

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KINCARDINE

Pier Safety Ad-Hoc Committee Minutes

Thursday, November 30, 2023

Members Present Councillor Rory Cavanagh, Chair
Ash Adams
Dr. Chris Houser
Jim Cooper
Kristin Beaton
Matt Cottrill
Rolf Jedemann
Sergeant David Hackney
Kent Padfield

Members Absent Steve Schaus

Staff Present Jayne Jagelewski, Staff Resource
Jennifer Lawrie, Secretary

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Rory Cavanagh called the Pier Safety Ad-Hoc Committee meeting of The Corporation of the Municipality of Kincardine to Order at 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2023.

1.1 **Land Acknowledgment Statement**

The Chair opened the Meeting with the Land Acknowledgment Statement.

3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

None Disclosed.

4. **Adoption of Minutes**

4.1 **November 16, 2023**

Resolution # 11/21/23 PS - 01

Moved by: Jim Cooper

Seconded by: David Hackney

That the minutes of the Pier Safety Ad-Hoc Committee held on November 16, 2023 be adopted as printed/amended.

Carried.

5. Delegations (approx. 15 minutes each)

5.1 Dr. Houser - SMART Beach (5:00 pm)

Dr. Chris Houser provided an update of Smart Beach Project. Presentation included stats on drownings in Lake Huron, use of lifeguards, use of signage and accuracy of signage, flag system on beaches, site specific warnings for local area, confirmation bias, confidence bias, beach design including design nudges, and beach safety issue. The presentation also included information on the Smart Beach project (integrated sensor network), the prediction of nearshore surf conditions from buoy, survey re predict wave heights and surf hazards, distribution of beach users (how many in water) and next steps in project (test of warning system in summer 2024).

The Committee discussed how lifeguards decide on which flag to fly and how a lifeguard service maintains expertise and knowledge with turnover in staff, the no swim zone, and that automated system for flags is only a partial solution.

5.2 Scott Ruddle, Open Water Safety Expert (5:15pm)

Scott Ruddle, Open Water Safety Expert, provided a presentation on the life saving program in the Town of Grand Bend. His presentation included how long lifeguards traditionally stay on staff (5 years), importance of the training of staff as opposed to age of staff, beach safety requires layers of protection (i.e. signs, flags, enforcement, lifeguards, rescue personal, education), and interventions by lifeguards are not just stopping drownings but provide education, first aid, beach ambassadors, and enforcement. Grand Bend has 30 to 40 rescues a year.

The Committee discussed how the number of lifeguards on duty at a time is calculated (per visitor or per square foot), Grand Bend has 5 to 6 lifeguards on duty during the week and 8 to 10 on weekends, the tools required for lifeguard service and the budget for Grand Bends lifeguards.

5.3 Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke, Reginal Advisor London's Coroner's Office (5:30pm)

Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke from the Office of the Chief Coroner provided data on the drowning deaths that occurred in Kincardine from 2008 - 2023.

Presentation provided data on age of drowning victims, the gender, primary address, location (pier or beach) and reason for entering the water (i.e. recreation or rescue attempt).

The Committee requested the breakdown of drownings between the North Pier and South Pier, and if there were trends (i.e. male, visitors, season) similar across the Great Lakes.

5.4 Dr. Jaime Blackwood (6:00 p.m.)

Dr. Blackwood presented on the August 2023 incident including the conditions, the importance of having life saving equipment on the pier, impact on rescuers, recommendations for consideration (better ladders, signs, close pier on rough days, flag system, memorial for those who passed away, change parking to direct people away from beach, and beach patrol).

Committee discussed assessment of waves on the pier and buoy location, ability to close the pier, and having life saving ring with a longer rope.

7. Business

7.1 Next Steps

The Committee discussed what the committees next steps are including the draft report to Council and future agenda items. Topics discussed were:

1. Impacts of potential closure of the pier versus making the pier more aesthetically pleasing with additional safety features (i.e. similar to Port Stanley Pier controlled access promenade with railing and gate) versus steering people away from the pier instead of encouraging more people to the pier through physical changes to the beach area.
2. Restricting jumping off the piers and creating a change in culture versus creating a safe environment for that activity (i.e. advertising a supervised community pier jumping experience event).
3. Creation of a memorial to educate users to the dangers similar to Port Stanley or naming life rescue stations as memorials.
4. Equipment at the piers including ring buoys with 50 feet high visibility lines same as nautical, ladders, and signage (i.e. no swimming area, painting no jumping/swimming on the pier).

8. **Outstanding Business**

Resolution # 11/21/23 PS - 02

Moved by: Rory Cavanagh

Seconded by: David Hackney

That Jim Cooper be appointed at Vice Chair for the Pier Safety Ad Hoc Committee.

Carried.

9. **Schedule of Meetings**

9.1 **December 14, 2023 at 5pm - Cancelled.**

9.2 **January 11, 2024 at 5pm**

9.3 **January 25, 2024 at 5pm**

10. **Adjournment**

Resolution # 11/21/23 PS - 03

Moved by: Kristin Beaton

Seconded by: David Hackney

That the Pier Safety Ad-Hoc Committee adjourn at 6:41 p.m.

Carried.

Chair

Secretary