



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD

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Sandy Neck Board Meeting February 10, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on February 10, 2025, at 7:00 pm in the Selectmens Conference Room.

Chair:

Thomas O'Neill

Vice Chair:

Peter Sampou

Board Members:

William Carey
William Monroe
Maureen Piccione
Rene King
Rich French

Council Liaison:

Gordon Starr
Kris Clark

Barnstable

PD Liaison:
Chris Kelsey

Roll Call:

Board Members present by roll call: Tom O'Neill, Pete Sampou, Maureen Piccione, Rich French, Rene King, Bill Carey, and Bill Monroe.

Board Members absent:

Staff: Sandy Neck: Sandy Neck Park Manager, Nina Coleman, Assistant Sandy Neck Park Manager, Ann Marie Luppino, and Natural Resource Officer, Ryan Henry.

Staff Member absent: Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor.

Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark

Barnstable Police Liaison: Chris Kelsey

Public: Wendy Paquette, Paul Berger, Tracy Hallett, and Dana Perry.

Guest Speaker:

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Bill Carey and seconded by Rich French, the Board, by voice and show of hands, voted to approve the January 13, 2025, minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. Last year we had a discussion regarding Board effectiveness. Since then, we have added new members to the Board. Tom will be sending out information to everyone regarding the Board direction. Items including, looking at the current agendas, encouraging various speakers to come to the Board meetings. Tom wants to get the most of the Board meetings and for the Board to give the best to the town. The Board's Charter is to advise the town about issues pertaining to Sandy Neck. Once he sends out the email, Tom will set up something on an upcoming agenda for member discussion. Kris Clark said that the Town Council's Ad Hoc Committee is set to review the effectiveness of committees and will be conducting their first meeting soon. She suggested that Tom may want to circle back to the code for Sandy Neck as the Council will be reviewing that information for all the committees. Kris asked if the Sandy Neck Charter was on the Sandy Neck website. Nina said it is the Sandy Neck Management Plan and is on the Sandy Neck website. There was a discussion of how the Board used to be run.

Correspondence: None.

Staff Report: Nina Colman addressed the Board. * See attached report.

- Nina introduced Ryan Henry, who is our new, full-time Natural Resource Officer. Ryan comes to us from MEA, Shellfish where he worked since 2022. Ryan addressed the Board. He is very happy to be a Natural Resource Officer. He is a big fisherman. He wants to get back into hunting and is also a bird photographer.
- All 2024 Off-Road Vehicle Permits expire at 4pm on January 15, 2025. Application for the 2025 Off-Road Vehicle permits are online at <https://townofbarnstable.us/sandyneckpark/>. Bill Carey said that the Town of Barnstable Transfer Station no longer has stickers, it is all done electronically. Nina said that it is a license plate reader, and we are in process of reviewing that option. It is a very successful application. She feels we could never get rid of stickers so people would know they are allowed to go out on the beach. Bill Monroe said the different color and shape of permits helps staff identify if it is a current permit by sight.
- Gatehouse hours continue to by appointment only.
- Off-Road Vehicle beach is open 8am-4pm daily.
- No campfires allowed.
- Sandy Neck seasonal positions have been posted to the town website.
- Sandy Neck walks and talks and beach cleanups for the year will be posted to the Sandy Neck website this month.
- Notes From the Field Newsletter for February has been updated and can be found on the Sandy Neck website.
- We are continuing our Coastal Resiliency outreach. Ann Marie has presented our Sandy Neck materials explaining the project and importance of protecting infrastructure to Upper Cape Tech in Bourne. There will also be a presentation in March at Cape Cod Community College. Rene said that Harwich Tech may be potentially another avenue for outreach.
- At this time of year, we have several seals visiting our beach and should a patron encounter one, please call the Gatehouse at 508-362-8300. If you cannot reach anyone at the Gatehouse, please call the International Fund for Animal Welfare, (IFAW), hotline at 508-743-9548. Please remain 150 feet away from the animal and keep all dogs on leash.
- So far, the front beach dune at the parking lot is doing ok. There is a lot of erosion east of Trail 4. Pinches off the beach at high tides. It will cause some issues in the spring for off-roading and there is loss of plover habitat. This may result in higher density of plovers in other habitat areas.

