



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD

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Sandy Neck Board Meeting October 20, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on October 20, 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, Bill Carey, and Bill Monroe.

Board Members absent: Rene King

Staff: Sandy Neck: Sandy Neck Park Manager, Nina Coleman, and Operations

Supervisor, Donna Bragg

Staff Member absent:

Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark

Barnstable Police Liaison:

Public: Paul Berger, Colleen Spero, Robert Bilodeau, Colleen Spero, Misti Hedges, Tracy Hallett, Dana Perry.

Guest Speaker: Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Barnstable Department of Public Works.

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Pete Sampou and seconded by Bill Monroe, the Board, by voice and show of hands, voted to approve the September 8, 2025, minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. The Town Council asked each Board Chars to appear and present a brief presentation on their Board's annual reports. The town is looking into the effectiveness of all Boards and Committees. Tom asked each Board member the approximate time they have each served on the Board. Bill Monroe, 11 years, Pete Sampou 22 years, Maureen Piccioni, 4 years, Rene King, 2 years, Rich French, 27 years, Tom O'Neill, 8 years, and Bill Carey, 27 plus years. Tom will need to present the reports from 2022 through 2024. The Town Council will be asking about how our Board functions.

Correspondence: None

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

- Gatehouse hours are 9am-9pm daily.
- Beginning November 1st, the Gatehouse will be closed and will be by appointment only.
- Through October 31st, Off-Road Vehicle Beach hours: 8am-10pm.
- Beginning November 1st, Off-Road Vehicle Beach hours 8am-4pm. Nina stated that later on in the meeting we would be discussing the Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project, and we would get to what the Off-Road Vehicle access will look like for the remainder of the year. Unfortunately, there was an error in reporting from the Cape Cod Times article. And we will have access throughout the year to some extent. Even around the project.
- Through October 31st campfires are allowed at sunset. No fires allowed as of November 1st.
- Speed limit on Off-Road Vehicle Beach is 15 mph.
- Cottage Owner trails are super soft and currently only Trials 1 and 6 are accessible. Donna said she would send an email out to inform the Cottage Owners of the trail situation. Donna said the Connector Trail is passable but rough.
- Donna spoke about the Sandy Neck Merchandise Sale. Merchandise sale is ongoing through October 31st from 9am-9pm daily. Discounted pricing, sizes are limited. We will see how much merchandise is left at the end of October and may hold a sale at Marine Environmental Affairs building. Dates to be determined.
- Nina spoke about the Coastal Resiliency Project. There is a QR Code that we are trying to direct patrons to learn about the project. Kelly Collop is here to speak about the project. We don't want to give the public all these different places to look for the information so the QR code will direct them to one place that will provide updates.
- Nina spoke about the groundbreaking ceremony which was held to kick off the project. It was fantastic and there is a video online showing the ceremony. There were several guest speakers. State Senator, Julian Cyr, Representative, Steven Xiarhos, Town Council President, Craig Tamash, and Town Manager, Mark Ells, all spoke at the ceremony. Nina spoke at the ceremony and said she wanted it to be from the heart and felt that all who spoke cared so passionately about Sandy Neck and their speeches were heartfelt. They all understand how important Sandy Neck is to this community, and how important it is to open space. Kelly said that Government Access has the speech online.
- Donna spoke about the success of the September Coast Sweep. Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association was invaluable in helping with the clean-up. They also provided a wonderful lunch for all the participants. We had over thirty participants, Tom and Rich French from our Board participated. We collected over two hundred pounds of trash and burnt wood from the front beach and Great Marsh Trail. The Board thanked MBBA for their continued support of Sandy Neck.
- Sandy Neck hosted the "Clam Crawl", which was a running event for the Massachusetts Officers Shellfish Association. The proceeds of the event go to high seniors as a scholarship. The event went well with Town of Barnstable Shellfish helping on their day off as well as Sandy Neck Staff. Nina would like to see it become an annual event.
- Nina reported on Damien Caron's Eagle Scout Project. The toy library exchange boxes are being built off-site and will be installed when we are ready to re-open the beach. The intention of the project is to recycle toys for other children to use to help cut down on the number of plastics on the beach and in the ocean. Tom asked Bill Monroe when he thought we should have Damien back in to speak with the Board. Bill said sometime in the spring.
- A large part of the Coastal Resiliency Project is scavenging plant material from where they are putting in the new parking lot. We had a group of students from Upper Cape Tech and staff bucketed several different species of plants they had pulled from the area. The plants will be heeled in and watered over the winter and then be planted in the spring. A lot of the trees cannot be transplanted as they are a tap root species, pitch pine is one example. The woody plants will be moved by a landscaping company. This woody material is mostly bayberry and beach plum. Some will be heeled in for the winter, and others will be transplanted right away. Once the plant material has been moved, the work on the new parking lot begins.
- Nina introduced our new Natural Resource Officer, Keely Ashe-Alex. We are happy to have her on our team, and she will be introduced to the Board at a future Board meeting.

