



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD

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Sandy Neck Board Meeting

August 10, 2026

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on August 10, 2026, 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
Tina Carrington
Rich French

Council Liaison:

Gordon Starr
Kris Clark

Barnstable

PD Liaison:

Chris Kelsey

Roll Call:

Board Members present by roll call: Tom O'Neill, Bill Monroe, Rich French, Bill Carey, Maureen Piccioni, Pete Sampou, and Bill Carey, (late).

Board Members absent: Tina Carrington

Staff: Sandy Neck: Sandy Neck Assistant Park Manager, Ann Marie Luppino, Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor.

Staff Members absent:

Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark

Barnstable Police Liaison:

Public: Paul Berger

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Rich French and seconded by Pete Sampou. the Board, by voice and show of hands, voted on the May 11, 2026, minutes. The vote passed.

Notes from the Chair, Et al: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. There was a notice sent out from the town stating that Town Hall would be inaccessible from September 8, 2026, through the end of December 2026 due to the installation of a new elevator. The notice stated that Boards and Committees could either not have meetings or conduct their meetings via Zoom. Sandy Neck Staff and Tom looked at the Board Meeting calendar. We have some items of importance to get through before the end of the year. Donna said in September we have a discussion on fees, and we could batch that together with regulation changes. Ann Marie said the thought was to have the meeting in September regarding fee changes and regulation changes and skip October and in November vote on fees and vote on regulations changes as well as presentencing the Sandy Neck Annual Report. The only other item will be a vote on 2027 Board meeting dates. Rich French asked for clarification, and it was given.

Correspondence: *See attached. Donna said there was a notice from the town regarding the elevator that she sent out with this month's agenda and May 11, 2026 minutes.

Staff Report: Ann Marie Luppino addressed the Board. * See attached report.

- Currently the Off-Road Vehicle Beach, (ORV), is open 4 miles, to Trail 5.
- All vehicle may park parallel or perpendicular with their headlights facing the dunes.
- Property Owners are using Trails 1, 2 or 5, or getting an escort to Trail 6.

