

VILLAGE OF EAST HAMPTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES
VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 2, 2021, 11:00 A.M.
WORK SESSION – SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to the Laws of the State of New York (COVID19 Pandemic) meeting was held via video conference online and published by Local TV, Inc. (Channel 20/22 LTV – public access) Call in was available.

Present: Jerry Larsen, Mayor
Chris Minardi, Deputy Mayor
Arthur Graham, Trustee
Rosemary Brown, Trustee
Sandra Melendez, Trustee
Marcos Baladrón, Administrator
Vincent Messina, of Messina, Perillo, Hill LLP, Village Attorney
David Collins, Superintendent of Public Works
Michael Bouker, Deputy Superintendent of Public Works
Billy Hajek, Planner
Tom Preiato, Building Inspector
Drew Smith, Beach Manager
Michael Tracey, Police Chief
Dominique Cummings, Treasurer
Hugh King, Historic Site Manager
Jody Gambino, LTV Moderator
June Lester, Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant

J. Gambino: And you guys are live.

G. Larsen: All right. Thanks Jody. Good morning, everyone. Today is December 2nd, 2021. Welcome to The East Hampton Village Board's Work Session. And if we could have a pledge of allegiance and then we'll get into business.

A. Graham: I pledge allegiance into the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. One nation, under God, indivisible, with Liberty and justice for all.

G. Larsen: Thank you, Tiger. All right. So we don't have a lot of things on our agenda today. I have one announcement about the Santa parade, which will be this Saturday at ... Marcos, what time?

2021 Santa Parade

M. Baladrón: It'd be 10 o'clock.

G. Larsen: 10 o'clock, start of the Christmas parade. And it will go from the Presbyterian Church along Main Street, along Newtown lane and ending down on Railroad Avenue. So hopefully everybody can come out and join us there, again, it's 10 o'clock start. Santa is coming to town. That's all the announcements I have. So now we'll just get into our work session. We're going to discuss bathrooms at Wiborg Beach. Chris, you want to lead us off on that?

Holiday Hours at the Museums

H. King: I have some announcements.

G. Larsen: Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead, Hugh.

H. King: Starting this weekend, you'll be able to visit three different places, and within walking distance. Down at the Garden Mill Cottage, there is going to be the East End Arts Alliance Holiday Show Friday through Monday from 11:00 to 4:00. The Thomas Moran house is open from December 1st to December 23rd, from 11:00 to 3:00, check their website for the days. And then Home Sweet Home is going to be open starting this weekend and the next three weekends to view the Christmas decorations. We'll be open Saturday 10:00 to 4:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00. So you'll be able to walk. You can park in front of either the Garden Mill Cottage or Home Sweet Home, and you can walk to all three places. Okay. That's it.

G. Larsen: Thanks, Hugh. Chris, you want to start off with the bathrooms, Wiborg Beach?

Bathrooms & Lifeguards at Wiborg Beach

C. Minardi: Yeah. Okay. So, I mean, I'm actually really excited about this. Everyone's going to benefit from this, but we've seen an uptick in beach goers and Wiborg Beaches are one of our only beaches left in the village that's unprotected and left with new bathrooms and facilities there. Someone's playing the music. Anyway, so the idea that I had was to locate a very similar structure, like we have at Two Mile and I believe Billy and Marcos had found a proposed location in the back of the parking lot that would be really nice because I don't think it would take up any parking spots. Correct me if I'm wrong, but we have about 80 spots there. This facility wouldn't take up any of them and I believe it's very far away from the beach. It's in basically the back corner, so I think it would avoid wetlands lines and any types of variances that might be needed. I'm not sure, Billy, you might be able to chime in there. But last year we got a couple complaints and every year we seem to get people complaining I think about people going to the bathroom in the dunes and in the parking lot and it's just not very sanitary, especially since Wiborg is a popular beach. And again, if we have 80 park spots there and we're selling beach stickers, I think we have a duty to the residents to provide bathrooms and also lifeguards. The catch 22 with Suffolk County is that we can't have lifeguards without bathrooms. The bathroom requirement for the county, it's an interesting requirement where they have all these little things that you need. Like you need separate bathrooms, they need stalls, they need paper towels and various different items in particular bathrooms and features. So what we've done at Two Mile is exactly what meets their criteria, which we have the plans already. So I think that was savings as well and when it gets down to that's the health part of it. The safety part of it is the lifeguards and being able to protect the beach, which is one of our most beautiful beaches. And we only have three or four of them so the fact that Wiborg remains unprotected is a little mind boggling to me. So, I'd like to propose to get a stand at Wiborg, lifeguards, and put the bathroom facility in the parking lot.

