



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD
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Sandy Neck Board Meeting September 9, 2024

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on September 9, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the Selectmen's 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, Bill Carey, Maureen Piccione, Rene King, joined late, and Rich French.

Board Members absent: Bill Monroe.

Staff: Sandy Neck Park Manager, Nina Coleman, and Operations Supervisor, Donna Bragg.

Staff Member absent:

Council Liaisons present:

Barnstable Police Liaison:

Public: Wendy Paquette, Paul Berger, and Tonda Lamb.

Guest Speaker:

Act on Minutes:

On a motion from Rich French and seconded by Bill Carey, the Board voted on the acceptance of the July 8, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. Maureen Piccione, Rich French, and Tom O'Neill have been reappointed to the Board.

Correspondence: None.

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

- Beach continues to be busy. We had a wonderful year. Summation of activities to be presented later in the year.
- Very productive year. Plovers, turtles, and people did great. Robust revenue. Very few Sandy Neck emergencies.
- Gatehouse hours are now 9am-9pm daily.
- Fall Off Road Vehicle Permit are now being sold. They are at a reduced rate. Applications are online, Sandy Neck website, www.townofbarnstable.us/sandyneckpark/.
- Off Road Vehicle Beach is open 4.5 miles. Opened all the way a little early this year. We have been maintaining a daytripper only areas. That is where the portable toilets are located. One mile of daytripper only, campers can be in the remaining 3.5 miles of beach.
- Minimal staff remains as most seasonal employees have left.
- We have begun the removal of fencing in anticipation of fall storms.
- We had our jet ski on the beach for rapid response to situations. We did have lifeguards for some of the summer. Had some trouble with floaties. Light winds offshore of 17mph we require large floats. (lily pads), to be anchored down. Paddleboards and kayaks outside the surf zone, personal floatation device must be on board and children twelve and under are required to wear a personal floatation device. Offshore winds greater than 17 mph, no floaties are permitted. This information is conveyed via the My Barnstable APP as well as posted in various locations on Sandy Neck. Lifeguards manned two towers and participated in jet ski training. Maureen asked if no lily pads were included during the over 17mph south winds. Nina responded that they were not allowed if the winds were over 17mph. Maureen asked to clarify that lily pads are considered a floatie.
- Diamondback Terrapins are hatching out and crossing over into the Great Marsh. Cottage Owners are to be mindful when driving on the Marsh Trail.
- Donna spoke about the third annual Veterans picnic held at Sandy Neck. Great success with over sixty Veterans and their families participating. Tom asked if perhaps the Veterans would like to participate in the beach cleanup.
- Events: Hike for Terrapin Hatchlings was held on September 4th. Nina to lead the Fall Migration Hike on September 11th from 10am-Noon. Donna will lead the Coast Sweep beach cleanup on September 15th from 9am to Noon.
- Congratulations to Ann Marie Luppino, the new Sandy Neck Assistant Park Manager. Former Assistant Park Manager, Hannah Lawrence, has moved on and accepted the Director of Natural Resources position for the town of Bourne.
- Donna spoke about all the work Pete Sampou and his former students had done at the Halfway House. Pete consistently is out there repairing and keeping the Halfway House in good condition for use by not-for-profit groups that are permitted to use the Halfway House for their events. Nina said that there will be underserved students that she is in process of permitting to out get to the Halfway House to enjoy.

Old Business:

- **Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.** None.
- **Economic sustainability.**
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** None.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** Tom addressed the Board. *See attached report. Tom showed that the total, estimated funding needed for the project, will be \$6,597,426.

