

ELEPHANT ROCK BEACH CLUB
Westport, MA

March 1, 2025

To the ERBC Membership:

Hoping that this letter finds you well and looking forward to warm and sunny days at the beach!

This year, we welcome two new Board members – Cate Rodriguez and Paul Saros. Both have a long-standing commitment to Westport Harbor and ERBC and we are delighted to have them join the Board. Also, we thank departing Board members Larry Bailis and Hugh Morton. Both Hugh and Larry were former ERBC presidents and each served for more than two decades on the Board. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their many years of guidance and wisdom. 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.

The ERBC Board has been working during the off-season on several issues. Here is a quick update:

- Our beach restoration efforts to address damage from the storms of winter 2024 were very successful. By mid-summer, our beach was largely sand (not rocks) and the dunes were rebuilding to their natural beauty. We had also committed as part of the governmental approval process for the beach restoration effort to plant beach grass in the dunes. I am happy to report that a group of 40 or so volunteers planted 18,000 plugs of beach grass over two days last November. It was hard but rewarding work – and we thank all who participated in this effort.
- In late October, a 35-foot juvenile humpback whale washed ashore at the western end of ERBC. While the Town of Westport did its best to assist, ERBC ended up absorbing the cost of burying the whale on the beach at a depth of eight feet and a cost of several thousand dollars. There is a shallow stone marker on the burial site that marks this sad event.
- We are purchasing a John Deere “Gator” utility vehicle to enhance safety by providing quick access to the west end of the beach for rescues. It will also help with clearing seaweed and other debris from the beach which the lifeguards do every morning. Except for emergencies, the Gator will only operate outside of beach opening hours as we are all very sensitive to having a motorized vehicle encroach on the serenity of the beach.
- Beach office hours will be extended to 6:00 p.m. to align with the time that the lifeguards are on duty. This will provide members access to the pavilion until beach closing. It will also restrict access to ERBC to members and guests until the closing time of 6:00 p.m. We understand that it may take some time for the community – both members and non-members – to adjust to this change.

- Nothing new to report on our water situation – while the Westport Harbor Water Association (WHWA) has found a new water supply on River Road, it has not provided an estimate of the cost of accessing this new water supply so we do not know the cost to ERBC. 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.
- Last year, we admitted thirty-two Derivative Members, all of whom were children of long-time family members of ERBC. This was a first step in addressing a long-standing problem created by the one house/one membership rule that has been in place since the late 1980's. The Board is still considering membership policy changes to accommodate children of members who now access the club using the Child ID program. Note that the beach itself is owned by the Westport Harbor Improvement Corporation (WHIC) and our lease includes a cap on membership. We have committed to WHIC to move slowly as we implement any membership policy changes to ensure that we don't over-burden our limited beach resource.

Our opening day for the 2025 season is June 21st. 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. Family Day is scheduled for July 26th and the Annual Meeting will be held on August 2nd. In addition, with an early Labor Day, we will extend our normal closing date by one week to Sunday, September 7th. If demand warrants, and weather cooperates, we may consider opening for weekends later in September. As a reminder, you can always go to our website, www.elephantrockbeachclub.com, for more information on our calendar and programs, including Child ID's.

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

Ralph Derbyshire
President

erbcbboard@gmail.com