

**Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**Monday, March 30, 2020**

A meeting of the Beach Advisory Committee was held jointly with the Board of Selectmen on March 30, 2020. In view of the restrictions on public gatherings, the meeting was held on a virtual platform (Zoom). Members of the Committee present were Richard Driver, Robert Sherman, Kate Bauer Burke, Jon Dykstra, Joanne Gustin, Jim Mulvihill, Sheila Matthews-Bull and Jennifer Wasserman.

Members of the Board of Selectmen present were Allen Daggett (Chair), Pat Briggs, Sheila Matthews-Bull, Michael Weston and Ed Hutchins. Also present were Town Manager Laurie Smith and Chief of Police Craig Sanford. Members of the general public were able to ask questions and offer comments virtually or by email.

Chairman Richard Driver called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm. The sole agenda item was the status of Goose Rocks Beach in view of the coronavirus pandemic and the actions taken by other towns in Maine and the State of Maine to close public beaches under their jurisdiction. Ms. Smith, Town Manager, described two options for the Committee to consider and referred to two alternative draft emergency resolutions which had been prepared by the Town's counsel and forwarded to Committee and Board members shortly prior to this meeting. One draft emergency resolution would close the Beach immediately. The other draft emergency resolution would authorize the Town Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, to take whatever actions deemed necessary to protect the public health and welfare, including but not limited to closing the Beach or limiting parking or other access to the Beach. Mr. Driver asked what criteria would be looked to in a decision to exercise the authority. Ms. Smith replied that several factors would be considered, including numbers of people utilizing the Beach, how well CDC guidelines on social distancing were being followed, and state mandates.

Mr. Driver then opened the meeting to comment by the Committee members. He stated that in view of the severity of the health crisis, he believed the Town should act proactively and close the Beach immediately. Mr. Dykstra and Mr. Mulvihill expressed strong agreement with Mr. Driver's position.

Ms. Gustin, Ms. Burke, Ms. Wasserman and Mr. Sherman all commented that in their view the Beach should remain open as long as possible for a number of reasons: the Beach is so large that it has been easy so far to follow social distancing rules and most people seem to be observing them; the Beach is a valuable avenue for exercise, fresh air and stress relief; the Beach provides a place for families with young children to allow the children fresh air and exercise; if the Beach is closed, people will resort to other areas for exercise (Cape Porpoise pier, Kings Highway sidewalk and street, Conservation Trust trails) that do not provide as much room for social distancing. All four Committee members expressed the view that the Beach should remain open but be closely monitored to see if an increase in population or lack of social distancing require closing it. They stated that measures such as reducing or eliminating parking be tried before closing the Beach. They therefore are in favor of providing the Town Manager in consultation

with the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, the authority to close the Beach or take other measures necessary for the public health.

Various members of the Board of Selectmen and the public expressed comments both in favor of closing and in favor of trying to keep the Beach open as long as possible. Possibilities discussed included opening the Beach only for a few hours on either side of low tide when the Beach is at its widest point; issuing 2020 resident beach stickers early and allow parking only to cars with a 2020 sticker; or allowing parking only to cars bearing 2019 resident stickers. Following discussion, none of these alternatives was deemed feasible.

Following lengthy discussion, Ms Gustin moved that the Committee recommend that the Board of Selectmen adopt the draft Emergency Regulation authorizing the Town Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Selectmen, to adopt orders and rules governing access to Goose Rocks Beach to protect the safety, health and welfare of the citizens of the Town. The motion was seconded by Ms. Burke. The motion was adopted with 6 votes in favor, 1 vote opposed and one member not voting (for technical reasons).

Mr. Mulvihill made a motion that the Committee should have another meeting to review the situation no later than April 17<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Gustin proposed that the date should be by April 13<sup>th</sup>. That amendment was accepted. The motion to have another meeting no later than April 13, 2020 was seconded and adopted by a vote of 7 in favor and 1 not voting (technical reasons).

The Board of Selectmen continued with their meeting and, after some further discussion and public comment, adopted the Committee's recommendation. Thereafter, upon motion duly made, seconded and adopted, the Committee adjourned at 8:00 pm.