There has been some funding secured through grants. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, (MVP), has awarded \$2.833million in grant monies. The MVP grant will require matching funds of \$1,000,000, which is anticipated to come out of the Sandy Neck reserves. Nina stated that we have requested a grant for \$100,000 from Coastal Zone Management, (CZM), for this year and will be requesting a grant in the amount of \$2,000,000 in the spring, for fiscal year 2026. Nina spoke to the Board regarding other grants we will be going after throughout this process. Nina said this project is very complicated and we need to have the \$6,597,426 secured by the fall of 2025, to put out the Request for Proposal, (RFP), be competitive, and award a contract to get the project going. However, some of the timing of the grants awarded will not be coming in during the timeframe needed. What the Town of Barnstable has decided to do is to secure the whole \$6,597,426. Nina handed out the Town Council Meeting Agenda, with this item speaking to the securing of these funds through the town. This proposal has had its first read already. At the time of this meeting, the Town Council Meeting Agenda had not been set yet. Presumably this item would be on the agenda. The next Town Council Meeting is scheduled for September 19th. The General Fund is the backstop for the project to proceed. Nina is confident we can get the funding with grant monies. Nina explained how we got to the \$6,597,426 by the project being refined and cost increases. Each refinement was proposed, and a public meeting held regarding the changes. We are now at one hundred percent design. Nina spoke to the \$1,000,000 from Sandy Neck surplus already being secured. Funding discussion continued regarding debt service and the bond expiring for the Bathhouse debt in 2030. Nina said she will email the Board when the agenda for the Town Council Meeting becomes available.

- Nina had a meeting with Town Manager, Mark Ells. The Town Manager requested the Board vote on the premise that even though the town would be backing the project financially through General funds; the concept is that we are going to secure funding through grants and if there is a shortfall, user fees may need to be raised again. The Town Manager requests that this Board understands and votes that it is endorsing this concept of this loan from the town and will continue to pursue other avenues of funding. Nina indicated that there will be an updated presentation to show the Town Council what this money will be used for.
- **MOTION** (Tom O'Neil/Peter Sampou) that the Sandy Neck Board supports the appropriation and loan order in the amount of \$3,826,327 funds for the Sandy Neck Project and the acceptance of the MVP grant of \$2,833,849 and the Sandy Neck Board supports the Town Council appropriating that money to be used to back up the project pending further applications for grants that could also support the cost of the project. We understand that there might be parts of the project not funded by grants and we recognize that the potential for taking debt which would be funded out of the Enterprise Account is still a present issue and the Board will support that and anything we have to do to make sure we can financially support the debt for the project. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Business:

- **Election of Board Officers. *Taken out of order.** Tom explained the rules for voting. Anyone can be nominated by voice. You may nominate yourself. A second is not required. Pete Sampou nominated Tom O'Neill to remain as Chair of the Board. The Board voted by voice and Tom O'Neill and with Tom's acceptance, he will remain as Chair of the Board.

Tom O'Neill nominated Pete Sampou to remain as Vice-Chair of the Board. The Board voted by voice and with Pete's acceptance, he will remain as Vice-Chair of the Board.

- **Discussion of fees. *Taken out of order. *See attached report.** Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. Tom stated that in 2003 Sandy Neck moved into an enterprise account, hiring a Park Manager, (Nina Coleman), and began to run Sandy Neck as a business. One of the prominent issues was economic sustainability. This is why we have fee discussion fees. The team has come up with revenue ideas. Merchandise sales have increased over the years. Tom

spoke about the slide showing other similar beaches and the fees that are charged to patrons. The slide showing the usage of the Off-Road Vehicle Beach showed that Barnstable resident usage has remained flat while usage from Non-Residents has gone up. The next slide showed the other Off-Road vehicle Beaches and the fees for usage they charge. Tom stated that are not other beaches that have the number of amenities that Sandy Neck provides. Bill Carey asked about the last increase in fees and Nina provided the information from 2023. Tom said data provided and usage of the beach as well as the upcoming project notes that we need to increase fees.

