

Town of Kennebunkport
Goose Rocks Beach Advisory Committee Meeting
October 19, 2020 ~ 6:00 PM
Virtual Meeting (Via Zoom)

A virtual meeting of the Beach Advisory Committee was held on October 19, 2020.

Members participating were Richard Driver, Kate Bauer Burke, Carol Sherman, Jon Dykstra, Joanne Gustin, Jim Mulvihill, Jennifer Wasserman, Mike Weston.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Richard Driver called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and performed a roll call of all members.

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Burke made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 31st, 2020 Beach Advisory Committee meeting. Mr. Mulvihill seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

3. Public comments on matters not on the agenda

Mr. Driver opened the meeting up for any public comments. There were no comments or questions from the viewing audience.

4. Update dune grass at west end of beach

Mr. Driver asked Ms. Sherman to provide an update on the dune grass at the west end of the beach. Ms. Sherman stated she has tried to contact the Rachel Carson Preserve with no response. Referring to the photos distributed to the Committee members prior to this meeting, Ms. Sherman explained an area approximately 25'x25' of the dune grass has been removed because of kayaks being left.

Ms. Burke commented there are still 4-5 kayaks remaining on the beach.

Mr. Driver explained there are two problems here; 1) is the kayaks are on Rachel Carson property, and 2) the town does not want to get in the practice of confiscating equipment left on the beach.

Mr. Weston suggested talking to the Town Manager on possible solutions. Mr. Weston also cautioned the kayaks are not on town property, so we do not have any authority to remove them from the Rachel Carson property.

On advice from Bill Yonkers, Ms. Sherman commented there is a 30-foot public Right of Way there and the kayaks may technically be on that Right of Way.

There was much discussion on this subject amongst the Committee members. Mr. Weston cautioned it is not the town's problem if the kayaks are left on private property and they have no authority to remove anything from private property.

Ms. Sherman also raised the concern that the area where the kayaks were left has removed much of the dune grass and asked what can be done next summer to protect the dune grass.

Mr. Weston volunteered to determine where exactly the Right of Way is on the west end of the beach.

Ms. Wasserman suggested putting stake and twine around the dune grass area to protect it.

Mr. Mulvihill questioned if the town has an ordinance that states you can not leave kayaks on the beach overnight, why then is it not enforced?

Ms. Burke gave a summary of the staking of the dune grass on the east end of the beach noting it was accomplished with a minimal number of committee members and community members. The effort to stake the dune grass combined with the kayak racks has had a big benefit to helping the dune grass grown, Ms. Burke added, and should be continued in the future.

Ms. Wasserman added she has spoken to a number of people who said they would have helped if they had known about the conservation effort. Ms. Gustin suggested asking the high school to post a notice to their students as they are always

looking for volunteering opportunities. On that note, Ms. Burke suggested perhaps combining the dune grass staking on the same weekend when there is a beach clean-up.

5. *Beach report: traffic, distancing, parking violations, dog violations*

Mr. Driver reported the following statistics from the end of the season report he received from the town office:

- Violations: Parking – 885, Dog – 38 (up from 19 in 2019)
- Fireworks violations – 2
- Beach fire complaints – 1
- Citation of owner for violation of dog ordinance – 1
- Tags issued for storage of equipment that impeded walking – 76
- Parking stickers – 7,676 total sold, collected \$157,000
 - 2,750 resident stickers at \$5.00/each
 - 4,600 daily passes
 - 166 weekly passes
 - 114 seasonal passes
 - General Store sold only daily stickers totaling 2,200.
 - Town Hall sold nearly 3,000 stickers with 2,500 stickers being sold at the kiosk.

Mr. Weston commented the total dollar amount generated from parking passes sold was down \$47,000 from last year.

6. *Discussion on signs at GRB*

Prior to tonight's meeting, Ms. Burke provided photos of the signs at each of the entrances to the beach. Ms. Burke and Ms. Sherman gave a summary of the different signs at each access point and shared the photos on the screen for the viewing public. In conclusion to their presentation, Ms. Burke stated there is no consistency to the signage, the messages they are trying to convey are confusing, and the number of signs make the area cluttered and render the messages ineffective.

