

TOWN OF BARNSTABLE
SANDY NECK BOARD
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Sandy Neck Board Meeting
June 14, 2021

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on June 14, 2021 at 7:00 pm by remote Zoom meeting. *In accordance with the Governor's Order Prohibiting Gatherings of More Than 10 People, issued on March 15, 2020, and effective through May 18, 2020, unless further extended, the June 8, 2020 public meeting of the Sandy Neck Board shall be physically closed to the public to avoid group congregation. Zoom information can be found on the Sandy Neck Agenda.*

Chairman:
Thomas O'Neill

ViceChairman:
Peter Sampou

BoardMembers:
Ann Canedy
William Carey
William Monroe
Hank Farnham
Joe O'Brien

CouncilLiaison:
Gordon Starr
Kris Clark

BarnstablePD
Liaison:
Chris Kelsey

Roll Call:

- Board Members remotely present: Tom O'Neill, Bill Monroe, Pete Sampou and Bill Carey.
- Board Members absent: Joe O'Brien, Hank Farnham, and Ann Canedy.
- Staff: Division Director Natural Resources, Nina Coleman, and Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor.
- Staff Member absent: None.
- Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark.
- Barnstable Police Liaison: Chris Kelsey.
- Public: Wendy Paquette, Paul Berger, and Rich French.
- Guest Speaker: None.

Act on Minutes:

- On a **motion** by Bill Carey and seconded by Pete Sampou, the Sandy Neck Board voted by Roll call to approve the May 10, 2021 minutes. Pete Sampou, yes; Tom O'Neill, yes; Bill Carey, yes; Bill Monroe, yes.

Public Comment: None

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Correspondence: None

Staff Report:

Nina Coleman addressed the Board.

- We are ramping up for the Fourth of July. We have been extremely busy in May and June. Memorial Day weekend was a washout. First and second weekends in June were very busy.
- We have started closure due to the nesting birds. More information later in this meeting.
- At the time of this meeting we are currently open to 0.8 miles. That will likely change the distance by the end of this week.
- We are selling a record breaking number of permits. 3,300 to date. About 2,000 Non-Resident and 1,000 Resident permits. Many people purchasing permits are new to driving over sand. We have put the informational Off Road Vehicle video on our webpage. In addition, when a person goes to the website to purchase their permit, they must watch the video and digitally sign that they agree that they have watched the video and understand the procedures.
- Our permit sales at 3,300 are equal to the entire 2020 permit sales.
- Revenue is picking up which is great as we had to borrow a considerable amount from our surplus to get through the 2020 season.
- The renewal applications and new applications are coming in online.

- The online application process is working fairly well; we are still working through some glitches. Patron feedback has been positive.
- Patrons may also park by the Gatehouse and use the QR code and from their vehicle fill out the application. The staff at the Gatehouse will approve and send a link to pay and process the permit. In this way we are able to keep the amount of people in the Gatehouse at a minimum as they are able to complete the application while they are in their vehicle.
- Gate Attendants are also available to help if needed with the process.
- Our camper reservation system we launched before Memorial Day weekend is extremely glitchy. We want to point out that we know that there are issues, we are not I.T. people and the Mooring Info staff is working on the issues. For the most part patrons have been understanding. This is the first weekend we have had less sites available and more folks that wished to camp out on the beach. We believe that most issues have been resolved.
- We have our new 2021 Sandy Neck merchandise in. Tees, sweatpants, sweatshirts, all picked out by staff. Lots of good stuff. Folks can come into the Gatehouse to purchase and we also get staff out on the beach to sell the merchandise.
- Nina asked if there were any questions. Tom O'Neill asked if there is a point where we stop selling permits where there are so many sold and with the beach closing down, there will be unhappy patrons. Nina responded by saying that she is currently in discussions regarding the situation and we are not there yet. The hope is that once we are down to 0.5 miles of beach, permit sales will slow down and the issue will resolve itself. It is definitely a thought and Nina is in discussion with the Director of MEA. If permit sales are shut down, it could backfire causing a run on permit sales. We are not there yet, but if we get to that point, Nina will discuss with the Board. Pete said we could advertise for weekday campers on the beach and that would allow for a broader community and more people would be allowed to use the camper beach. Pete also stated that it is a real concern if we were to say we would cut off permit sales for people who really want to purchase a permit and concentrate on coming to the beach in August when the Plovers have left. Tom agreed that it is tricky and people may want a permit to use for weekdays when it is not so crowded.
- Nina responded to the camper suggestion Pete brought up. The reservation system is similar to any campground reservation system. Once certain days are full, the campers will have the availability to purchase other nights during the week when available. Weekdays we don't fill up and there is space for people to camp.
- So far this year we have had only one day where the Off Road Vehicle beach had to be closed at 11:30 am due to being at capacity and it was reopened at 2:30 pm. Donna told the Board that staff has been great at explaining to new people coming onboard that the weekdays are much less crowded than the weekends.
- Nina presented the Board with the Plover report. We have six Plover nests between Trail 1 and Trail 2. On the graphic provided, nests that have not hatched as of yet are indicated in red lettering. Nests that have hatched are indicated in yellow boxes. Once hatched, the chicks are called a brood. One nest that was lost is in black lettering with the re-nest of that particular nest indicated in red lettering.
- Close to Trail 2 we have a tern colony, which can go deep into the season if successful. There is also nest 29B which will be a late hatch as it is a Plover re-nest.
- West of that is brood 9 which was the first hatch which closed the beach to 1 mile. Nina then listed the nests on the beach which are on the presentation. Nest 25 is due to hatch on Friday, June 18th and that will close the beach down to 0.5 miles. The beach will be open 0.5 to .06 miles for the month of July. That leaves a certain amount of space for campers and a certain amount of space for daytrippers. The good news is that the beach is very wide in these areas. We will be able to double up daytrippers. We are providing coned areas for campers.
- Nina explained how much work it took to get the beach opened to this point this year. Last year there were more nests to the west because the beach was closed down due to Covid-19 restrictions. Nina showed the slide comparison between 2020 and 2021. We could not do the deterring in 2020 because we were all in lockdown and also because we didn't have vehicles on the beach. This year we were able to deter.
- We were able to deter this year under a Section 10 permit which requires aggressive nesting deterrents which we used to keep the beach open to Trail 1. Slide was shown with regarding the types of deterrents used this year. We used pallets, stakes and flagging tape. We also had to deter behind the dunes. Used extensive hours a day raking the area. It costs a lot of money both in staffing and permitting in order to accomplish.
- Nina opened up the floor to questions. Bill Carey asked if the pallets were only behind the dune. Nina said they were both on the front beach and behind the dune. Bill said it must have been a lot of work and Nina did a great job to get as much beach as she did. Nina said at some point you can't deter because Plovers want to be apart from each other. We are only allowed to deter two potential nests. There is an acreage that we are allowed to deter within. Pete said that it was a fantastic job dealing with nature and not damaging nature to get that amount of beach. Tom said it was also the hard work with the state which is a key part of this.

