



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD
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Sandy Neck Board Meeting **February 9, 2026**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on February 9, 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
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, and Bill Monroe.

Board Members absent: Rene King and Bill Carey.

Staff: Sandy Neck: Sandy Neck Park Manager, Nina Coleman, Assistant Park Manager, Ann Marie Luppino, and Natural Resource Officer, and Keely Ashe-Alex.

Staff Member absent: Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor.

Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark and Gordon Starr.

Barnstable Police Liaison: Chris Kelsey

Public: Peter Levine

Guest Speaker:

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Bill Monroe and seconded by Pete Sampou, the Board, by voice and show of hands, voted on December 8, 2025, Board minutes. The vote passed.

Notes from the Chair, Et al: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. Tom said there would be a guest speaker for the March 9, 2026, Board Meeting, Vice-Chair, Pete Sampou. Tom had sent out a water quality report to the Board Members that addressed the water quality on Cape Cod. Tom found it an interesting report, particularly relating to the open water around Sandy Neck. Tom said that at last Board Meeting, guest speaker, Peter Eleftherakis, Co-President, Friends of Barnstable Harbor presentation regarding water quality should open our eyes to what is going on around us with the water quality surrounding Sandy Neck. Tom is always looking at options to talk to people who are working on issues that are related to Sandy Neck. Tom thought the report was very interesting and has asked our resident scientist, Pete Sampou to break the information down in plain English and take us through an overview of the report and how this information pertains to Sandy Neck.

Correspondence: Letter of thanks to Peter Eleftherakis for his time and presentation at the December Board Meeting. * See attached.

Staff Report: Nina Coleman addressed the Board.

- Nina introduced Sandy Neck Natural Resource Officer, Keely Ashe-Alex as a new member to the Sandy Neck Staff. Keely addressed the Board. Keely spent many years in the medical field and then decided on a change of career. She went back to school and into Environmental Science. She went to Cape Cod Community College for two years and then she received her degree from Southern New Hampshire University. Keely worked in various positions; she did some shorebird monitoring at Nauset. She worked with Diamondback Terrapins at the Coastal Wildlife Alliance. She also worked for the USDA and Massachusetts DCR. It has been quite a journey to get here, and she loves the crew and this place.

- Nina said Keely is going to take on the shorebird piece and help supervise the younger staff. We are happy to have her on board.
- **Ann Marie addressed the Board and gave the Staff Report. *See attached report.**
- All 2025 Off-Road Vehicle Permits expired on January 15, 2026.
- All purchased 2026 Off-Road Vehicle Permits will be mailed out until further notice.
- Gatehouse is closed due to construction.
- The parking lots are temporarily closed due to construction.
- The Off-Road Vehicle Beach is open on Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting. Check the website <https://barnstable.gov/sandyneckpark/> for updated information. We also are sending out updates through push notifications.
- When the Off-Road Vehicle Beach is open, there are NO fires allowed.
- Nina explained that at this time, all Trails are iced in. For Cottage Owners, there really is no access until we have a change in the weather, and everything begins to melt.
- Rich asked if there we any snowy owls. Ann Marie said we did have one, but it didn't stay long.
- To obtain an Off-Road Vehicle Permit, you need to visit the Sandy Neck website at, <https://barnstable.gov/sandyneckpark/>, click on the link on the front page that says Sandy Neck Off-Road Vehicle Permits, click here. On the next screen you will click on Permits/Licenses/Certificates, then click on Sandy Neck ORV Permits. There you may apply for your permit. Please remember to fill out the online application completely and click on "save" at the end of the application. From there you will receive an email from staff indicating if your application has been approved or rejected. If rejected, you must go back into the application and fix the errors. Once approved, an invoice will be emailed to you for payment.
- Website updates. All access information is updated weekly.
- Sandy Neck Walks and Talks will be posted to the Town of Barnstable website this month.
- Seasonal Sandy Neck employment opportunities will be posted to the Town of Barnstable website.
- Later this month, Sandy Neck staff will present to Barnstable Innovation School third graders on Diamondback Terrapin Conservation ahead of their spring field trip to Sandy Neck. This is part of the Sandy Neck Relocation Project for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, (MVP), grant.
- Videos showed the progress of the Sandy Neck Relocation Project. This included new location of the Gatehouse, the new shed at the Access Trail, and the parking lot reconstruction. ***See attached report.** Tom and Rich said to take a tour with staff if Board Members get a chance. It is impressive. Pete asked if the tours were on weekends. Nina said the tours are not open to the public. Nina said Board Members can reach out to her to arrange a tour. Nina said the tours would be available to the Town Council also.
- Scout Eagle Project update. Damien has finished the library lending boxes along with signage. The installation of the lending library will take place when the parking lots open sometime in the spring. Bill Monroe said that the project is ready to be delivered and he has paperwork to be signed. Ann Marie said she would be meeting with him this Wednesday. Damien is keeping the lending library through the winter while the construction is ongoing.