Old Business:

Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.

- **Economic sustainability.** Included in fee discussion.
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** Bill Monroe said Ann Marie gave him a list of projects that would focus around the Lean-to and Halfway House, and he would get them to the Scout leaders for consideration.
- Pete Sampou led a walk on Sandy Neck for the Open Space walking weekend. He said there were six or seven people and they had the opportunity to see a Diamondback Terrapin hatchling. Pete also mentioned that he and Rich French had been out at the Halfway House doing some work out there working on the windowsills and they are committed to keep the Halfway House up and functioning.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** Nina Coleman addressed the Board. Nina is updating the Board on the project. They are creating a primary dune and are trucking in a lot of sand. The milling machine came in and milled the parking lot. This material is being stockpiled to become the base for the future lot. At the far east corner they have already dug into the virgin land. Once we move the plants they will begin working in that area. Nina described there will be a huge wide primary dune, then the parking lot and a secondary dune behind that. East of that will be a drainage basin. The best way to view the project is to go to the Access Trail. There should be no issues with the drainage basin filling up. In the center of the new parking lot there will be a rain swale. This work is being done per the regulations. We have had our second closure. The first closure was the lower parking lot and now the upper parking lot is closed. Both lots are now closed for construction. There is signage indicating there is no access to either parking lot. There is a large sign at the Gatehouse stating that both parking lots are closed. The Off-Road Vehicle Beach is still open.
- Donna spoke about patrons who still wish to walk to the beach. We have limited parking around the Gatehouse. Patrons may park in that area and walk the Great Marsh Trail to Trail 1 to access the beach. The other way to access the beach is to walk up to the Access Trail and walk down to the beach. Nina said the biggest issue is people would walk down the Access Trail to the beach and then walk up the new dune. She believes we have buttoned it down for the most part.
- Nina said the next closure is November 11th. The park will be closed in front of the Gatehouse. There will be fencing set up so patrons may still have access to walk the Great Marsh Trail and Cottage Owners may drive down the Great Marsh Trail to access their properties. There will be one parking lot by the Gatehouse. Kelly Collopy is here to speak about the outreach for this next closure. Rich French asked about the fat tire bike race usually held in the winter. Donna said she had contacted the race organizer, and they agreed there would be no race this year. Nina said that soon after November 11th they would be relocating the Gatehouse. There will be a little time that everything will have to be shut down for the move as it is a safety issue. We are not sure exactly when that is going to happen. The intent is to have the Off-Road Vehicle Beach open on the weekends for November, December, January, February, and March. Robert Our will secure their equipment at the end of their work week, and we will be able to provide one lane, even if not paved for access to the ORV for weekends. The ORV hours will be 8am-4pm weekends only. The only question is to when the Gatehouse is moving so there may be a weekend when we cannot allow Off-Road Vehicle use.
- Nina turned the meeting over to Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Barnstable Department of Public Works, for her to lay out the communication conduits for Sandy Neck. Kelly handed out a paper to the Board showing the communications summary. ***Please see attached report.** Kelly said her goal is to go over what communication tools are available to us, what have we done to date to support communications and outreach, and some of her recommended next steps based of the briefing that Nina has provided. There are a lot of tools for communication and outreach that we use. There are tools specific to the Department of Public Works that we have been leveraging, but she also works hand in hand with the town communications as well, with Director Lynne Poyant and her staff and with Barnstable Government Access to leverage all the town's communication systems. We have created a project website short link as well as a QR code. The project website is what they consider the source of truth. <https://bit.ly/sandyneckproject>
We have information on the town website and Barnstable Water Resources website run by the Department of Public Works. The website has been expanded to include coastal resiliency projects, as well as drinking water