- Gatehouse hours: 8am-9pm.
- ORV Beach is open from 8am-10pm. Curfew at 10pm for the rest of the season until October 31st
- Campfires are allowed.
- Speed limit on the ORV is 5mph. Speed is an issue and we have put up more signage and are doing a lot of patrols. Bill Carey asked about the closure at Trail 5 and assumed it was for a tern nest. Ann Marie said it was very active past Trail 5, and we are monitoring the nest to see if it was going to hatch out.
- **Re-cap for the 4th of July weekend.** The ORV beach never reached capacity. We were open to 0.8 miles. We had a little more beach than we typically do, it is usually 0.5 miles on the 4th. The big day of the entire weekend was July 3rd, on Friday. Very busy and a lot of staff stayed past their regular shift times to help. Staff were very attentive to the ORV, and we received a lot of positive comments from beach patrons.
- During the entire weekend we had three calls to Emergency Management system, (EMS), and West Barnstable Fire Department responded to all three incidents. We only had one transport to Cape Cod Hospital. Ann Marie thanked the staff for all the hours they put in to make the weekend possible.
- Kris Clark asked how the landscape changed with Barnstable Police Department now that Chris Kelsey has retired. Ann Marie said we still had a lot of police presence that weekend with detail shifts. There were multiple shifts for Thursday through Monday, and all the shifts were filled. We have a new Barnstable Police Liaison, and we worked with him this summer to get the shifts filled. Tom asked if we could get him to join the meetings. Ann Marie said we would.
- Tom commented on fireworks on the beach. Tom said staff did a good job but before the 4th of July, there was no mention of fireworks. He feels it is a dangerous situation with fires on the beach and propane cookers. Tom feels that at some point there will be an accident regarding fireworks and as Chair of the Board he has been saying this for years about the potential danger of fireworks on the beach. He said it is not staff; it must be something more than that to make an impact. He feels it is a disaster waiting to happen. He sent Nina a note about it and as a Board there must be something we can do about it. Donna responded that we put the police and staff in the problem areas every year, but we can't control every single person that has fireworks. Donna said that it would take a huge number of staff. Ann Marie in charge of safety and she targets where we have a problem. Tom felt that all user groups like the Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association and the Cottage Owners should be talking about it with their people as well as other user groups. Tom said maybe there should be a few arrests to let people know we are serious about it. More communication is needed. He wonders if it is a town responsibility to take this on more seriously. Tom asked Kris Clark how it works on other beaches. Kris said Barnstable has moved to doing a drone show in Hyannis in part in deference to the plover concerns. Kris said she was watching the 4th of July shows from around the country and a lot of places are now shifting to drone shows instead of fireworks. Not is it for the safety of the plovers, but also for dogs and wildlife. Also, for people with PTSD. Rich said fireworks are so dangerous and that is why they are illegal in Massachusetts. Rich doesn't think there is a way to stop all of it. Bill Carey said he thinks it is an enforcement issue. Obviously not something staff can deal with. Ann Marie said there are so many on the 4th of July that have fireworks and it would be a dangerous situation for staff. The discussion continued. Donna said the police are spread-out all-over Barnstable for crowd control during the 4th. The Board discussed what other towns are doing. None of which would work at Sandy Neck. Tom suggested we don't have campers for the 4th of July. Ann Marie said Sandy Neck has a fine of \$50 for fireworks anywhere in the park. Bill Monroe said a task force was set up years ago with the fire departments and the police department to implement ways of handling these situations and it did cut down on some issues. Ann Marie said West Barnstable Fire Department is very involved with Sandy Neck. Over the 4th of July weekend they had their Humvee stationed in our garage and did two patrols daily with their forestry truck. They also have our radios for direct communication with Sandy Neck Staff. Ann Marie said we begin our work with both the police department and fire department well before the 4th of July, so everyone is on the same page. Tom said the town should be interested in risk management and mitigation of risk. And if something does happen, we will have to become more draconian in our approach to the situation. Bill Carey said there is a risk and if something happens it falls on Sandy Neck Staff and the Board. Bill asked about signage on Sandy Neck regarding fireworks. Put

signage right at the Gatehouse. Ann Marie said we have a lot of regulatory signage at the Access Trail as well as at the beach entrances, but we don't have signage specifically regarding fireworks. It is a suggestion that we will investigate. Ann Marie asked the Board if we should have signage around the 4th of July; how would we enforce it? That would be the conversation we need to have with all the agencies involved. Kris suggested we do signage showing fireworks are prohibited and should a patron choose to light them off and are caught, they would lose their beach privileges for a year. Make it a severe penalty. Then do some spot enforcement. This would have to be done with policemen. Tom said it is a town issue, and it is a concern of staff. Tom doesn't think it is up to us to come up with something, it is a matter of the town to decide on what is to be done. Bill Carey suggested that a letter of concern be sent to the Town Manager. Pete said we have a unique situation here with campers and combustible materials and that needs to be made aware of. Ann Marie reminded the Board that we have specific ways that patrons must park, and campers get a thirty-foot space per camper. Rich French said that we must bring it to the Town Manager because of the liability. Bill Monroe said it is also a staff safety issue. Tom said he would write the letter and circulate it to the Board and when everyone is happy with it, he will send it to Mark Ells on behalf of the Board. Kris Clark asked if Tom wanted to make a motion and bring it to a vote about the letter.

- Tom made a motion that he would write the letter to Mark Ells highlighting a risk concern that the Board has regarding fireworks on Sandy Neck. He will circulate the letter to the Board and Nina and once everyone agrees, he will send the letter to Mark Ells. Pete Sampou seconded the motion. By voice and a show of hands, the Board voted. The motion was passed.
- Ann Marie continued with the Staff Report regarding the 4th of July. Due to the new configuration of the road and the parking lots, we went into a parking lot closure around 10:30am, and we were out of the closure by 3pm. For context, Ann Marie said any other year we would have been in a parking lot closure from 9am until 5pm. The new lines in the parking lot made it clear where people could park and they were not parking anyway they wanted to. We broke the ORV into sections. We had a camper section that was just for campers and their chase vehicles and that was done through reservations. We were at capacity in the camper section. Campers had to park within a coned area, either with headlights facing the dunes or the water. Each camper had a thirty-foot space in which to park. The camper configuration was done through meetings with WBFD and staff. We had a daytripper only area where campers could not park.
- In June and July, we had two walks with Barnstable Land Trust. One was In Search of Diamondback Terrapins which went well this year. Last year during the walk there were no terrapins at the time for walkers to view. This year we got to see five nesting females and got to see a nest that was laid in the middle of the Great Marsh Trail. That walk took place in June. In July we had a plover walk. Donna and Seasonal NRO Kara Clyburn took participants out in trucks to the nesting areas to walk and see the plovers nesting. Very informational and everyone enjoyed it.
- All plover chicks have fledged. We had sixty nests with fifty-seven chicks fledged.
- We currently have three active tern nests on the ORV corridor. Two of the nests are in bump-outs and patrons can't drive past a bumped-out area. We have one nest past Trail 5 in a bump-out also. If any of these nest's hatch, we will be going into a closure and escorting campers past those areas. We sent out a PSA when we opened to 4 miles regarding that situation.
- We had less re-nest this year. We have a higher predation rate between Trails 2&4. Coyote and crows.
- **Upcoming Events:** September 9th, we have a walk with Barnstable Land Trust, Hike for Terrapin Hatchlings. This hike is from 10am-Noon. September 13th from 9am-Noon we have our CoastSweep beach clean-up with Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association. Public is invited!
- We haven't received the instructions for the Zoom meetings yet, but Donna will be sending out the information once we receive it.
- Bill Carey asked about an estimate of how many people we must turn away for a parking lot closure. Ann Marie said we don't have that number, but now with the new configuration we can queue up eight vehicles and most people come back to get in the queue.
- **Old Business:**

- **Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines** Tom addressed the Board. Now that the big project is complete, it might be a good time to reflect on what worked and what didn't. What would we have done differently? What did we learn? During one of our meetings where we don't have anything on our agenda, we may want to spend some time on this subject. We talked about speeding on Sandy Neck Road and will discuss some possible solutions. Kris said Town Council has been discussing the speeding issues throughout the Town of Barnstable. The discussion centered around the fact that signs don't slow people down, tickets do. Kris said that if there is a day that things are slow in the town, we might get a police officer to sit somewhere on Sandy Neck Road and write out tickets. Donna said that might be a good discussion with our new police liaison. Bill Monroe asked about the parking where the Gatehouse used to be. He noticed there were staff parking there and he wanted to know if there was still hiking parking. Ann Marie said that there was. We have one designated parking area for hiking. We talked about our crosswalks, and we put up a mirror for visibility for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Economic sustainability.** Tom said he has asked Maureen to come up with some ideas to generate income. Tom said the Board needs to get back on top of big picture items.
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** Tom asked Rich about the boulder engraving for Nate King. Rich said they have come up with another idea to make a plaque at the compressor building that can be added to. Rich is waiting for Tina to come back to further discussion. Tom asked if it would be appropriate to send Gordon Starr a letter from the Board thanking him for his service to Sandy Neck. Tom will write the letter.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.**

New Business: Election of Board Officers

- Nominations for election of Board Officers: Anyone can nominate anyone for Chair and Vice Chair. Tom is currently the Chair and Pete is currently Vice Chair. Rich French made a motion to keep both parties in the positions they currently hold. Bill Carey asked for further discussion. Bill asked if Tom and Pete were happy to continue in their role as Chair and Vice Chair. They both said they are willing. Bill Carey seconded the motion and by a show of hands and voice vote, the motion passed.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck

Attachments:



August 10th – Staff memo to dept
Report.pptx heads elevator 07 05