Minutes of a Town Council virtual meeting held April 9h, AD 2020 via Video and Tele-Conferencing at 5:30 o'clock PM. Councilors present: Lawrence G. Anderson, Paul J. Golembeske, Gary S. Mataronas, Andrew W. Moore and Robert L. Mushen. Also in attendance: Richard S. Humphrey, Town Solicitor, Town Administrator, Antonio A. Teixeira, and Police Chief Raynes. Several Beach Commission Members and Budget Committee Members viewed the session, but did not participate in discussion.
Richard Humphrey, Town Solicitor stated that there would be discussion of the Beach, Wilbour Woods and Financial Town Meeting and to accept comments from Beach Commission, Budget Committee or any others that would like to be heard. He then encouraged the Council to act in accordance with the Emergency Ordinance that was adopted on March 16, 2020.

Council President then opened up the discussion to accept comments from Members of the Beach Commission and others.

William Ryan, Chair of the Beach Commission stated that the Beach Commission met and discussed the closure of South Shore Beach with Police Chief Raynes and they are ready to close the Beach parking when the Council sees fit.

Police Chief Raynes stated that he and Fire Chief Petrin have had discussions and have an intended plan to move forward with the closure of South Shore Beach to vehicular traffic. The Public Safety Complex has 30 large construction barrels with weighted bottoms and 6 jersey barriers fillable by water that are portable that can be used. He further noted that signage and what the signs should say is most important at this time. Discussion has taken place with the Beach Commission regarding location of signage and efforts to keep people from parking on area roadways if the Beach is closed to parking. The Police Department will strictly enforce no parking zones.

Council Member Andrew Moore is in agreement with the Beach Commission shutting down South Shore Beach to parking, but allowing people to walk down there.

Council Member Larry Anderson supports a robust closure at this point, robust signage and robust enforcement. He believes that strong action should be taken now rather than waiting and stated that he has a draft resolution should Councilor Mushen or the Solicitor wish to review.

Richard Humphrey believes the Beach Commission, Chief of Police and Town Council seem to be in agreement and what he would like is comments to be received by Robert Mushen acting as the Council through the emergency ordinance that was adopted on March 16, 2020. He further suggested that the Council should not take votes because they have already designated Councilor Mushen to act during this emergency period as per the ordinance adopted March 16, 2020. Councilor Robert Mushen with guidance from his fellow Councilors, Police Chief, Fire Chief and the Town Administrator should act as the circumstances dictate.

Larry Anderson, supports the action of the Council President acting under the ordinance and will provide a draft of a resolution he has prepared.

Gary Mataronas agrees with Andrew Moore and Larry Anderson on the closure of South Shore Beach and suggests it also be done for Lloyds Beach.

Paul Golembeske agrees with the closure of the beach and defers to Police Chief on how to monitor and

post signage.

Town Administrator believes there is a need to be concerned with the problem of domestic violence on the rise and that people need an outlet and that we have limited sources.

It seems to be suggested by all that the town should allow walking on the beach but close vehicular access to South Shore Beach. Councilor Mushen will continue to review other areas within town (i.e. Wilbour Woods, Lloyds Beach) and handle as necessary.

John Berg from Nature Conservancy stated that TNC Preserves in Rhode Island have been closed but he does not have the authority to close Lloyds Beach.

Councilor Mushen gave an update to status of Budget developments for the Annual Financial Town Meeting. Currently gatherings are limited to no more than five (5) which has caused the need for virtual/teleconference meetings. The FTM would normally attract approximately 150 – 250 voters, which is not allowed under the COVID-19 health crisis. RIGL allows a city or town to carry into the next fiscal year the expenditure of the prior fiscal year, but is silent on the ability of the municipality to levy taxes for revenue collection. The Town Clerk and Councilor Anderson have been working with the League of Cities and Towns to encourage the Governor's Office to provide an executive order to assist the municipalities who find themselves in this predicament. Councilor Mushen suggests the Budget Committee hold a virtual meeting to cast a vote on a recommended budget while the Town awaits direction from the state.

Council President then declared the meeting adjourned at 6:13 PM.

Sheila A. Oliveira
Deputy Town Clerk