G. Larsen: Perfect. Billy, do you want to add anything to that?

B. Hajek: Sure. Good morning, Mayor, members of the board. Chris covered it pretty well. Marcos and I had gone out and reviewed the survey. We found an old survey of the property, which is really a road end. And it was decided the most sensible, or least obtrusive location, is probably off to the rear, I think the north easterly corner of the parking lot. It puts it out of the dune setbacks. It makes it compliant with the coastal erosion hazard area and we would have to worry about any FEMA compliance issues in that location. So, from an environmental standpoint, that's the most practical location. And as Chris said, I think we'll have to fine tune it, but I think there's ways to do it where we won't affect any parking.

G. Larsen: That's good. And it also will not affect any neighbors either, right?

B. Hajek: That's the idea is to just be compatible with the neighbors. Yes.

G. Larsen: That's great. And the push for lifeguards here is really important. I think, Drew, you could probably speak to that just with this past summer how many saves you guys had down there?

D. Smith: Yeah. Good morning, everyone. The need for lifeguards down there is a very large need. If you go down on a weekend or any weekday, you'll see there's high volume of people, a surprisingly large volume of people for the amount of parking spots we have down there. In September, on the fourth, we had EMS call for cardiac patient down there. Anything related to your heart, obviously time is of the essence. It would be better to have a guard down there rather than one come from Main Beach or Two-Mile Hollow. August 16th, we had a missing swimmer. East Hampton Village Police, East Hampton Marine Patrol, East Hampton Village Police Drone Unit, ourselves, and the Coast Guard were activated for that person. We were able to locate them and alleviate the situation. But again, should we have guards there that 911 system's able to get initiated quicker. In July, Jimmy Minardi actually had a multi-person rescue down there where he could have used some resources. But again, he was kind of left between the two beaches unprotected by himself. And then I've seen on multiple occasion, the Maidstone lifeguards have to go in and assist us while we respond down there with our delay. So, I think putting lifeguards down there is something that would benefit the public in terms of like Chris Minardi already touched on. The bathroom issue, there are people down there, where are they going to the bathroom? It's a sanitary issue. As far as safety, like anything else in the 911 system, the response time is paramount. It's another set of eyes. It's another person down there to render care, render a rescue. Resources from Main Beach were pulled. Anytime we had a red flag day, I had to take somebody and station them down there. Not always to go in the water, but to kind of educate the public and kind of explain to them what's going on with the water conditions that day. We did get a lot of positive feedback from family, from parents, just thanking us for being down there and kind of giving them a little info. So, it is something that I think would benefit the public from a lifeguard's point of view is having somebody closer, cuts down on response time, makes our beaches safer. And as Chris said earlier, we have a growing population with the beaches and this is just the next step in the right direction.

G. Larsen: Great. Thanks Drew. Any board members want to discuss it or? Tiger?

A. Graham: Yeah. I like the idea of more guarded beaches. It also gives the village a closer response to something that might happen at Egypt Beach. I'm just a little concerned about the cost and that's all.

G. Larsen: I mean, I know Marcos gave me some figures back in 2005 when we built the Two-Mile Hollow building that was \$363,000 for those bathrooms. Of course, it's going to be more now. But it's something we would have to bid and see what the prices came back in on.

A. Graham: Yeah, we'd also have to do IA system there. Right?

G. Larsen: Yeah. I would assume, Billy, that's correct. Right?

B. Hajek: Believe so. Yes.

G. Larsen: Yeah. I mean, if it comes back in too costly, maybe we could look into some sort of portable unit. They have those nicer portable units that maybe we could rent for the summer, so this way we could still provide the lifeguard services. So, I think the next step, if everybody's in agreement, is to get some pricing.