Old Business:

Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.

- **Economic sustainability.**
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** None.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** Nina Coleman addressed the Board. She said she feels the project is going well. We chose a difficult winter with weather issues. She has been told we are still on time. There is a lot of activity going on. The big wait is for the pavement facility to open in April. Bill asked about the video showing the road going in front of the Gatehouse for oncoming traffic. He asked if there will be a road behind the Gatehouse to accommodate outgoing traffic. Nina said that there will be a road behind the Gatehouse

that right now is just sand. The north-going road will have two lanes and some parking. The south-going road will go behind the Gatehouse. There will be some challenges to keep patrons in the correct lane. Bill asked about staff safety and Nina said staff will be able to interact with patrons from a platform and there will be lighting and bollards put in place for protection. The crosswalk will be going in front of the Gatehouse and will be well marked. Tom spoke about the importance of safety, and it is everyone's responsibility.

- **New Business: Sandy Neck Safety Presentation: *See attached report.** Ann Marie Luppino addressed the Board.
- General information: Number of Off-Road Vehicle Permits sold. Resident, 1,508; Non-Resident, 2,619; Property Owners, 111. Number of camping nights 3,118. Numbers over the past few years have remained steady.
- Incidences of aggressive behavior: 7 incidences of aggressive behavior in total. 3 incidences of aggressive behavior towards staff. 4 incidences of aggressive behavior towards beach patrons. 1 domestic incident. 1 assault. 7 police responses. 0 arrests. Tom asked Chris Kelsey how Sandy Neck compared to the rest of the beaches in Barnstable. Chris said he did not know he would have to pull the reports for all the other beaches. Sandy Neck is the only beach in Barnstable where police are assigned on a regular basis on weekends.
- Verbal warnings. Ann Marie pointed out there were 23 verbal warnings for Permit Required. Most occurred between January to March regarding patrons who had not applied for the 2025 Off-Road Vehicle Permit. The remainder were picked up by our new license plate recognition reader we have installed. Chris asked if it was new that permits expire in January. Nina said it has been several years since it expired in January. Not as many permits not affixed verbal warnings in 2025 due to staff interaction.
- Written citations included parking in shorebird area, tire pressure, campfire violations, curfew violations, minor in possession of alcohol, pet or person in a closed area, trail violations, drone operation violations, and Off-Road permit required. Tire pressure, please note that tire pressure warnings have gone up a bit because of staff interaction. Speed verbal warnings are given by staff along with education regarding posted speed limits. We purchased and installed an additional beach radar sign which assists staff in watching for speeding. We also use the option of having the patron leave the beach for the day along with a verbal warning, depending on the infraction. There were 51 citations issued. Temporary suspensions, 8, having patron leave the beach for the day; written warnings, 12; permit revocations, 3; dog revocations, 0; no trespass, 1. Rich asked about the drone violation. Nina said that there are no drones allowed on any beaches in the Town of Barnstable, and we are in a no-fly zone due to the proximity of the Marstons Mills Airport.
- Ann Marie said that citations were up from last year due to staff being more proactive in certain situations, especially speed and Off-Road permits required. Staff are required to directly hand out citations to the patron(s), at the time of violation, if that is not feasible, the citation is mailed. Although the citations were up for 2025, they are still lower than in years prior. Bill Monroe asked if there was a fine attached to those citations, and Ann Marie said there was, based on the regulations.
- Emergency Management System, (EMS), calls. The trend line is staying steady, year to year, and we were slightly up from last year. ***See attached report.** Ann Marie went over the incident that happened on the 4th of July as it was one of our biggest incidents. There were two separate incidents that happened that day. One incident was that our dumpster at the Access Trail caught fire. Unexploded fireworks went off in the dumpster at the end of curfew. Staff responded using fire extinguishers and West Barnstable Fire Department came to put the fire out completely.
- The other incident was a larger, multi-agency response for lost swimmers. The call came in from a third party. Our staff were on Ocean radios; there was Barnstable Police radios as well as Fire EMS radios communicating. Nina was out on the jet ski, there were a lot of radio channels going on, but a lot of great communication. Barnstable Harbor Master and the Barnstable Fire Department were able to rendezvous with the missing individuals and get them back safely. Sandy Neck Natural Resource Officers responded with the Barnstable Police who were on the beach, and Nina responded on the jet ski. Officer Chris Kelsey said we spend a lot of time doing these drills for each summer, and we always have the issue of communications. With multiple agencies not using the same frequencies, using multiple radios, it is challenging. Chris said this real-life situation was the best drill we ever had. It worked. All the communications went the way it was supposed to.

