

Town of Sherman  
BOS Special Meeting  
May 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.  
Via ZOOM

**Member's Present:** First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Kevin Keenan, and Selectman Bob Ostrosky

**Member's Absent:** None

**Audience & Invited:** John Wrenn, Frances Frattini, TJ Fazzino, State Trooper Wayne Tate, Rachel Booth, members from the Park and Recreation Commission, and many members from the community.

**Clerk:** Margaret Beatty

**Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:** First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance

First Selectman Don Lowe began the meeting by acknowledging potential hardships the town might face in the upcoming summer months with respect to Park and Rec programs, the safety of beach use, boat launch, and town parks. The BOS and Park and Rec Commission engaged in constructive discussion to formulate ideas that might affect the following issues due to Covid 19:

**A) Boat landing and ensuing issues such as enforcement:** Currently neighboring towns have closed down public boat launches and many other neighboring towns are under lock and key, making the launches accessibly only to local residents. Sherman town beach/docs can be subject to vulnerability, which can potentially lead to heavy traffic from non-residents. First Selectman opened up the discussion to the BOS and Park and Rec Commission for ideas and feedback. All were in agreement to keep the town beach closed. John Wrenn, the head of Park and Rec, suggested longer hours spent for monitors at the boat launch entrance post, possibly from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with an additional employee.

**Questions from public:**

Joe Keneally was concerned if this was problem was a staffing/ man power issue? First Selectman Don Lowe replied that it was both a staffing issue and strategy issue.

Denise DePalma raised concern that the responsible parties in charge of enforcing beach/ boat check in were responsible enough to manage the task. Selectman Bob Ostrosky responded that it would be our responsibility to hire competent employees.

Rachel Booth questioned whether it was more important to staff more employees and longer hours on the weekend rather than the week days, more as a cost prohibitive measure. John

Wrenn and Selectman Bob Ostrosky both responded that generally more staff would be needed on weekends but that it can potentially set the town up for a weak spot during the weekdays, which can cause potential issues. TJ Fazzone replied that it would be necessary for employees to log the number of people coming in and out.

First Selectman Don Lowe wrapped up conversation on the topic with everyone in agreement that two employees on duty at the entrance is necessary, a well-placed sign listing criteria needed upon entrance, and adequate identification, such as beach pass and/or proof of Sherman residency.

Denise DePalma questioned if there will be any protocol or guidelines in place in the event a confrontation takes place. F. Selectman Don Lowe responded that the employees act only as a check point at the beach/doc entrance. If a problem escalates, the employees will have a direct contact line to state police and/or constables, and he along with John Wrenn will devise a plan.

Lastly, Selectman Bob Ostrosky offered the suggestion of possible camera surveillance. This could help squelch any fears of the residents.

**B) Beach and ensuing issues:** F. Selectman Don Lowe posed the question of guarding the beach, he also offered information that all the local towns were revisiting potential beach openings after Memorial Day and can be discussed at a later date. It was also suggested that a better sign be posted of the rules, mainly in reference to the “no dogs allowed” policy. More discussion will resume on this topic post Memorial Day.

**C) Summer Camp:** First Selectman Don Lowe was open to any comments/ suggestions. TJ Fazzone offered up information that the Governor will be provided with guidance on the issue in the coming weeks. He felt we should revisit the topic when more information comes from the recommendation of the Governor. In the interim applications will be gathered for potential camp counselor positions. The potential is there to not move forward with camp.

#### **Questions from public:**

Joe Moravsky asked if there would be a liability issue if the town were to open camp? In terms of infection to counselors and campers. Rachel Booth responded that the counselors would need to be given extra training on safe practices and the town would have to set the benchmarks for employees. If an employee were to catch Covid 19 while working it would fall under Workman’s Comp. She also advised that a waiver be signed by participating families understanding the risks and potential possibility of catching the virus.

**D) Hiring pertaining to different open/ close scenarios:** Applications will be gathered in order to fulfill job openings but will be revisited when more decisions are made to the viability of opening the beach and camp.

**E) Keeping parks open/ closed:** John Wrenn commented that he would prefer to keep the basketball court closed. Business Manager Liz LaVia raised the concern that non-residents are

using our facilities creating some of the issues being raised by resident park users. Selectman Bob Ostrosky commented that if there is no enforcement then it will be a constant battle. Both First Selectman Don Lowe and John Wrenn were in agreement to potentially hire someone to monitor the parks, mainly Veteran's Field. The biggest concern was prohibiting dogs at the parks moving forward and whether this decision would punish responsible town residents. John Wrenn will compile estimates for potential cost of hiring someone to monitor the parks.

**Questions from public:**

Kasey Diotte inquired whether monitoring the parks was for the duration of the virus or long term? Will this idea become part of a long term policy? First Selectman Don Lowe replied he wasn't sure, it would be difficult to estimate if the difficulties the towns are facing with Covid 19 will lead to long term problems.

The topic was left open for further discussion at future BOS monthly meetings.

**F) Dogs in park:** The topic remains open for further discussion. First Selectman Don Lowe would like to revisit the topic at the next BOS monthly meeting.

State Trooper Wayne Tate offered his input. He believes specific signs, having physical presence enforcing rules, and possibly hiring a private security firm. He even suggested to chain off the boat launch. He feels, at the current moment, the best solution is to staff the areas with Park and Rec staff. He offered to sit down with First Selectman Don Lowe and develop plan to put in place for those responsible for enforcing rules in the event a problem should arise. He would not recommend instating a policy banning dogs at the park. He feels it potentially punishes town residents that are being responsible.

John Wrenn asked when the next BOS monthly meeting? First Selectman Don Lowe replied May 28, 2020.

**Other Issues:** None

The meeting was now open to public comment.

Kasey Diotte remarked how impressed she was at the participation and what a wonderful job the BOS has been doing. She went on to offer information relating to the BOE monthly meeting which fall on the first Wednesday of every month. She understands that the BOE budget is highly debated and that joining the BOE meeting allows for any town resident provide input.

Phyllis Schaer provided information on behalf of Candlewood Lake Authority. She mentioned that the CLA added another boat to their lineup, widening the scope of patrol. She was impressed with the adaptability of our leaders navigating unsettling times. Lastly, she thanked the BOS for all their hard work.

First Selectman Don Lowe posed a general question about town gardens and whether all plots are taken. Joh Wrenn replied that yes all plots are taken with a waiting list. First Selectman Don

Lowe would like to have space available for town residents to grow food especially with the current situation with Covid 19.

State Trooper Wayne Tate commented that if any residents see violations at any town park to please contact the State Trooper office, you can find the information on the town website. (townofshermanct.org)

Peter Kuring commented that there is no clear signage present at the parks relating park rules. He felt it was important to have the signs be more visible in efforts to enforce the rules.

No other comments or suggestions from the BOS, Park and Rec Commission, and public.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m., motioned by Selectman Kevin Keenan

**Motioned by:** Selectman Kevin Keenan

**Seconded by:** Selectman Bob Ostrosky      **All in Favor:** Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on May 7, 2020.