A. Trustee Graham: Okay. I agree with that.

C. Minardi: The one thing I wanted to mention that Tiger brought up is that the Egypt Beach and the Maidstone Club don't really always follow our schedule with lifeguards. So sometimes in the early season or late season, those beaches are unprotected as well. And it would be nice to keep our lifeguard unit as together as possible. And again, I think it's health and safety is the main focus here. I mean, I know it's not going to be cheap, but if one person drowns, it's worth it to go through that expense. Out of all the things that we spend money on, health and safety and life I think is definitely takes a priority here. So, I would be in favor of this and I think the community would be much better off. Our beaches are beautiful and I'd like to keep them that way. And Wiborg, if you have hundreds of people on the beach, I compare this to the problem they had at the Truck Beach in Amagansett, is that when you have hundreds of people at the beach, they have to go to the bathroom somewhere and they're going to go somewhere. And again, we sell our beach stickers and Wiborg Beach is a popular destination where people pay to be there. And not to provide bathrooms and lifeguards is, I think, a very big disservice to the community. And there's a lot of people are going to the bathroom in the dunes and the neighbors parking lots and things like that. So, I feel strongly about this. I think it would be a very large addition to our community.

G. Larsen: I agree Chris. And to just follow up with what Chris was saying. This summer, the Board decided that any special events at any of the beaches that did not already have bathrooms, that we were requiring porta potties to be delivered. So again, if you're having, like Chris is saying, hundreds of people at the beach, even at night, we're approving special events and we know people have to use the bathroom and we're not really requiring that. I thought that was a good step on our part as well to keep the beaches cleaner. So, if everybody's in agreement, then we'll just, Marcos, you want to put out some bids for us.

M. Baladrón: Sure, and I just to Chris's point, because he had asked me to look up in terms of this year's revenue. This year, we went from \$1.2 to \$1.8 in terms of beach revenue, only on the, let's say the hundred-dollar increase on the non-resident beach pass and our new monthly beach passes. So, it's a significant jump in revenue as well.

A. Trustee Graham: Okay. And actually I had one question for Drew. To Chris's point about Maidstone and Egypt being off schedule with the village. Drew you're talking Maidstone about coordinating with that, Bill McKee?

D. Smith: Yeah. So, all last summer, anything we did with the help of East Hampton Village Police, they were able to get a radio so they could hear our communications to each other. And I kept Billy McKee in the loop with everything moving forward. The issue we had with Maidstone, is like Chris said, they lose guards earlier, they open later. They do kind of operate on their own schedule. The biggest safety issue we had with them this year was when that hurricane came through. I had staff stationed at each head to the beach. We were told they would be there to keep people off. It is a private club, so I didn't want to put my members there, but they were a weak spot for us. The public was parking and actually walking over the dunes there all day. So, I think having in a more fixed stand, like one at Wiborg, which is a little closer to Maidstone and Egypt, it helps us in those times. But overall for the most part, yeah, they were very good about working with us. But when he was out of staff, he was out of staff and that just lays more burden on the village guards.

A. Graham: Okay. Thank you.

Museum Fees

G. Larsen: Great. All right. Anybody else before we move on? All right. Next discussion is about museum fees. Marcos, you want to lead us off on that?

M. Baladrón: Well, We just did a quick, I think last year's total revenue was ... Well, this really came off Hugh King when he mentioned, I believe five or six meetings ago that I think he was imploring to the board that the museums are a gift. So, we kind of took it on that and we were looking at last year's revenues and I believe it was \$750 or, sorry, that was two years ago. Last year was about \$860. So, we just thought that the accounting seemed to be more of a nuisance in a sense than what we were getting out of it. And I think most people have credit cards these days and they only have cash. We don't accept credit cards there. So, I didn't know if the board just kind of wanted to make it free and make it a gift.

