

Town of Kennebunkport
Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee Meeting
April 24th, 2023 ~ 6:00 PM
Village Fire Station Meeting Room, 32 North Street, Kennebunkport

A meeting of the Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee was held on April 24th, 2023.

Members participating in person were Paul Hogan (Chair), Pam Czekanski (Vice Chair), Carol Sherman, Barry Engel, Fred Stafford.

Mr. Jon Dykstra participated via Zoom.

There were 22 people signed on via Zoom for tonight's meeting.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Hogan called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The February 27th, 2023 Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

3. Committee Reports

A. Natural Resources

a. Plovers are Back and Spring Dog Rules

Ms. Sherman provided the plover report from the Maine Audubon Society noting there are 80 pairs of plovers recorded so far in Maine with Goose Rocks Beach having 7 of those pairs. There is a new seasonal biologist who will be working all season long with Maine Audubon and the stake and twine has been installed to protect the plovers' areas.

b. Spring Beach Cleanup / Dune Protection

With the offer of some volunteer help from Kennebunk High School's Environmental Action Committee, Mr. Hogan suggested the spring beach cleanup occur on two weekends in May to encompass the usual cleanup of debris, the staking and twining of the beach dunes, and if possible, the replanting of some of the dune areas that were hit badly with the winter storms. The cost of the dune grass replanting was estimated to be \$12,000.

Mr. Engel made a motion to approve spending up to \$12,000 for dune replanting. Ms. Czekanski seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Hogan added the Board of Selectmen will need to approve the expenditure and we are hoping to plant on the weekends of May 6th and May 13th, 2023.

c. Recommendation to fund Plover Coordinator

Ms. Sherman mentioned there is a vacancy to hire a new plover coordinator for the season to monitor the nesting plovers at the beach. Mr. Engel made a motion to fund \$5,000 for the plover coordinator position. Ms. Sherman seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. Dykstra reported he has met with a graduate student at the University of New England to possibly have him aid in creating more accurate 3D models of the dunes in the hope to be able to measure within a foot accuracy the amount of sand being moved from the dunes due to storms as part of his graduate thesis work.

There was a brief discussion about the dune grass and sand movement at the beach resulting from the many storms this past season.

B. Communications – Beach Brochure

Mr. Hogan announced the beach brochure will be reworked for this coming season to reflect the changes in the parking fees.

There were no other items brought up for discussion from the sub-committee.

C. Beach Overnight Storage

Mr. Hogan gave a summary on the issue of the growing number of kayaks and other watercraft being left on the beach overnight and the sub-committee's work thus far on this issue. Mr. Hogan proposed at tonight's meeting the Committee consider the following items:

1. Ask the Board of Selectmen to adopt a rule that no items may be stored in the dunes themselves.
2. Propose to do a survey of the boats during the course of the summer to get an idea of the real number of kayaks, dinghies, paddleboards, etc. that are left on the beach overnight.
3. Do an online public survey this summer to gauge how people feel about the kayaks left on the beach.
4. Have a vote tonight on whether we want the Trust to put out the kayak storage racks this summer.

Mr. Stafford offered his opinion to not put out the racks this year since there will never be enough racks to accommodate all the kayaks and if you can't accommodate everyone then don't do it at all.

Mr. Engel agreed with Mr. Stafford in not putting the racks out this year as well as doing a survey this summer to see what is really being left on the beach.

Ms. Czekanski agreed it would be helpful to have more data to make a better decision for the following year; adding the town is unlikely to do anything without some data behind the recommendations.

Mr. Dykstra added he is very much in agreement with everyone not to redeploy the racks this year, to collect the data, and have the survey this summer.

Ms. Sherman stated it is difficult for the Committee to take away privileges that people have loved but sometimes you must do the hard thing and there are better uses for the beach than storage of kayaks.

Mr. Hogan asked for any comments from the public.

Mr. Michael Martin addressed the Committee stating restricting the use of the beach violates the trustee duties of the town for the continued benefit of use and enjoyment as a public right. Mr. Martin also argued that the Beach Use Agreement is invalid and suggested the Committee hire an attorney to advise them. Mr. Hogan responded that the Town Manager Laurie Smith does a wonderful job in communicating with the town attorney and the town attorney is aware of what is discussed and comfortable with the town's legal position with respect to the Beach Use Agreement.