When there was an issue, we pivoted and fixed the issue. We had different agencies together on land and water and the coordination with the staff was incredible.

- Ann Marie spoke about the different agencies we collaborate with. Barnstable Police Department, Chris Kelsey Liaison. Detail officers on the beach. West Barnstable Fire Department, year-round fire and medical emergency response. Sandy Neck staff public safety training. Barnstable Public Works, annual trail reconstruction maintenance. Barnstable Harbor Master supports all water related incidents as well as jet ski training. New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance, Diamondback Terrapin PIT tagging training and working relationship for Ocean Sunfish Training. International Fund for Animal Welfare, marine mammal releases at Sandy Neck, and working relationship for marine mammal strandings. Rich said the Barnstable Fire Department needs to be included in the list. Ann Marie said the Barnstable Fire Department responds to the Cottage Colony for medical and fire issues. Bill Monroe stated that equipment from the Barnstable Fire Department is stored out at the Cottage Colony for any response as well there is a working seawater pump installed by a Cottage Owner for use to put out fires. Ann Marie said it will be in next year's report for sure.
- For 2025 we did a multi-agency drill at West Barnstable Fire Department. This included all Sandy Neck staff as well as Harbor Master along with the volunteer firefighters from West Barnstable Fire Department. The training included safety protocols for Sandy Neck for the 4th of July and the summer. Everyone rotated stations to practice stop the bleed, CPR, fire extinguisher practice and CalTopo. Ann Marie explained CalTopo which is an app agencies use to find missing people. It uses satellite imagery, topographical mapping, GPS tracking and map syncing tools. It is sharable and works well for off the grid searches. It is a central point for all agencies to use as they are tracking and mapping in the event of a lost or missing person. Kris Clark asked who owns that app and Ann Marie said she would reach out to West Barnstable Fire Department for information.
- Community Outreach. Educational topics included, public safety, EMS equipment, beach grass restoration, long-term Coastal Resiliency Project, ecology field work with Diamondback Terrapins and shorebird nesting. Prior to start of the Coastal Resiliency Project we were able to work with Barnstable High School and Upper Cape Tech out of Bourne to work with staff for dune restoration. We saved several species of vegetation, flora and fauna that they potted and moved near the Access Trail to overwinter. When it begins to get warm, we will plant them on the newly vegetated dunes. We also did some larger species with the contractor of beach plum and bayberry.
- 2025 Solutions Implemented. Natural Resource Officer Keely Ashe-Alex and Assistant Natural Resource Officer Jacob Turner were hired and designated to Sandy Neck full-time. We participated in the Barnstable High School Intern Program, and we have two students that split their time between Sandy Neck and Natural Resources and are learning about both parts of our department. Full-time staff have either completed or are taking lifeguard training for open-water certification. Nina said our own Jacob Turner is certified to teach open-water lifeguarding and he is training and certifying staff. He is an excellent addition to our staff. We are doing Sandy Neck, Natural Resources and Shellfish lifeguard training. The next training and certification is in March.
- 2025 Solutions Implemented for Vehicles. Purchased a Polaris UTV for a field vehicle. Liftgate was installed on Patrol Vehicle #327 for maintenance. Outfitted the jet ski with green and white lights for emergency response. We have also designated an area for the jet ski outpost, for emergency response, and have done a lot of training regarding all tidal conditions. Tom asked who services our jet ski. Nina said Harbor Master has helped tremendously with the jet ski maintenance as well as training staff on the use of the jet ski. Ann Marie continued to say we have done many emergency scenarios with seasonal staff, that were unexpected, so they would get comfortable when an actual incident occurred. We added an AED box on the public beach for emergency use. We added an additional speed radar sign at Trail 1. Now there are two, one for oncoming traffic and one for traffic leaving the beach. We now have a license plate reader installed at the Access Trail to verify patrons going out on the Off-Road Vehicle Beach have a permit.
- 2025 Solutions Implemented for Traffic. Keeping pedestrian walkways clear of sand and vegetation. Complete Marsh Trail maintenance monthly for vehicle access. Public access outreach for the Coastal Resiliency Project. We continue to update the Sandy Neck website weekly. We send out push notifications with current information. The Town of Barnstable has put out notifications on their Facebook page. We have done lot of work with signage. We know that there are not a lot of places to park for access to the Marsh Trail, and we ask the public not to park on the sidewalks, and anywhere that is coned off. We ask the public to park in the designated area only and not enter the work site, even if the gate is open.
- 2026 season Traffic. There is going to be a lot of shifting in our safety solutions department. We will be updating safety solutions and emergency responses based on the new traffic flow layout. We will have an emergency entrance to the Off-Road Vehicle Beach which will be for staff use. It will be gated and locked.

