



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD

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Sandy Neck Board Meeting September 8, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on September 8, 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: Chris Kelsey

Public: Wendy Paquette, Paul Berger, Colleen Spero, and Robert Bilodeau.

Guest Speaker: Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works.

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Rich French and seconded by Bill Carey, the Board, by voice and show of hands, voted to approve the July 14, 2025, minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. We are making a change to the agenda and adding in the Notes for the Chair, Et al. This will make it a broader section so should any Board members have something to bring up, they may do so at this time.

Tom sent an email that originated from the Open Space Committee regarding three topics: water resources, conservation, and recreation. Rene King most likely attended last Thursday's meeting regarding recreation. Tom did not make the meeting on water resources, so he presented the questions to the Board for feedback and will send the conclusions from the Board to the committee. Some of the areas may relate to Sandy Neck. We are in the middle of one of the largest resiliency projects on the Cape and are tuned in on these issues. The last time the study was done was in 2018. What aspects of water resources are impacting Sandy Neck, and other parts of the town? Bill Carey asked about the study with Kris Clark explained the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan must be updated on a regular basis. The plan used to be updated every five years and now it is every seven years. The plan expired in August, so the Open Space Committee is trying to accelerate this evaluation and update the information from 2018. What is the town's plan for the next seven years, and who has the responsibility according to the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is in section nine, and it outlays what the plan was and who the responsible party was, and what must be updated. Kris felt it would be appropriate to put that the Sandy Neck Coastal Resiliency Plan is happening. The consultants and the town are working on the list from 2018 to see where all those items stand. There has been a large outreach to help identify what has been accomplished, what is still ongoing, and what still needs to be done. The town meets with a plan that the Town Council agrees to and then it is approved by the state to receive state funds for the projects.

Pete Sampou said he would like the Board to voice strong support for clean water in terms associated with town water resources. Barnstable Harbor has the benefit of Sandy Neck with little or no nutrients being added to the

water, which results in clean water system. This clean water results in robust shell fishing opportunities which brings money into the town. Pete said that it was important to maintain our resources for the benefit of all. Maureen asked Pete if he wanted to include water quality included in water management. He agreed. Sandy Neck should be the model for what the rest of the town should be concentrating on with our natural resources. Tom talked about the balance between conservation and recreation.

Bill Carey said we were a net positive on Sandy Neck with water quality. Tom said it was the challenges of the future. Rich said that one of the issues is the degradation of the Great Marsh. Tom said there was a study a couple of years ago on the Great Marsh. Nina said Great Marsh degradation is an issue and is a huge topic which ties into water quality.

Tom spoke about accessibility and the project spearheaded by Rene King and Sandy Neck staff to bring school children to Sandy Neck who had never had the opportunity to come to this beach. The program with the children was a success and will be built on in the future.

Pete said that others in the town should look at Sandy Neck as a role model.

Correspondence: None

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

- Gatehouse hours are 9am-9pm daily.
- Fall Off-Road Vehicle Permits are available through our website at, <https://townofbarnstable.us/sandyneckpark/> or at the Gatehouse.
- Off-Road Vehicle Beach is open all the way to 4.5 miles.
- Minimal staff left for the remainder of the season.
- Diamondback Terrapins are emerging from their nests and going into the marsh. We had 606 nests this year.
- Cottage Owners and guests are reminded to go slow on the Marsh Trail and look out for hatchlings.
- We have hatchlings in the garage if anyone would like to visit and see the hatchlings during business hours.
- If you encounter a hatchling, pick it up and move to the edge of the marsh.
- Events coming up:
- September 4th, 10am-Noon, "Hike for Terrapin Hatchlings." Massachusetts Audubon.
- September 9th, 10am-Noon, "In search of Terrapin Hatchlings" Barnstable Land Trust, let by Sandy Neck Staff.
- September 10th, 10am-Noon, "Fall Migration Hike."
- September 14th, 9am-Noon, "Coastsweep beach cleanup", with Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association.

Old Business:

Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.

- **Economic sustainability.** None.
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** Bill Monroe said there was nothing in the pipeline. He said it would be good to change how we do it and get a list together of needs for Sandy Neck to present to the scouts instead of waiting for them to come to us. Everyone thought it was a good idea. Bill Carey asked about the toy lending library and where the project stood. Donna said the scout raised all the money needed for the project and would send Ann Marie a list of materials to purchase.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** *See attached Report. Nina Coleman addressed the Board. Nina is updating the Board on the construction project about to begin on Sandy Neck and will be explaining the first stage. She introduced Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works. Chris addressed the Board. Chris is the Communications Assistant and reports to Kelly Collopy,

Communications Manager, Department of Public Works. Their main goal is public outreach, using as many platforms as possible for the duration of the project. Using different mediums to reach out to the public including videos, photos, and mailouts to keep the public informed. After Nina goes over the project, Chris will explain the methods they will be using for outreach.