Old Business:

- **Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.** None.
- **Economic sustainability.** Nina addressed the Board. Tom has written a letter to the Town Manager regarding the Sandwich Beach fees paid to Barnstable for Sandwich residents to access Sandy Neck. Nina had a discussion with the Assistant Town Manager regarding the situation. The Assistant Town Manager said we needed to do the data again to substantiate the reason we would be asking for more money from Sandwich. We need to know how much use is coming from Sandwich residents. We will do counts this summer.
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** Bill Monroe addressed the Board. He spoke about the two most recent Eagle Scout led projects that had been completed in 2024. Jack Bete's Osprey pole installation and informational signage for the public completed. Grayson Hickey's three information kiosks were built and installed on Sandy Neck. Their Scout leaders said both would be able to come to the March Board meeting for a wrap up of their projects. Donna will include on the March 10, 2025, Board Meeting agenda. Bill also indicated that Sandy Neck Property Owners are going into negotiations with the town regarding their leases on Sandy Neck. It doesn't pertain to the Board, but it is something that Bill wanted to let the Board know that it is happening.
Tom spoke about access to Sandy Neck. He wanted to know if there was something else the Board could be doing to encourage more access. Rene indicated the public outreach to the schools with Nina's book project with the youth reading about nature and learning and exploring Sandy Neck is a good start. These third graders from Hyannis West Elementary School have a field trip planned for Sandy Neck in late spring. Rene said she will be actively involved with Nina on this project. Rene said that we should use social media to promote the

Halfway House also. Maureen asked if the school project was possible because of the grant money. Nina said it was through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, (MVP). Nina said next year it will be all third graders from Hyannis West as well as the Innovations Schools who will participate in a Sandy Neck turtle program.

- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** Nina addressed the Board. We will be applying for the Coastal Zone Management, (CZM), in the spring of this year. We were also going to go after the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, (NFWF), grant which is a federal grant and may be less likely to obtain. The reconfiguration plans are at 100% and we are in the process of reviewing them for getting the Request for Proposal, (FRP), out. That is slated to come out in late March 2025. At the last meeting Nina reported that we had a site plan review, and Old King's Highway approval. The big one is the Natural Heritage Endangered Species approval. It is called a Conservation Management Plan. (CMP), which is kind of like the Habitat Conservation Plan, (HCP). It is a big plan on how we are going to handle the Spadefoot Toad habitat during construction. The plan is just about ready to submit. Tom asked about the Stormwater Review. Nina said that it was in house through Department of Public Works, (DPW), and Nina believes we are close to having that done. Tom asked when an appropriate time would be for the Board to speak about the project timeline and the potential access issues that may come up during construction time. He questioned how things would go for the public during the construction, not just the walking public but also the Off-Road vehicle access. Nina said there was thought put into these issues as there will have to be some items put into the contract with the construction company. We need to have an action plan on access for all user groups. Right now, we are looking at after Labor Day, the lower parking lot may be closed. After Columbus Day, the upper parking lot may be closed. After Veterans Day we may have to close the access to the Off-Road beach. We will still have access to the Off-Road through other means. Tom asked Nina to provide a rough plan about access for the Board to look at. Nina said she would like everybody's feedback but knows we are not going to have as much access as we want next winter. We are going to try maintaining as much access as we can. Bill Carey asked at what point will we have the Requests for Proposal, (RFP), in and at what point will we be able to compare the cost to the grant money. Tom said we won't know until the RFP is selected. Nina reminded Bill that the money for the project has been secured through the vote by the Town Council. Generally, if the bids come in higher than planned for, there would be pieces of the project taken out of the plan. Rene said that it is important for a very clear communication plan for the public as the project timeline as the project gets off the ground regarding any closures. Nina said that the town is very good at outreach and keeping the public informed. Nina said our user group is very good at looking at the website and we will use the My Barnstable App to keep patrons informed of changes.

New Business: The Sandy Neck Safety Solutions Report. Ann Marie Luppino addressed the Board. ***See attached report.** The Safety Solutions Report is an overview of Sandy Neck Beach data for the current season with comparisons from the prior five years. The first part of the report is Off-Road Vehicle Permits sold, and number of camping nights. Ann Marie noted that the numbers have remained consistent since around 2020. The number of permits sold seems to have plateaued, averaging 4,500 a year. We had an 8.55% increase in permit sales from 2023 to 2024. We had a 1.05 increase in camper nights from 2023 to 2024. Next was the overall summary of aggressive behavior from 2014 through 2024. We had four incidents of aggressive behavior in 2024. Two incidents of aggressive behavior towards staff, two incidents of aggressive behavior towards beach patrons. We had one domestic incident, seven police responses and one incident where police placed someone in protective custody. We had no assaults in 2024. Ann Marie attributes the seven calls to police as staff being proactive in handling issues. During busy weekends when the beach is shortened due to nesting shorebirds, we closely monitor the number of vehicles on the beach and close the beach to Off-Road traffic when it is determined to be a safety issue. Bill Carey wanted to know about police response time. Officer Chris Kelsey responded that it was dependent on where the sector car is located in the area for response time. Usually no more than ten minutes. If it is a weekend and we have officers on the beach, it is immediate response. Every weekend during the busy season there are police details at Sandy Neck. Verbal warnings. The highest number of verbal warnings were given to people for permit not affixed to windshield. There were ninety-nine violations. Staff are working on solutions to this issue. Next was dogs off leash. There were forty-two verbal warnings. Typical number for this kind of violation. Other violations were tire pressure, glass bottles, curfew violations, fires violations, riding on rails. In total there were three hundred and forty verbal warnings for 2024.

