

ELEPHANT ROCK BEACH CLUB
Westport, MA

March 1, 2024

To the ERBC Membership:

We had a busy 2023 season with the opening of our ADA-compliant front entrance ramp and changes to the traffic flow at both the main and Cockeast Pond parking lots. While it took a while for folks to get used to these changes, they have improved safety and access to the beach. Thanks to everyone for your patience in accommodating these improvements.

As we look forward to 2024, I would first like to welcome new Board member Elena Matlack. Elena has a long-standing commitment to Westport Harbor and ERBC and we are delighted to have her join the Board. Also, we thank departing Board member and former president, Bob Humphrey. As a reminder, we are always looking for members who would like to participate in the governance of ERBC – if you are interested, e-mail the Board at the address below.

We have been fortunate to avoid an increase in annual dues for the last four years. But, like everyone else, our costs are increasing and the Board has voted to increase dues for 2024 to \$500 for a family membership and \$350 for an individual membership. There will be similar increases for Child and Sibling IDs and for the Beach Pass program. While this is a significant jump (about 17%), the Board hopes to be able to hold annual dues at this level for several years.

A few other updates on issues affecting ERBC:

- The Westport Harbor Water Association (“WHWA”), which supplies fresh water for ERBC, has found a new water supply on River Road. WHWA has not yet provided an estimate of the cost of accessing this new water supply so the cost to ERBC is still unknown. Please know that ERBC continues to contest the methodology that WHWA uses to assess costs against ERBC which results in ERBC paying three times as much as the average water system member even though our documented water usage is equivalent to the average household.
- As discussed at last year’s Annual Meeting, the Board has been considering changes in club membership policies that would allow children who have been under a family membership for at least 10 years to apply for membership without owning a home in the Westport Harbor area. As a first step in making these membership changes, the Board is pleased to announce that it has approved an offer of Regular Membership to all current Derivative Members and certain former Derivative Members. All Derivative Members were under a family membership for at least 10 years and have had a decades-long commitment to ERBC and Westport Harbor. The Board is still actively considering further membership policy changes to accommodate other such children who now access the club using the Child ID program. In the meantime, the Child ID program will remain in effect.
- The Board has approved extending the benefits of family membership to the domestic partner of a Regular Member. Domestic partners must have shared a residence with the

member for at least three years and have a mutual support relationship similar to marriage. The Board will evaluate each person requesting domestic partner benefits and may require documentation of the relationship. If approved, the domestic partner will have access to ERBC as would a spouse or eligible child but will have no independent membership rights. Benefits will end when the relationship ends.

- This past January saw two major storms that resulted in flooding of Atlantic Avenue and significant erosion of both the beach and the dunes. Fortunately, our pavilion had only minor damage to some electrical wiring underneath the structure. We have done all we can to clear both parking lots while the Town of Westport took care of removing sand and debris from the road. However, environmental rules prohibit us from taking any remedial action on the beach and dunes without approval of the Westport Conservation Commission. We have made an application to move sand from the lots to the beach in an effort to reconstruct damaged portions of the dunes and are awaiting approval. The Board is also considering whether there are steps it can take to prevent or minimize such damage in the future.

Our opening day for the 2024 season is June 22nd. We will have a “soft” opening the preceding weekend when parking passes will be available and staff on site as they prepare for the season. Both the Annual Meeting and Family Day are scheduled for August 3rd. We will close, as usual, on Monday of Labor Day weekend which this year falls on September 2nd.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to get in touch with me at the e-mail address below. I am looking forward to summer and seeing everyone at the beach!

Ralph Derbyshire
President

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