



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD
1189 Phinney's Lane
Centerville, MA 02632

Tel: 508-790-6272
Fax: 508-790-6275

Sandy Neck Board Meeting **November 18, 2024**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on November 18, 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, 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: Kris Clark.

Barnstable Police Liaison: Chris Kelsey.

Public: Wendy Paquette.

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 October 21, 2024, minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. He thanked all the Board members for showing up at the last Town Council meeting. The decision of the Town Council to back the Sandy Neck Coastal Resiliency Project by unanimous vote was huge milestone for Sandy Neck.

Correspondence: None.

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

- Gatehouse hours by appointment only.
- Off-Road Beach Vehicle hours are 8am-4pm.
- Off-Road Beach Campers must continue to make reservations to stay overnight, but there is no charge in the off-season. They must have an Off-Road Vehicle Permit to go on to the beach.
- No campfires are allowed on Sandy Neck.
- We are in cold-stunned sea turtle season. Should a patron find a turtle, please put it above the high-water mark, cover it with seaweed and place some kind of marker, (driftwood or stones, etc.), and call the Gatehouse at 508-362-8300. If you can't reach anyone at the Gatehouse, please call Wellfleet Audubon to report. Their number is 508-349-2615. We have had six turtles, five at Sandy Neck and one at Scudder. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Mass Audubon Wellfleet.
- We are having a Sandy Neck Merchandise sale. Please call the Gatehouse to make an appointment.
- Sandy Neck Merchandise is available at the Gatehouse.
- Upper Cape Tech has been engaged in a dune grass planting project as part of the Sandy Neck Coastal Resiliency educational outreach program. Sandy Neck has also engaged Barnstable High School, Environmental Technology with outreach, Nina also teaches at Cape Cod Community College and will be engaging with their Environmental Department.
- Sandy Neck Staff puts out a monthly newsletter which is available on our website. Nina will ask NRO Antonio Mancha to email the Board with the newsletter monthly.
- Fall hunting season has started. All hunters must sign in at the Gatehouse.

Old Business:

- **Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.** None.
- **Economic sustainability.** None.
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** None.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** None.

New Business:

1. **Annual SNK Report Presentation. *See attached report.** Nina Coleman addressed the Board. This is the annual Conservation report. Nina summarized the report. Revenue is up. Plover activity is up. Diamondback Terrapins are way up. Enforcement on the beach is average. Another great year. Cottage Owner Escorts are down. The presented report presents an overview of endangered species, enforcement and revenue items for Sandy Neck for the current year, 2024 and going back four years for comparison. In breaking it down there has been an uptick in plovers from 2022 and up to and including this year. Nina is not sure of why there is an uptick in plover numbers. We had 65 pairs this season with eighty-six chicks fledged. That is a productivity rate of 1.32 chick per pair. We always shoot for a 1.5 chicks per pair productivity rate. Bill asked about why the productivity rate isn't higher. Nina said there were many factors including predation. Rich asked about coyotes. Nina said we have a healthy population. Diamondback Terrapins exploded this year with 609 nests. With such a warm spring it has been hypothesized that some of the females may be nesting twice. We are tagging the nesting females, and we had a female that had already nested come up again. The lengthy stretch of warm and hot weather may have something to do with this. Geographically they are continuing to spread out in the vicinity. Terns did better this year, we had 143 pairs of Least Terns and 4 pairs Common Terns and 3 Oyster Catchers. Productivity is still very low.

Tom spoke about the Ospreys. The Gatehouse nest lost the first clutch and re-nested and fledged 3 chicks. Other nests throughout Sandy Neck did well also. We are seeing eagles more often. Sea Turtle stranding for the last year were 9 Kemps Ridley and 2 Loggerheads. We have 6 so far this fall. Wetland restoration continues with 25 plus isolated freshwater wetlands treated. Also, Salt Marsh was treated in selective areas. The violations were as follows: 33 written citations which is average. Very few alcohol related issues. 10 written warnings. 301 verbal warnings. Verbal warnings are staff interaction with the patrons and are used for educational purposes. Nina suggested that patrons watch the video provided on the website to avoid any issues on the beach. Officer Kelsey said he thought speed was up a little bit this year as well as not airing down. He didn't believe there were any arrests this year but will look through the log and during the January meeting he will report. Only 2 permit revocations and 0 no trespassing. Nina went on to speak about the financials. Revenue is up this year with a total of \$1,345,332 dollars. She shared the breakdown of the revenue earnings. One question was the beach parking fees collected from Sandwich which she will be checking into for accuracy. There was discussion regarding concession stand fees as well as Sandwich payment to the Town of Barnstable for parking. As both items are negotiated, discussion was tabled. All Board members agreed that the negotiations between Barnstable and Sandwich was worth looking into. Off-Road Vehicle Permits sold for the calendar year, Barnstable Resident 1,432 permits, Non-Resident 2,823, Property Owners, 110. Total Off-Road Vehicle Permits sold, 4,365. Total number of camping nights sold, both Off-Road and tent camping number 3,376. Property Owner Escorts, 11. Hunting, October 18th-November 27th, 336 pheasants stocked. Tent camping nights, 30. Two-wheel drive tests, 24. Special Permits sold, 35. Daily horse permits sold, 18 permits and 28 daily rides. Walks and Talks. 5 Barnstable Land Trust and 3 Mass Audubon. All walks and talks were in conjunction with Sandy Neck Staff. Beach clean-ups, 1 Coast Sweep with Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association and the public. 1 Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association with Sandy Neck Staff, and 1 Cape Cod Commission. Junior Ranger Program, working with the Recreation Department, Wednesday, July 10th-August 7th. Halfway House Permits, Cape Cod Art, and Sturgis. Two-night trips this year. Portable toilets on the beach, 8 units.

On a motion from Tom O'Neill stating the Chair of the Sandy Neck Board will write a letter to the Town Manager, Mark Ells highlighting the opportunity that exists with respect to the Sandwich yearly beach fees in light of the funding we are going to need for the project that is upcoming. Bill Carey seconded the motion. Bill Carey wanted to have a count of the Sandwich residents using the beach. Nina stated that we do not have that information and to do a count would put us another year out. Maureen said that based on the costs of services going up, that should be sufficient. Rene said that the costs of services are very tangible to provide. Nina said that she has done a cost-of-service evaluation many times and that this is a political issue to be taken up by the Town of Barnstable and Town of Sandwich Town Managers. Donna said it was about the increase in operating costs such as electric, trash, and staffing that has occurred over the years. The Board voted by voice and show of hands and the motion passed.

Nina revisited the Sandwich payment for beach use and said that looking at the financial from accounting, Sandwich paid \$55,500 for fiscal year 2024 for Sandy Neck Beach usage. The payment goes up 2.5% a year. Bill Carey asked to show the Sandy Neck reserves in the Revenue section of the report. Nina said she would be happy to include the reserves in the Revenue section of the report.

- 2. Vote on 2025 Sandy Neck Board Meeting Dates. *See Attached.** Tom asked that "Vote on Fees" be included for the October meeting for 2025 to which Donna said she will include. Bill Carey made a motion to approve the 2025 Sandy Neck Board Meeting Dates with Rich French seconded the motion. The Board voted by a show of hands and voice vote. The motion passed. Rich asked if the meeting dates would be set up on the calendar and Donna said yes it will be done in December. Chris Clark asked if Donna put the meeting dates on the Town Calendar. Donna said no. Once the meeting dates and times were set up, then it automatically goes on the Town Calendar.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Secretary Pro Tem

Attachments:



November 18th – ConComreport2024
Staff Report.pptx



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