There were thirty-nine written citations given in 2024. Types of Citations were, ORV Permit required, failure to carry required equipment, fire violations, speeding, Slight uptick in Citations in 2024 and the trend upwards may continue as we standardize procedures for staff. Emergency Medical Response was slightly down from 2023 with seven in total for 2024. West Barnstable Fire Department, Harbor Master, Barnstable Police Department, Barnstable Fire Department, and Sandy Neck Staff. Sandy Neck collaborates with various agencies throughout the year including, West Barnstable Fire Department, Barnstable Fire Department, Barnstable Harbormaster, International Fund for Animal Welfare, (IFAW), New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance, (NECWA), and the Barnstable Police Department with Officer Chris Kelsey serving as liaison to Sandy Neck. There are various training courses throughout the season with these departments and Sandy Neck Staff. The Barnstable Police Department provides officers for details on the beach for the busy times in season. We also provide a lot of community outreach programs including walks and talks on Sandy Neck, the Junior Ranger program, and educational programs.

2024 Solutions implemented: Ann Marie Luppino promoted to Sandy Neck Assistant Park Manager, Natural Resource Officer, Ryan Henry full time at Sandy Neck. Participation in the Barnstable High School Internship Program. Full time staff and seasonal staff completed jet ski training. Polaris UTV vehicle was purchased to use as a patrol vehicle. AEDs were added to all vehicles for use in emergencies. An AED box was added to a location on the public beach for emergency use. All patrol vehicles have been equipped with green and white lights for emergency response. Frequent patrols were added to the public beach, jet ski matrix innated, and periodic drills conducted. Informational signage was added at the Access Trail in Spanish and Portuguese languages. Pedestrian walkways and areas were maintained regularly. We implemented a fifteen-minute tow truck policy at the Access Trail where vehicles get stuck to keep traffic flowing smoothly. We added two more compressor lines at the Garage by the Gatehouse to accommodate vehicles airing up during peak times. We added a pedestrian crossing sign at the crosswalk on the road going up to the beach.

We did a multi-agency drill in June and used the jet ski to find a “victim” in the water with all staff, full-time as well as seasonal.

We set up a jet ski outpost area and response protocols for all tidal conditions. We also instituted a “floaty” protocol based on offshore winds and wind speeds. If the winds were offshore greater the seventeen miles an hour, we did not allow floaties. We established an AED policy for the public beach. The decking at the Snack Shack was replaced for safety reasons. Lifeguards were available at Sandy Neck for 2024. Nina said we will not know yet if we are getting Lifeguards for the 2025 season.

2025: We are adding another speed radar sign to the Off-Road Vehicle Beach. We are purchasing a new truck and ATV to replace older vehicles. Starting the beginning phase of the Coastal Resiliency Project. Remove vegetation from upper parking lot to widen pedestrian paths. Update seasonal staff training manuals and protocols. We will be continuing to develop jet ski training. We will continue to develop training for seasonal and full-time staff. We will continue to reevaluate and develop new safety solutions.

Questions: How are staff trained on UTVs and ATVs? Ann Marie said that it is in-house training. Do you have to have a motorcycle license to drive an ATV? No license is needed on the beach. Do you have any needs for safety equipment? Ann Marie said we are in a good place and have what we need. We may need to re-evaluate after the Coastal Resiliency Project. Chris Kelsey said the police department has access to drones for emergencies. He said that Sandy Neck could use a drone for safety issues. Bill Monroe stated the importance of labeling watercraft so if there is a question the owner can be contacted to make sure the vessel just got loose, and no one was in danger. Have we contacted anyone else who uses a jet ski with big tides and how they handle it? Ann Marie said she has contacted Horse Neck Beach, but so far has not been able to get with them regarding their procedure.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck

Attachments:



2024 Sandy Neck
Safety Solutions.ppt



Staff report.pptx