and other water related information. There is also a dedicated newsroom on Barnstable Water Resources where we have a coastal resiliency tab with Sandy Neck-related communications. We also can reach people through email. Nina said she has contact for permit holders we can email, as well as the Cottage Owners emails. We also have the town's newsletter's distribution in the weekly e-news that we utilize. Barnstable Water Resources also has a email distribution newsletter subscription base that we can use. They have been pushing content out primarily through the town channels, but they can look at the additional email opportunities to utilize. Barnstable has its own social media channels and Barnstable Water has theirs, so we have been pushing content in both. We also have the My Barnstable Mobile App with over ten thousand subscribers. As far as press media we hosted the groundbreaking event and have been sending out formal press releases and updates. We are working with Heather McCarron of the Cape Cod Times to post a correction to their recent articles. Heather is going to continue following the project. One thing Kelly said has not been leveraged is the Public Meeting Space. Kelly produces a report to Town Council monthly regarding water issues and this is an opportunity to highlight the Sandy Neck Project there as well as the Town Manager's communication to Town Council. This is something she can work on with Nina and Amber Unruh to provide accuracy to the reports. Prior to the start of construction, they sent an Abutter letter out to set expectations of the project. This included expected noise from trucking sand in and the expected timeline for the project. We will be putting out additional communications as the project progresses. There is an additional Barnstable Water newsletter that will be going out this Thursday that will be dedicated to the Sandy Neck Project.

In continuation of communications as the project moves forward, all forms of communication that were mentioned before. Media releases with content and photos. We have a dedicated content creator who has been visiting Sandy Neck and taking footage for social media, continually sending out updates using Instagram reels and short videos, but also looking at packaging that and sending to the media to give them some more visual content. Using community engagement, the more face time we have, the better. Kelly coming to the Board meetings regularly or doing Zoom meetings to share updates. Also going to residential associations to talk with people face to face to give them information and hear their concerns or complaints and address them in real time. Kelly said she would take questions or comments at this time.

Tom said the report was very good and broadly addressed communications using all the various tools. He said he thought Kelly should come to all the Board meetings to continue updating everyone over the next few months. He also said it would be nice to tie the pictures that are being taken to the goals of the project. Kelly said Barnstable Town Access has a drone, Department of Public Works has purchased a drone and there are eight individuals who are currently being trained to operate the drone.

Rich said that timelapse would be great to show the progress. Donna said Robert Our has a drone operator and posted video on Facebook. Also, Barnstable Channel 18 has two drone operators and has been getting footage. Nina said that part of our problem is that people want to go up and see the progress. Kelly said with the footage on social media that it will provide the public with a look behind the scenes.

Bill Monroe said that a lot of Cottage Owners who are not Barnstable residents and an online forum may be a better way to engage them. The folks in the Cottage Colony tend to be non-traditional access times to their property and they are very used to coming and going whenever they want to go. If there are restrictions on when property owners can use the Marsh Trail, the clearer we can be, the better. We need to get in front of that so those that are driving long distances won't be surprised when they can't access their property. Nina said the Marsh Trail will be accessible for Cottage Owners and it is a different conversation from the recreational users. Nina said that we will use email as well as Bill Monroe and Kathleen Bresette to get information to the property owners. Kathleen uses her social media as well as email to reach out to them.

Tom asked Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association if they had a way to communicate with their members.

Paul Berger said they did and can reach out to the members through emails. Nina said we could get campers out on Fridays after the work is over, and we just need to work through that together. Bill Carey asked Kelly if she had been sending emails to Cottage Owners and Kelly said not yet but plans on sending emails out as soon as we have a more concrete schedule as to what the Gatehouse relocation looks like. Kelly said that she likes to do two weeks minimum in getting information out to where it needs to go. Nina said she needs to know when the Gatehouse is moving and to her understanding there will be a couple of days where it is up in the air, and all the equipment is around. She needs to know specifically so we can send information out.

Maureen asked if we had sent any information out to ORV Permit holders. Nina said once she locks down exactly the dates, that information will be emailed and a push notification sent to ORV Permit holders.

Tom said the sand trucks coming down through the neighborhood have been quiet.

The public was asked if they had any comments or questions regarding the project information that had been laid out in the meeting. Dana Perry asked at the completion of the project, would any information shared to the public to show the scope of the project. Nina said that it is part of one of our grants to provide information in the parking lot regarding the project and we are working on that. Nina said we have done a lot of outreach and have

gone into schools and colleges with a technical overview of this project which was part of our requirements with one of our grants.