- Nina said that Sandy Neck staff are very experienced in handling closures and getting the information out to Sandy Neck users and Chris and Kelly are experienced in getting information out to the public. Nina said she felt that this was a good team to navigate the complexities of this project with good communication. Robert Our, who won the bid, is coming out of the gate super-hot with and wants to move quickly to get the project completed to the point that in the spring there will just be the finishing touches to be done and no big construction. Nina showed a slide of the project. She said this is one winter of work to get everything accomplished. Starting September 22nd, Robert Our is going to deploy. Setting staging, ripping up asphalt. On the 22nd, we are handing over the lower parking lot to the Robert Our team. At that time, the lower lot will be closed to the public. Vehicles and pedestrians will not be allowed in the lower parking lot. The access from the beach to the lower lot will also be closed off to everyone. During the week, Robert Our will have barrels set up in part of the upper parking lot so sand trucks can gain access to the lower lot. This will make the upper lot parking spaces smaller in number. Robert Our will not be working on the weekends or holidays so the barrels and cones in the upper lot will be removed to accommodate more patrons. Officer Kelsey and Nina looked at the upper lot and when the barrels and cones are in place, there will be about forty parking spaces. The portable toilets will be moved to accommodate patrons. The Bathhouse will not be accessible during construction times.
- The next phase begins October 14th, the day after Columbus Day. Both parking lots will be closed at that time. There will be no vehicles or people allowed to walk up to the parking lot to access the beach. The closure is just past the Off-Road Vehicle Access Trail. People may park down by the Gatehouse where it is available and hike to the beach, either using the Access Trail or the Great Marsh Trail. The Off-Road Vehicle Beach will still be accessible for patrons with current Off-Road Vehicle Permits to drive on to the beach. The walking path to the beach will be inaccessible. Kris Clark asked if this information will be posted on the Sandy Neck website. Nina said that in speaking with Kelly, it was decided that all changes be posted to the story board on the Sandy Neck website:
<https://townofbarnstable.us/sandyneckpark/>
Paul Berger asked if the Off-Road Vehicle Beach would remain open. Nina said future timeline for the ORV would be discussed at the October 20th Board meeting. Colleen Spero asked if the air station would still be available. Nina said yes it would be available.
- Chris Gadd addressed the Board to explain the public outreach part of the project. Chris said they will use a media release which will go out by the end of the week. This will give general information about the project, as well as parking lot closure information. It will encompass the Off-Road Vehicle beach and Gatehouse as well. This will be for the first phase of the project. When the second phase of the project is coming up, there will be a media release detailing that closure information. A notice to all abutters regarding the project and timeline will be mailed out. It is essentially the same as the media release with more detail as an abutter to Sandy Neck, they may be more affected. This notice will also include construction times and what type of noise they should expect from increased traffic. They also use the My Barnstable App, free on Google Play or Apple Store. They will be reminding people multiple times. They will utilize social media, using the Town of Barnstable Facebook and Instagram as well as the Department of Public Works Facebook and Instagram. They also use the Barnstable E News weekly newsletter to pass along the information. Possible information flyers at the Gatehouse. Chris said if there is a way that we can think of putting the information out please let them know. Tom asked that should the benefits of the project could be included in the media releases. Chris said that information is already included. Nina said that Sandwich also needs to be kept informed. Tom said that the timing of the letter to have to go to the neighbors must go out immediately. Tom is sending out a notice to the neighbors. Bill Carey said there must be an end date. Nina disagreed with a firm end date as weather and other factors may delay and we cannot promise. Chris Kelsey reiterated that it is impossible to give an absolute date. Maureen said that Chris had stated that they have positive verbiage that they use to get through projects. Maureen said he covered this and did very well. Chris said he understands the concern with the timeline, but we can't anticipate everything. Rich said Robert Our is very familiar with Sandy Neck and will keep us posted as time goes on. Nina said there would be a groundbreaking ceremony sometime in September that the Board member should be on standby. Nina will be away so Donna will inform everyone of the date and time. Nina also said that we should be hearing from Coastal Zone Management, (CZM), soon regarding a grant we have out there. Kris Clark asked if the information regarding the project will be passed on to the Town Manager's office in time for the next Town Council meeting. Chris said it would. Kris asked Nina where the grant funding stands as Town Council approved the appropriation of funding for the project through the town. Nina said we should

know something any day now. Nina said she did not anticipate having an answer about the grant at the next Town Council meeting which is being held on September 18th.

- **New Business:**
- **Deer Hunt.** Nina addressed the Board. She stated that we are recommending that the deer hunt should be postponed until 2026 and then every two years from there. Maureen asked about the pheasant hunt. Nina said we should be fine with most of the pheasant hunt. Pete asked about informing hunters that there would be no deer hunt this year. Nina said we had a list of hunters we would get in touch with. Donna said we would also put it on the front page of our website as hunters are used to getting the deer hunt information from there.
- **Discussion on Fees.** Nina addressed the Board. We usually do fee hikes every other year and we did them last year. We have September and October to discuss and vote on any potential hikes. She would like to wait until October to discuss potential fee hikes as she would like to see how things go with the CZM grant.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: Robert Bilodeau, Paul Berger, and Colleen Spero addressed the Board. Robert said that he had been camping on Sandy Neck for fifteen years and had recently joined the Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association. His question/comments were about campfires on the beach for campers after October 31st. He was asking for consideration to have campfires for campers to be extended to the end of November and begin again fires again each April 1st. Nina said it is an off year for regulation changes, and this would require a regulation change. Nina said she works closely with the West Barnstable Fire Department regarding fires. Nina said is responsible for all fires on Sandy Neck Beach. The decision was made because staff are not there to oversee campfires from November 1st until May 1st each year and should there be a stiff on shore wind, the decision would be up to the camper themselves to make the correct decision. Tom said he thought we were the only beach that allowed fires at all. Nina said Race Point can have fires with an additional fire permit. Nina will take the request into consideration and circle back to the issue.

Colleen Spero asked about when fires were called off at 5pm due to high winds and the wind dies down can staff allow fires. Nina said of course and she trusts her staff to make the right decision.

Colleen also asked if there had been any water quality tests on the estuary by the Department of Environmental Protection on nutrient loading. Nina said there is a lot of water testing. Kris Clark said it goes to Dartmouth for analysis. Colleen asked if we could inform all permit holders of the project with the dates. Donna said we email everyone who currently holds an ORV Permit with information.

Rich wanted to let everyone know we are working on the Nate King memorial, and he should have information next meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck



September 8 – Staff C-100-Sandy-Neck-
Report.pptx Beach-Facility-Recor

Attachments:

