a formal engineering assessment, recommendation, and opinion of probable cost. By October 2017, GZA Environmental was retained to perform this work at a cost of \$9,500 – a wholly necessary and appropriate expenditure for a project of this consequence.

GZA presented their findings and recommendations at the Annual Meeting on May 26, 2018. The presentation and comments from the membership was ended after an hour. There remained significant unknowns and many questions about the project, not the least of which was the anticipated funding structure.

In anticipation of a repair/replacement project, \$7,000 was allocated for an eel grass study, the findings of which were necessary to inform appropriate design solutions. By the September 2018 Informational Meeting, although no new information was presented, Mr. Beauchene was hopeful that "there would be a vote at the next May meeting". In the interim, the reports generated thus far (Phase 1 assessment, eel grass study, memorandum of findings) were made available to members via the website. These

preliminary reports, which are the only detailed information the Board has provided to the general membership about this project to date, appear to have been removed from the website.

At the October 25, 2018, BOG meeting, Treasurer Carolyn Boyle provided information from the 2007 pier project wherein the membership was assessed at a rate of 3.1 mills. In the months since October 25 there appears to have been limited discussion with respect to the current pier project of what is to be financed and how. The minutes suggest that the Board has had some concern about this, yet it appears from the minutes that no specific financial information has been provided by the Pier Committee to the Board, let alone to the membership for review. Rather than being provided clear, detailed information that has been carefully considered by our elected Board members, I and the rest of the membership are left to speculate that we may be faced with a larger assessment than in 2007, as the current project is likely to be more expensive. Regardless of the assessment level required to fund this project, the Board should provide information of sufficient detail and with enough advance notice that members can appropriately plan for such an expense.

Meanwhile, the level of information available in the minutes of the Pier Committee is so vague that I, a construction project manager with decades of professional experience, have no idea what option(s) will be voted on by the membership this month. Somehow, the Committee has reviewed a number of bids/proposals and associated costs, but the membership (and presumably the Board) has not been provided with the specifications or constraints of those solicitations, from which we could make an informed decision.

The Board's failure to solicit or disclose any real detailed information in advance of the Annual Meeting and nevertheless expect the membership to understand the impact of this proposal on the Association and members' own personal finances is, at the very least, appallingly disrespectful.

I understand the importance of a sandy beach as part of a key community resource and I support the concept of rebuilding the pier. My great grandfather purchased land at Black Point in 1929 and I have personally been a seasonal resident of this community since I was born. As a professional in this line of work, including having worked with GNCB, I am confident in their expertise and the information they are undoubtedly providing for this project. It is the approach and the apparent direction of the Pier Committee and the Board on this matter that I find wholly unacceptable.

It is from a position of great respect and appreciation for this community, our members, and our beaches that I urge the Board to develop a well thought out plan for the pier project, engage the membership in conveying the information in a way that is meaningful, transparent and allows sufficient time for full review and consideration, and **only then** to put the project and the associated financing package to a vote of the membership.

Yours Truly,



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