Mr. Todd Chisholm of 530 Kings Highway addressed the Committee to ask them to take into consideration the west end of the beach when discussing rules or restrictions.

A discussion among some members of the public audience and the Committee members on the Community Safety Officers and their inability to ascertain who are signers of the Beach Use Agreement and who are not when patrolling the beach.

Mr. Richard Driver addressed the Committee stating the issue of the kayaks on the beach needs to be separate from those that have moorings and are allowed to leave their dinghy or kayak to get to their mooring. Referring to Mr. Michael Martin's accusations and interruptions previously at tonight's meeting, Mr. Driver cautioned the Committee to hold every person who attends a meeting to the same rules of order and decorum.

Mr. Hogan asked if there were any folks on Zoom who wished to speak.

Mr. William Reid of 30 Wildwood addressed the Committee to voice his opinion in favor of reinstalling the kayak racks this summer to promote outdoor recreation, encourage community building, and avoid unnecessary damage to the equipment from being dragged back/forth to the beach.

Ms. Laura Gillis of 41 Timber Way stated her issue with the kayaks is there was a substantive amount of kayaks along with beach chairs, umbrellas, etcetera being left near Jeffrey's Way and thinks some policing is needed because it got out of hand last year.

Mr. Bill Casey of 272 Mills Road spoke in favor of having the racks for another year as it will keep people from leaving their boats in the dunes. Additionally, Mr. Casey was concerned if there were no racks, the traffic congestion of people loading/unloading their kayaks will only increase along Kings Highway.

Ms. Ann Dube called in to ask how the Committee changed their position from their earlier meetings in January and February. Mr. Hogan responded at the earlier meetings there were several proposals discussed but nothing was adopted, and tonight's meeting is to decide how to move forward for this season.

Mr. Dykstra noted that it is important to understand that when the racks were out last year, for every kayak that was on the rack, there 2 or 3 within close proximity that were not on a rack and were lined up in front of the dunes on either side of the racks along with chairs that were stuffed under all of those being stored.

For clarification, Mr. Hogan explained the first question the Committee needs to consider is whether or not to ask the Trust to put the kayak racks out this season. Mr. Dykstra made an important clarification that the Committee is not asking the Trust to put the racks out but rather the Trust is allowing our Committee to use their 25-feet of beachfront in which to put the racks on; adding it is not the Trust's decision to consider.

Ms. Maureen Sommers of 15 Wildwood suggested to the Committee to possibly add some language to the beach brochure encouraging folks to carry in/out and discourage leaving things on the beach. Ms. Sommers also stated her support in removing the kayak racks this year.

Ms. Kate Bauer Burke of Summer Breeze Lane suggested asking folks to put street numbers on the beach side of their house for the benefit of the CSO's and for public safety in the event of a medical emergency. Mr. Hogan and Ms. Sherman responded that the proposal has been brought to the Town's attention.

The public input portion of the meeting ended.

Mr. Stafford made a motion to conduct surveys this summer to get people's opinions on the carry on/off policy and to also perform an online survey for data compilation. Mr. Engel seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Engel made a motion to ask the Board of Selectmen to adopt a Beach Rule to prohibit public storage of kayaks or other items in the dunes. Ms. Czekanski seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Hogan asked the Committee members who are in favor of not putting the kayak racks out this summer. Ms. Czekanski, Ms. Sherman, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Engel, and Mr. Dykstra are in favor of not installing the kayak racks. Mr. Hogan opposed the proposition of not installing the kayak racks. The vote was 6-1 in favor of not installing the kayak racks this summer. Mr. Dykstra stated this is a decision being made by the Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee and not a decision being made by the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust.

4. *New Business –*

A. Comprehensive Plan Info for Beach Committee

Mr. Hogan mentioned each item from the Comprehensive Plan that fall within the Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee's area of concern such as natural resources, marine resources, protecting water quality, working with the Maine DEP on water contamination and to help preserve Goose Rocks Beach as a safe, limited-use, family-oriented beach.

B. Other?

The Committee members confirmed their next meeting will be May 15th, 2023.

6. *Adjournment*