- Bill Monroe asked about Cottage Owner access. Nina responded that Cottage Owners can access via Trail 1 or through the escort service. Please call the Gatehouse to set up escort. As a reminder, the turtles are out on the Great Marsh Trail and Cottage Owners need to keep a lookout for them. Use caution. At the time of this meeting there were twenty turtle nests. Concentration is Trail 1 east at least to the lean-to.
- Officer Chris Kelsey reported that there was an incident at Sandy Neck a couple of weekends ago. He said that he wanted to speak with the Board regarding the push to a permanent 10:00 pm curfew with respect to public safety. He was on patrol on Sandy Neck during the incident and did have to have two police cruisers respond. They were able to take appropriate action requiring more than one officer. Had the 11:00pm curfew been in place there would have been more challenges with the police response. The one incident proved why the curfew was changed to 10:00 pm as far as a public safety response. Curfew has been good with the 10:00 pm curfew. Nina agreed that there has been a nice vibe on the beach and the 10:00 pm curfew is working. We had a police officer stationed at the Gatehouse when we had to close the Off Road Vehicle beach. Bill Carey asked if the police cruiser was still parked at the Gatehouse. Chris responded that it will be there all summer. Presence is a big reason and also for police response time if there is an incident on the beach.

Old Business:

- 1. Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.** None.
- 2. Economic sustainability.** None.
- 3. Public outreach and public use & participation.**

1. Bill Monroe said the new bird houses at the Gatehouse were seeing a lot of activity. He asked about activity out at the campsites and lean-to by scouting troops. Donna responded that the campsites and lean-to were being heavily used by both scouting troops and other patrons. Donna reminded everyone that we close the campsites for the month of July due to the green head flies. Bill also wish to thank Paul Elderedge of mosquito control for doing a great job keeping the mosquito population down.

New Business: Election of Board Officers.

1. Tom O'Neill called for the election of Board Officers. On a motion by Bill Monroe nominated the existing slate of officers which are Tom O'Neill as Chairman and Pete Sampou as Vice-Chairman. Bill Carey seconded the nominations. By voice vote; Bill Carey, yes; Tom O'Neill, yes; Bill Monroe, yes; and Pete Sampou, yes. The motion carried.

Matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment:

1. Bill Carey asked about the situation regarding filling Hank Farnham's seat on the Board. Tom didn't know anything as of yet. Three Board member's terms were up in June. Hank Farnham, Ann Candey and Tom O'Neill. There was a discussion regarding the process. Kris Clark informed the Board that the Appointment Committee had met earlier in the day and she could not attend the whole meeting. Kris received a phone call from the Town Council President saying the process had been put on hold as current terms had not yet expired. Discussion resumed on how to make the process less confusing. Wendy Paquette said she had seen the Appointments Committee meeting where they decided to extend the process time. Rich French asked if Hank had resigned or was just not seeking another term. Tom indicated that he had resigned. Tom said he would get in touch with Cindy Lovell regarding the process.
2. Wendy Paquette thanked Nina and Donna for the great job they had been doing this year. The Board agreed. Rich French also thanked Officer Chris Kelsey for his support of the beach.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned by roll call vote at 7:48 pm. Tom O'Neill yes; Bill Carey, yes; Bill Monroe, yes; Pete Sampou, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Secretary Pro Tem

Attachments:

1. Slides included in the Board Presentation.