Ms. Burke questioned the effectiveness of having all the information on one sign as it may make it difficult to find the information you need and suggested perhaps using QR codes that people could download on their phone.

The Committee members had a discussion on the content, number, and appearance of the signs at the beach. Ms. Sherman suggested having only 2 signposts where the signs are changed depending on the season and make each sign consistent in size and wording.

The Committee members agreed the signs serve a purpose and are necessary but should be streamlined to be more effective. Mr. Driver asked the Communications Sub-Committee to compose a recommendation to be presented at the next Beach Advisory Committee meeting.

Mr. Dykstra recommended the Communications Sub-Committee ask Bethany Jordan to assist with creating the new signs.

7. *Discussion of dog ordinance*

In response to a number of complaints from folks who don't want to be accosted at the beach by dogs and from emails from Linda Hannah, Mr. Driver offered a change to the current dog ordinance as follows:

- June 15th to September 15th
 - 6:00am-7:30am – Dogs allowed on beach **off leash**
 - 7:30am-9:00am – Dogs allowed on beach **on leash**
 - 9:00am-6:00pm – **NO** dogs allowed on beach
 - 6:00pm-Sunset – Dogs allowed on beach **on leash**
- September 16th to June 14th
 - 6:00am-8:00am – Dogs allowed on beach **off leash**
 - 8:00am-Sunset – Dogs allowed on beach **on leash**.

Ms. Gustin suggested changing the off-season date to Labor Day weekend rather than September 15th.

Ms. Burke agreed with Mr. Driver's suggestion noting there is much more intensive use of the beach and there are far many more dogs loose on the beach than in years past.

Ms. Wasserman asked how much of the complaints were people not following the dog rules as stated versus people following the rules and not liking them.

A suggestion was made to have a designated area of the beach just for dogs and a discussion ensued about the location and legality of such an area.

Mr. Driver reminded the Committee members that whatever the Committee decides it needs to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen early in the new year in order to be put on a warrant for a town vote to amend the dog ordinance.

Mr. Mulvihill stressed the importance of enforcement, citing the Community Safety Officers must be scheduled during those times to enforce the rules.

Mr. Weston offered his opinion that the town work with the ordinance that is already in place and suggested perhaps having a dog advisory group similar to that at Gooch's Beach in Kennebunk who patrol the beach and remind people who violate the ordinance.

For reference, Mr. Dykstra shared a comparison of the dog rules on several coastal beaches in Southern Maine.

Ms. Sherman suggested dogs need to be on-leash at all times while at the beach adding Gooch's beach in Kennebunk doesn't have plovers which needs to be a consideration if the dog ordinance is to be changed.

The Committee members had a lengthy discussion on the current dog ordinance.

Mr. David Stievater of 4 Skyline Drive addressed the Committee stating in his opinion there is no real enforcement of the dog rules and would be in favor of extending the time for dogs in the morning during the summer to 9:00am rather than 8:30am.

An audience member suggested some people may want to be able to have their dogs off leash longer in the off-season.

Mr. Dykstra suggested allowing dogs off leash until noon during the off-season.

Mr. Driver asked for a show of hands who thinks the dog ordinance should be changed. Mr. Weston was the only Committee member who did not raise his hand.

Ms. Burke, Ms. Gustin, Ms. Wasserman, and Ms. Sherman volunteered to compose a change to the dog ordinance to be presented to the Committee at the next meeting. Mr. Weston offered to provide the Committee with the deadlines for getting such an amendment onto a warrant for a town vote.

8. *Other business*

There were no other topics raised for discussion at this time.

9. *Date for next meeting*

The Committee members agreed to hold a meeting in December in the Zoom format. The exact date will be determined by the town offices and the availability of the videographers.

10. *Adjourn*