- ***See attached.** Proposed fee increases include going from \$95 for Resident Off-Road Vehicle Permit to \$100. Non-Resident from \$220 to \$250. Cottage Owner from \$45 to \$50. Trailer from \$40 to \$45. Fall Resident from \$50 to \$60. Fall Non-Resident from \$100 to \$120. Winter Resident from \$20 to \$25. Winter Non-Resident from \$40 to \$50. Winter Cottage Owner \$15. Overnight camping. Resident Slide-On from \$11 per night to \$12 per night. Non-Resident Slide-On from \$22 per night to \$24 per night. Resident RV from \$15 per night to \$16 per night. Non-Resident RV from \$30 per night to \$32 per night. Chase vehicles from \$6 per night to \$7 per night. Tent camping per site from \$20 per night to \$30 per night. Horse Permit per ride from \$20 per ride to \$25 per ride. All remaining items no fee request change. Maureen recommended we consider instead of going up a dollar or two it should perhaps be five dollars instead for overnight camping on the beach. As a lot of time and effort goes into calculating, she thinks there is room to go up and as she is a camper she would have to issue with the fee change. Tom wanted to know if there was support not raise the Barnstable fees again. Tom spoke about the loss of revenue with Sandwich as their beach stickers are allowed at Sandy Neck and the agreement between Sandwich and Barnstable has not been changed in a long time. Staff has noticed for the last several years that more Sandwich residents come to Sandy Neck than Barnstable residents. Tom said we must do more work with data to confirm what is going on. Nina showed a slide showing the Sandwich contributions and comparison of amenities between Sandy Neck and the Sandwich beaches. There was a lot of discussion regarding the matter with Tom saying that this may be a situation where it is presented, and the Town Manager may not want to do something about it. Nina reminded the Board that there was just a vote regarding the Board regarding our debt load and this may be something we need to look at. This is a good time to look at this situation. We need to be respectful of Sandwich and their budget and the project they are doing. Nina made it clear we are not going after Sandwich, but it should be addressed. Rene said that it is important because of the resiliency project because money must be raised. Tom said he would work on it with Nina to see how we can go about this issue. Nina said that the \$54,000 we get from Sandwich does not cover the cost of service. Tom said that with the cost of the project for the parking lot, Barnstable is taking on all the cost.

Rich said that we should look at fees each year. Nina said it was on the agenda each year and can be looked at each year. Running of the beach costs are going up not just with the project but with the increase in service costs. Nina calculated that changing the fees would bring in an additional \$85,000 to \$100,000. Nina reminded the Board that one storm where would have to replenish sand would cost upwards of \$100,000 and we need to keep building the surplus for these potential events. Rich asked Nina to do another draft regarding fees incorporating what Maureen had recommended. Nina asked Maureen what she would like to see. Tom asked about raising Special Permit rates. Nina said we wish to be consistent with the rest of the town and reminded the Board that most of the time a fire permit is purchased at the same time, increasing the cost. Maureen proposes Resident Slide-on \$15 per night. NR Slide-on \$25 per night. Resident camper \$20 per night. Non-Resident camper \$35 per night. All chase vehicles \$10 per night. The Resident permit rate came up for discussion. Leaving it would make it three years since it has been raised. We will look at the fees again next year. Bill Carey asked Nina to show what the total would be by increasing the nightly camper fees. Paul Berger said that raising the rates would make Sandy Neck overnight camping fees would make Sandy Neck the most expensive overnight camping. Making Nauset the best deal. All of this depends on how much the beaches are open during peak season. Bill Carey asked about Nina providing a pro forma showing how much revenue in and how much spent to determine what is leftover to go into the Sandy Neck Enterprise surplus. Tom spoke about what is driving the fees and the project as well as expense is a large part of it. A pro forma is a benchmark just to make sure you are on the right path.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: Tonda Lamb addressed the Board. She had an issue with the cost of the fire permits as well as the number that could be sold per night. Nina responded that we have limited space for fires, and it takes a lot of effort to manage. We have costs associated with the public fire permits such as bathhouse remaining open, staffing and cleaning the trash and dead wood from the beach. There is safety concerns voiced by the West Barnstable Fire Department regarding the number of fires on the beach and that is why they are limited to usually ten permits nightly except for large groups which require a special permit as well. Large groups require a lower number of fire permit sales for that evening. Nina also pointed out that if you have an Off-Road Vehicle Permit, the campfire permit is included.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Secretary Pro Tem

Attachments:

 SNK Board 9092024 final.pptx

 2025 SNK Proposed Fees.pdf

 ORV Beach Pricing Matrix 2024.pptx

 September 9 – Staff Report.pptx

 Town Council Document.pdf