- 2026 season Staff Training. There will be updated procedures and protocols for staff. We are going to continue to improve training for both full-time and seasonal staff.
- Open for comments. Chris Kelsey said he wanted to thank the staff for the job they are doing. He looked at calls for service to Barnstable Police Department and those calls have decreased. He believes those calls to service are decreasing due to the proactive work the staff is doing. He said he feels that there is more permanent staff than in prior years and that is making a difference. He feels that Nina has put the word out to both campers and daytrippers that certain types of behavior that will not be tolerated, and the actions taken have helped and the message gets spread. Tom said staff were very proactive and had done a great job. Staff are good at mitigating situations. Nina said Chris has been very big help and goes to some of the Friday staff meetings where he can offer advice and answer questions. Nina said the relationship with the Barnstable Police Department is very important. Ann Marie said that as we get new staff each year it has been so helpful to have the detail officers interact with staff and help them along. Chris said that having Lieutenant Riley meet with staff at the beginning of each season really helps set the tone as he runs them through scenarios and answers questions.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: Peter Levine from Marstons Mills addressed the Board. He asked if there was a change in capacity with the new parking lots. Nina believes we added sixteen spots. Peter asked about the lead time with the license plate reader. Nina said it was downloaded twice a day. We know that and we have a visual as well so we know we just sold them a permit. Peter asked if there was a thought of having two exits roads off the Access Trail so people who didn't want to air up could just leave. Nina said yes, we are calling it is an emergency access which is located at the east end of the lower parking lot. It will be gated and locked. It will be used for a couple of things. It will be used for emergency response, and will be used if the Access Trail is blocked to get emergency vehicles on to the beach. There are a couple of nights a year where we will need to get patrons off the beach and there are about a third of people who don't want to air up, they just want to go home. We will be able to station an office there to get those folks off the beach. It is not for campers. If a camper can't make it up the Access Trail, the gate will not be opened for them. Ann Marie said one thing that will help with the congestion will be that we don't have a fence in the middle of the Access Trail anymore. All the air hoses will be off to the side so folks who don't want to air up can go through the middle and leave. We will probably still have staff directing traffic during the busy times to help with the traffic. There will also be auxiliary air at the Garage. Last question Peter asked was if we have beach wheelchairs. We have two water wheelchairs, one smaller one, and two beach walkers. Nina said the access for those with mobility issues is now at the far east corner of the lower parking lot, that is where the handicap parking is going to be and that area has the least amount of elevation change. There will be a Mobi mat and the wheelchairs will be located there. Bill Monroe said Peter is a father of a Troop 54 Eagle Scout.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck



2025 Sandy Neck
Safety Solutions.pptx



Staff report.pptx

Attachments: