

CB # 14 Parks and Public safety Committee Meeting Minutes 03.30.16

Overview from Parks Enforcement Patrol Deputy Inspector Eddie Falcon, this is his 2nd year overseeing beach operations.

PEP officers are normally founded on closed sections of the Beach where there are no lifeguards, ensuring that there are no swimmers in the water

At 6:00 PM once lifeguards come off the beach, PEP officers begin their shoreline patrols until 9:00 PM

Additional New Captain being assigned to Rockaway Beaches to assist with operations and correct issues that came up last season with staff.

There are 36-37 seasonal officers (eyes and ears), 4 peace officers, 4 sergeants, 1 captain.

Questions/Comments:

Do the 36 patrol the beach? No they are assigned only to closed portion of beach, the 36 seasonal are security officers (eyes and ears), they wear green shirts and are identify by a patch indicating that they are Park security

4 peace officers and 4 sergeants have arrest powers and are able to issue summons, these officers patrol the boardwalk year round.

What is the name of the new captain? Currently interviewing candidates one of the interviewee had worked the Rockaways last season.

How can enforcement happen if there are not enough officers to enforce rules? The budget dictates how many officers are assigned; additional officers may be requested and assigned during heat waves.

Additional remarks and questions were ask regarding the duties and functions of seasonal officers,

How do the officers communicate? All PEP officers carry radios that are linked to central command.

Do you feel you are understaffed? He would love to have additional officers in this area.

How many tickets were issued last season? Deputy Inspector Falcon said he was unprepared to answer this question but would provide the CB with these figures at the next board meeting.

Does NYPD issue summons for Park offenses? PEP officers are responsible for issuing smoking summonses but the NYPD can issue summonses for all other violations i.e. drinking. PEP officers met with NYPD and reviewed procedures last season; everyone should know what the expectations are.

There seemed to be no consistence in the enforcement of the no dog walking on beach rule, Deputy Inspector Falcon acknowledge that this was an issue last season but he expects to do better this season.

PEP seasonal officers have First aid and CPR training.

At surfing beaches PEP officers are all standing on the same side. Deputy Inspector Falcon said that this season expect that PEP officers will be redeployed in a safer fashion.

Are PEP officers not giving out summons due to having to go to court? No summonses are being issued and arrests have been made which has taken some officers off the beach due to court appearances.

Are there problems around the concession stands? Sometimes at late night when they are open past their closing hours, and bicycling during the weekends when the bicycle rule is in effect is also an issue.

Concession stand should only be open till 10:00 PM and we report to Park revenue when they are open past the park closing time.

What were the biggest issues PEP faced last season? Non-compliance of the non swimming hours and that PEP officers were being harassed and not complied with.

In the past there have been drownings in the east end of Rockaway during early and late hours when lifeguards are not on duty, will there be additional officers assigned to Far Rockaway area as requested by the CB. PEP officers are not on the beach before the lifeguards are there, however we can look at being there early on days there are expected to be very hot or heat waves.

Is the city liable for drownings when the beaches are closed, yes the city can be sued.

Request for drowning stats,

Request for a meeting between NYPD, PEP, and Parks dept. to address quality of life and beach issues. Portia will be coordinating this meeting.

Recommend that the CB send letter(s) to all concerned parties requesting additional PEP officers.

Request that CB be informed how PEP will be deploying their resources this season.

Question regarding launching of kayaks on city beaches, as per Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski of the Parks dept. there is no current location designated for Kayak launching on city beaches. Summonses can be issued to folks launching kayaks from beaches. You may only land on beach; the City has the ability to regulate the launching and landing of kayaks on beaches.

Question regarding biking on the boardwalk, DOT will be removing jersey barriers along Shore Front Pkwy; Parks is proposing the riding of bicycles on the boardwalk 7 days a week, with no time restrictions. Parks does request that people dismount from their bikes in the concession areas as those areas are pinch points with a lot of people in those areas. Delores Orr pointed out that she feels that the signage/markings for the bike lanes are still unclear and she could not offer 100% support unless this issue is resolved. Parks is requesting that the CB support this idea.

A motion was made to recommend that the CB accept Biking on the boardwalk 7 days a week without any time restrictions. Motion passed 9 yeas, 1 abs

Parks will be providing sandwich boards that will designate bike lanes as well as the dismount areas, and if there are any PEP officer around they will issue summonses to those that do not dismount.

Question regarding the distribution/assignment of PEP officers what criteria are used; is it population density, attendance? Central command decides, there is a formula.

Can there be a publication that listed the rules?

Can kayaks be released in the dead zone areas of surf beaches, dead zones are the areas near the groins.

Discussed the process of how things are moved up the chain of command, also how to request additional PEP officers

A motion was made to write a letter(s) to elected and Commissioner Silver requesting additional PEP officers. Passed unanimously.

Rockaway Beach Shorefront Parkway Handball Court Reconstruction @ Beach 103 – 105

Presented by Jim Martusi Director of Queens Capital Parks project, Kylie Murphy (44)

Allocated 1.5 million

Pre Sandy there were 8 handball courts, the new design will continue with the double court design and the handball courts will be fenced in by 16 foot fence with 3 separate entrances.

The new design cuts into the berm so a retaining seat wall is being built, it will include cut outs for ADA seating and use reclaimed boardwalk wood.

Features include an adult fitness area with a safety surface, a minor pitch to drain rainwater, permeable pavers gaming tables, two ping pong tables, seating around handball courts will include: world's fair benches. Pebble seating, the fencing plan includes trees near street protected by 18 inch fence, as well as greenery around the entire perimeter.

Questions included: Community had requested backless benches, shading, fencing, original gaming tables, funding, and restoration of other park areas along shore front parkway

Completion date for design summer 2017, completion date for construction fall 2018.

A motion was made to support the new design of the Rockaway Beach Shorefront Parkway Handball Court Reconstruction @ Beach 103 – 105, it passed unanimously.

Rockaway Beach Club mobile vendors

Presentation by Amy Tichenor

Rockaway Beach Club has the vending rights on the boardwalk from Beach 50th to 150th St.

Requested local vendors via ad placed in Rockaway Times

Request approval for mobile truck (Smoothie Haven) location; in consideration are Beach 77th Street, Beach 81th St., Beach 59th St., seeking community input.

The 59th street location had been approved previously for an ice cream truck vendor.

Karen will check with the co-op residents of Beach 77th Street, Beach 81th St.; however these sites are on the asphalt sections near the staircase.

Ozzie will reach out to the 59th St. community for their input, just asks the mobile vendor to make sure they have a garbage can in the area.

Question/Concerns:

Are there any plans for development of Beach 73rd St. to 84th St.? No, there is no capital projects planned right now.

Will the same area be resurfaced due to roadbed damage created by construction vehicles? Parks will be conducting a walk thru of the affected area to determine what can and should be repaired, but there will not be a large scale repaving of area affected. They will be replacement of flower beds and benches but not much else.

Clear signage for alcohol and smoking consumption.

What is the mobile vending rights zone for mobile vendors on the boardwalk near Beach 116th Street, after much discussion on the issue the Parks and Public Safety committee decided that this issue required further public engagement and that it should be presented to the Economic Development committee and the Beach 116th St. business partnership.