G. Larsen: I like the idea. I think it's good.

R. Brown: I'm in favor of that as well.

A. Graham: I think it's a great idea. I mean, we're not trying to make money on it. We're just trying to defray expense. But sometimes people look at \$5 as, ah, I don't want to go.

M. Baladrón: Right. And you know what, Tiger? What's happening is that I think people are showing up, and Hugh can speak to this better than I can, but I'm assuming some people don't have cash or they don't have the \$4. And then obviously what happens is Hugh's not denying them. He's letting them in anyway.

A. Graham: Yeah. So, what is the total number that we get from museum admissions?

M. Baladrón: About \$850, \$860.

A. Graham: \$860? I don't think we'll miss that.

G. Larsen: I heard a rumor that Hugh actually pays out of his own pocket for people to come in if they don't have the money.

H. King: May I talk? Okay. When people came to the museum during the pandemic, a lot of people don't have cash anymore, they have credit cards. So, if somebody comes and they don't have any money, we still take them on a tour of the museum. But nobody is not coming to the museum because of the \$4 to get into Home Sweet Home, or the \$2 to get into Hook Mill. And Marcos is right. The amount of money you take in is [inaudible]. Really? You know what I mean? So, if you-

G. Larsen: And then our treasurer has to do a bunch of accounting - Sales tax, auditing and yeah. It doesn't seem to be worth it.

H. King: What do you think, Marcos?

M. Baladrón: I think it's to your idea, Hugh. Make it a gift and that's what it is. And then we don't really in the future have to look at revenue at all when it comes to these museums. We shouldn't be looking at it that way and I agree with you.

H. King: Oh, that's great. Well, wait a minute now. But we would like to increase the number of people coming to the museums, right?

M. Baladrón: Oh yes.

G. Larsen: Of course.

H. King: Okay. Well, one way to do that is advertising. Okay? And now we have a website at Home Sweet Home, a wonderful website. I have an ad that goes on WLNG for the summer months. And then the village has a website. So, we have that way and that's not costing me a lot of money, but weekly or biweekly ads in local papers, I think could help. But that's going to cost money.

M. Baladrón: I forgot to mention that the Hook Mill also takes in revenue. I think it was \$120 bucks last year.

G. Larsen: All right. So, going to make our museums for free.

C. Minardi: I think it's a great idea. And maybe there could be either a donation box or maybe a QR code or something where people can scan with their phone. I think if I were to go to one of these museums, I would definitely drop in a \$20 bill or at least a maybe somewhere where you could get sent an email to make a donation or just forget it and let it be totally free.

G. Larsen: I like your idea with the QR code. That's a great idea.

C. Minardi: And then when we get a lot of people up to museums, we can have lifeguards and bathrooms at the museums as well.

G. Larsen: There you go.

H. King: Well, we have to have an outside bathroom though.

G. Larsen: All right. I guess we are wrapped up. Short meeting today, everybody. So, thank you all for coming. Can I just get a motion, we'll close?

A. Graham: Motion moved.

R. Brown: Second.

G. Larsen: All right. The meeting is closed. Thanks everybody.

R. Brown: Thank you.

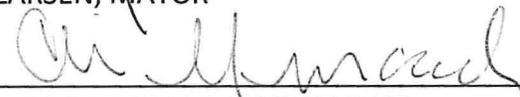
G. Larsen: And have a good weekend.

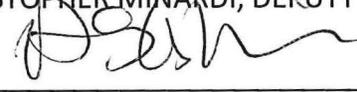
The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

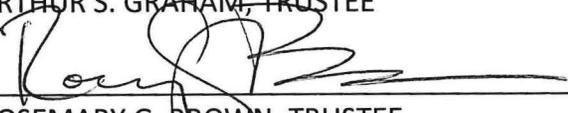
(APPROVED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES FEBRUARY 18, 2022)


PAMELA J. BENNETT, VILLAGE CLERK


GERARD LARSEN, MAYOR


CHRISTOPHER MINARDI, DEPUTY MAYOR


ARTHUR S. GRAHAM, TRUSTEE


ROSEMARY G. BROWN, TRUSTEE


SANDRA MELENDEZ, TRUSTEE