

BOARD OF SELECTMEN - TOWN OF MACHIAS

JULY 24, 2014

A special meeting of the Machias Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Aubrey Carter. In attendance were Board members Warren Gay, Danny Manchester, Glenn Davis, and Eric Holm; Town Manager Christopher Loughlin; Secretary Cathy Lord; Officer Wade Walker, Officer Chris Mace, Fire Chief Joey Dennison, Cony Upton, Kehben Grier, Susan Corbett, Michael Corbett.

Chairman Carter explained that the Board of Selectmen had agreed at the previous night's selectmen's meeting to schedule a special meeting to discuss the use of Bad Little Falls Park for the Blackfly Ball this year with event organizers. Mr. Carter reviewed the concerns the Board had listed at the previous night's Board meeting; he observed that the main cause of concern for the event is the amount of alcohol that was being transported into the park at last year's event. Mr. Carter noted that since Police Chief Grady Dwelley is on vacation that Officer Wade Walker of the Machias Police Department as well as Fire Chief Joey Dennison were invited to attend to offer some insight into causes for concern resulting from last year's event. Mr. Carter commented that the Board wants to try to work out solutions to create a safe event for everyone.

Mr. Carter asked Officer Wade Walker to share suggestions the police department has to increase safety at the event. Officer Walker said that the use of "bouncers" suggested by organizers of the event should be uniformed in some way for easy identification to event attendees who need assistance. He suggested that the organizers use people who remain on site for the entire event. Mr. Davis asked how many entrances existed for access to the event. It was noted that there were three entrances providing access to the event. Mr. Davis recommended not allowing people into the event with backpacks; he noted that this would solve the major problem of alcohol being brought into the park area and would cure the problem. Mr. Carter commented that it was unfortunate that alcohol was being brought into an event that was advertised as a chemical-free event. Ms. Grier pointed out that alcohol is also brought in via open containers but that if most of the alcohol is coming in via backpacks event organizers can ban backpacks and large containers from being brought into the park.

Mr. Upton asked what would happen if one of the event bouncers gets into an altercation with an attendee and whose liability would cover such a situation? Ms. Grier said that the Blackfly Ball is covered under an insurance umbrella. She added that event organizers set aside six hundred dollars to pay for additional police officers to help during the event. Officer Walker explained that sheriff's deputies assist the Town with traffic control, the Machias Police Department has both of its police cruisers in use that evening, and there are a total of six police officers on duty during the event. Officer Walker recommended that event security personnel be clearly identifiable so that attendees know who to approach with questions. Mrs. Corbett suggested that organizers could ban both food and drink in the park. Officer Walker said that denying drinks such as water would not be advisable and could create medical issues.

Officer Walker recommended that entry control points be wide enough for emergency vehicles to use in case of need. Ms. Grier said that she was concerned that attendees might try to circumnavigate the "no alcohol" rule by gaining access to the event down river. Officer Walker explained that police officers working at the event patrol the entire vicinity including the cemetery area. Officer Walker suggested using the event "bouncers" as traffic

control assisting people with getting into the event. Chairman Carter asked Fire Chief Joey Dennison for his suggestions. Chief Dennison noted that there is a problem with the capacity of the Machias Grange Hall and that having too many people in the building at one time is a real fire hazard. In answering questions from Ms. Grier about building capacity, Chief Dennison said that he would measure the building and confer with her about the number of people the building can safely accommodate. Ms. Grier said that if organizers know the capacity of the building the doors can be shut to people coming into the building when capacity is reached. Mr. Carter added that the last concern is the capacity of the park's footbridge which can be a major safety issue if it is overloaded. He asked Mr. Loughlin what the capacity of the footbridge would be? Mr. Loughlin noted that there should be no more than fifteen to twenty people on the footbridge at one time. Ms. Grier suggested that organizers can have event people stationed at both ends of the footbridge allowing single file pedestrian traffic across the footbridge and not allowing people to congregate on the footbridge. Mr. Carter asked the members of the Board how they felt about the steps to increase safety at the Blackfly Ball discussed at this meeting. Mr. Manchester said that he felt comfortable that the event will be safer if all the safety measures are put into place as discussed. Mr. Davis commented that if all the precautions are put into place the event should be successful. Mr. Gay and Mr. Holm agreed. Officer Walker suggested that if there continue to be problems again this year that all parties meet at least six months prior to next year's event to discuss options. Mrs. Corbett suggested meeting again after the event to see how things went. Mr. Carter said that the Board will place this discussion on a future Board of Selectmen's agenda and he noted that it would be advantageous for everyone to meet to discuss how the event went this year.

On a motion by Danny Manchester, seconded by Glenn Davis, the Board
VOTED:

To allow the Beehive Collective to use Bad Little Falls Park for the Blackfly Ball this year with all the constraints and precautions put into place agreed upon at this meeting.

On a motion by Warren Gay, seconded by Danny Manchester, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 PM.