Nina said everyone knows but she announced that we received the Coastal Zone Management, (CZM), grant for one million, seven hundred, seventy thousand dollars. Nina said we are doing well with the funding. We have already taken one million dollars out of surplus for a match for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP), grant which was two point eight million dollars, and with the CZM grant it puts us in a great position. We will have minimal debt service. Our debt service will be under one million dollars. There were nine bidders, and the winner came in at around five and a half million dollars. Nina said we are coming to Town Council this Thursday to ask if they will accept the grant which of course they will. This project is not Barnstable taxpayer money. It is funded by grants and the Sandy Neck Enterprise account. Tom said all the money expended by Sandy Neck is paid for by the Sandy Neck Enterprise account. Kris Clark asked when Nina goes before the Town Council on Thursday, will she make it clear that no funds for this project are coming out of the General account for the Town of Barnstable. Nina said she would be happy to do that.

- **New Business:**
- **Discussion on Regulation Changes.** Nina addressed the Board. There are no recommendations from staff to change regulations this year.
- **Discussion on Fees.** Nina addressed the Board. Nina had asked the Board last month to wait to see if we received the grant from CZM before discussing fees. As we have received the grant and will not have to supplement funding through a permit fee increase. We raised fees in 2025, and we generally look at an increase in fees every other year. Nina is not recommending a fee increase.
- There was a period when Nina wasn't sure what ORV access was going to look like during the project, and now there is a better understanding of what it is going to look like. Nina wants to discuss pro-rating 2026 ORV permits as that had been an idea when she didn't know about the access. January, February, and March, in the new permit year we will have weekend access barring any winter storms, and to be fair there is not a lot of ORV usage at that time of the year. In April, the plan is to be fully open, the ORV beach hours would still be 8am-4pm. At the very least we would still only have weekends but most likely at that time we would have every day. In May we are back on track for the upcoming season. Again, Nina cannot guarantee it, but that is the expected timeline. This is what Robert Our had told Nina as the plan for access. Nina said she does not see a need to prorate as we have this information. We can communicate when we send out the renewal information for the ORV permits, we would inform the applicants of the planned ORV operation for the winter months access for the ORV. Nina wants the Board to think about what she is saying and decide regarding the question of prorating the ORV Permits or stay with our current rate. Bill Carey said the impact will be minimal. Tom said we need to decide now. Maureen asked how many people purchase their permit in January to March. Donna said it is about twenty percent of the sales. Most who purchase in those months do not come out until the spring.

Public comment from Misti Hedges regarding permit pricing. She lives in Mashpee and finds it grossly unfair that she pays one hundred and fifty dollars more as a non-resident as a Town of Barnstable resident. Tom said that we benchmark the price based on the other beaches that offer Off-Road Vehicle Permits, also amenities provided by each beach. Sandy Neck offers more service than other beaches, some beaches you can't have a fire. You can't camp on some beaches, so we try to look at all the data. We went into this process deeply when we raised the rates a couple of year ago and we found we were way below the benchmark of all the other competitive beaches in this area, so we started to move the pricing up. Misti said it is the non-resident that has moved up not the Town of Barnstable residents. Tom said that is because Barnstable residents pay taxes to the Town of Barnstable. That is why we do it this way. We showed the numbers to substantiate the price increases back in 2009. We looked at the usage of the beach from that time to current. 2009 it was about fifty-fifty out of towners to residents. Over the years it has increased two to one of out-of-town use to Barnstable resident usage. We did a lot of benchmarking over the years and looked at cost of doing business. Then a budget is formed. What do we need to spend and what are our expenses versus our revenue and then use benchmarking to determine how we need to price permits to keep us competitive. Bill Carey said we needed to spend a million dollars to match one of our grants and that means that the money and gone and we must build our reserve account in case we need to purchase sacrificial sand and other things. Nina said we are still lower than other beaches. She pointed out that Duxbury non-resident is close to four hundred dollars, and we still have the lowest

fees. Kris Clark thanked Misti for her concern. She stated that although we are an Enterprise account, we are still using all the town infrastructure such as the Town Clerks Office, I.T. Department, GIS Department. Highway and other departments. The residents support the Town of Barnstable that supports Sandy Neck. Tom said we look at usage and are the non-residents dropping off because of pricing. So far, we are not seeing this.

- Nina went back to discussion of fees and stated that she does not see any reason to raise fees or prorate the ORV fees. She asked the Board to decide. Tom asked if we needed a vote. Pete said he is in support of keeping the fees and not prorating.
- On a motion by Tom O'Neill, the fee structure remains the same for the coming year, and fees will be as currently documented in our current regulations. Seconded by Pete Sampou, the Board voted by voice and show of hands to approve the motion.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck

Attachments:



Sandy Neck Board -
COMMS BRIEF - 10.2



October 20th
meeting.pptx