

Recreation & Parks Committee

Surfing Beach Subcommittee

Minutes of April 1, 2013

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Community Room at City Hall. Present were Butch Arbin, Ward Kovacs, Tom Shuster, Mick Chester, Joe Groves, Chris Shanahan, Shelly Dawson, Rick Pairo, Mike Foelber, Lee Gerachis, Joe Mitrecic and Dennis Dare and Lloyd Martin.
2. Surfing and the Beach Patrol Mission: Butch described the mission of the Beach Patrol and handed out a written description of the current operation of the Ocean City Surfing Beaches. Butch also described how the Beach Patrol decides to modify beach access to permit surfing during the established swimming hours from 10:00 a.m. thru 5:30 p.m.
3. History of Surfing Beaches in Ocean City: Butch handed out a history of surfing regulations and designated surfing beaches in Ocean City. Lloyd Martin arrived at 4:25 p.m.
4. Discussion of Surfing Beaches in 2013: Mick Chester discussed how Beach Patrol decides to modify beaches for permitted surfing. Lee Gerachis offered the opinion that a less flexible, more definitive option on modified surfing may be safer and cause less tension between surfers and swimmers.

Butch Arbin provided some data on the use of surfing beaches in 2012.

Some members suggested increasing the size of surfing beaches to two blocks and then moving the surfing beaches 3 blocks each day. Following discussion, there was no consensus on this option.

Mike Foelber provided Google earth photos showing the beaches around the Princess Royale Hotel in 2010 over a holiday weekend. A discussion of the

impacts of surfing beaches on the guests and operators of large hotel and condominium properties followed.

Ward Kovacs suggested a change to a beach size of approximately one and a half blocks wide by adding to the width on either or both sides of the block. There was support among the group for this option. Using this option, the proposed draft schedule for 2013 could be maintained while allowing more surfing space.

The group discussed the variable size of “blocks” around town and Butch Arbin explained how the rotating beach schedule north and south takes that into consideration.

Mick Chester suggested adding a third surfing beach on Saturdays and Sundays to compensate for the loss of the Inlet Beach on weekends. Butch agreed to prepare a draft schedule for 2 rotating surfing beaches from Monday to Friday and 3 rotating beaches on the weekends. The addition of a third surfing beach on weekends would require hiring more Surfing Beach Facilitators (SBF’s) and a corresponding increase to the Beach Patrol budget. This option and its cost will be discussed at the next meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 15 at 4:00 p.m. In order to expedite action, the recommendation from the April 15 meeting will be scheduled for the Council meeting of April 15.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.