



TOWN OF BARNSTABLE

SANDY NECK BOARD

1189 Phinney's Lane
Centerville, MA 02632

Tel: 508-790-6272
Fax: 508-790-6275

Sandy Neck Board Meeting

November 10, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Sandy Neck Board was held on November 10, 2025, 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, Maureen Piccione, Rich French, Bill Carey, and Bill Monroe.

Board Members absent: Rene King and Pete Sampou.

Staff: Sandy Neck: Sandy Neck Park Manager, Nina Coleman, and Operations Supervisor, Donna Bragg

Staff Member absent:

Council Liaisons present: Kris Clark

Barnstable Police Liaison: Chris Kelsey

Public: Robert Bilodeau, Wendy Paquette, and Tracy Hallett.

Guest Speaker:

Act on Minutes: On a motion from Bill Monroe moved that the minutes are amended to state that Bill Carey had been on the Board more than twenty-seven years. The motion was seconded by Rich French. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed. Bill Monron made a motion to accept the amended minutes and was seconded by Bill Carey. The Board, by voice and show of hands, voted to approve the amended October 20, 2025, minutes.

Notes from the Chair: Tom O'Neill addressed the Board. Town Council is asking all the Chairs of the Boards and Committees to come in and do a presentation to Town Council. The intention is to match a Regulatory Committee with an Advisory Committee during the presentations. Tom went to the meeting last Thursday night, along with the Water Committee as well as the Preservation Committee. Tom thought it was a good idea to do these annual reports. The reports go into a book and Tom is not sure who sees them, but it gives Town Council an opportunity to have more time with the Boards and Committees. Tom spoke about the composition of our Board and the diversity as well as the fact that everyone on the Board are all users of Sandy Neck Beach. Our Board has hunters, campers, daytrippers, just about every facet of Sandy Neck is represented by our Board members. Plus, there is about one hundred- and five-years' experience collectively. It is quite a diverse group in terms of background experience. Tom talked about how the Board functions, they asked if we had quorum issues which we usually don't have. Also under effectiveness, Tom spoke about the Board's role in the project that is going on now and how complex it is with many people's involvement, consultants, Department of Public Works and input from the Board. Everybody had to play a role, and the Board did too. The project is going on now, so Tom feels that we all did good as a team. Tom also talked about fees, something he felt the Council was not aware of. Tom explained that we prepared for the project by putting in some additional funding into our reserves, which as it turns out was important as we had two grants which required matching funds from the Enterprise Account. He told the Council about the study that was done and how we did the benchmarking, looking at usage, etc. and they seemed impressed with the work that has been done. Kris Clark asked Tom to speak about the relationship with the Town of Sandwich. Tom said he did not get into it too deep, but Tom felt there may be a good opportunity there for further revenues. We are preparing the data to back up what may

be going on. Tom got a couple of interesting questions. One Council Member didn't realize you could ride horses on the beach. Tom felt that the report was well received. Bill Carey asked if this was going to be an annual thing and Tom said he didn't know. Kris Clark said that the Town Council Agendas have been very full. Once the Council got through September, and the volume at the meetings kind of lightened up. Kris said she was tasked with lining up the guest speakers for the meeting. Tom said he spoke about how important it was to have a team. He mentioned Chris Kelsey, our Barnstable Police Department liaison, and how important that is. He also spoke about Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association and what a tremendous help they have been to Sandy Neck over the years.

Correspondence: None

Staff Report: Nina Coleman addressed the Board. * See attached report.

- Gatehouse is closed for the season. There is no electricity or water. Beginning to get ready for the move which may happen in the next two weeks.
- Gatehouse phone is still in operation.
- Merchandise sales requests via email. sandyneck@town.barnstable.ma.us.
- Off-Road Vehicle Beach closed starting Wednesday, November 12th. May reopen once the Gatehouse is relocated. Once all the safety concerns are addressed, we are hoping to open the Off-Road Vehicle Beach for weekends in December. There may be no pavement, but there is no construction being done on the weekends so there is the potential for Off-Road Vehicle use on the weekends in December as long as there is staff on site. We are hoping to get Barnstable Police details for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week because it is going to be a new configuration and PD can speak with the patrons regarding the changes. Chris Kelsey asked Nina to ask for police details first thing in the morning as there will be a hard time staffing with all the construction going on currently in the Town of Barnstable. Nina said the police details were decided this morning, and she thought Amber Unruh had already reached out to PD for details. Tom asked what plan B would be and Nina said Sandy Neck Staff.
- Very limited parking near Gatehouse. Starting November 12th, there will be a chain link fence well south of the Gatehouse across the entire road as preparations for moving the Gatehouse begin. The entire park will be shut down except for hiking the Marsh Trail. There will be signage placed on 6A signifying temporary closure. There may be three parking spaces left as the fencing goes through the gravel lot before you reach the Gatehouse. We are really locking it down for safety sake.
- NO campfires.
- NO pheasant stocking at Sandy Neck after November 12th. Nina said we wanted to keep the pheasant season open as long as possible at Sandy Neck but there will be no way to get the Off-Road Vehicles on the beach and there is really no parking. The pheasants that usually are stocked at Sandy Neck for the rest of the season will be stocked in other areas. There will be extra birds at Crane and extra birds at West Barnstable Conservation Area.
- Marsh Trail access for hikers but very little parking. We must maintain access for emergency vehicles. There will be a gate for emergency vehicles to access if needed.
- We are coming into cold stunned sea turtle season and staff are preparing for any turtle events. Should a patron find a turtle on the beach, do not put it back in the water. Place it above the high-water mark, cover it with seaweed, and mark the location using a buoy or a stick. Report findings to the Gatehouse, 508-362-8300. Anyone interested in volunteering, contact Wellfleet Audubon. There is some training that is required. You may also contact Animal Control or Natural Resources.
- There was a beach grass planting day held with Upper Cape Tech. They planted the areas on the front dune where the old pathways to the beach were. The beach grass was harvested from other areas on Sandy Neck prior to the plantings and they will be coming back again for additional plantings.
- We participated in Truck-or-Treat which is usually held at Sandy Neck with the West Barnstable Fire Department. Due to construction, this year, it was held at Cape Cod Community College. Keely who is a new Natural Resource Office and Katie who is a shellfish Natural Office represented for Marine Environment Affairs and Sandy Neck.

- We also had a large group from Barnstable High School Art and Applied Technology field trip. They were led by Natural Resource Officer Keely. They were taken out to the Halfway House and they had a wonderful time. We are looking forward to seeing what kind of art came out of this project.
- Project updates: Drone footage from Friday shows the project as it is now. Nina pointed out the primary dune being built as well as the new parking area. We removed some plant material prior to the start of the excavation. The upper parking lot asphalt has been pulverized, using the pulverized material as a base for the road between the upper parking lot and the lower parking lot. The picture shows the back dune, or screen dune and the bowl will become a parking lot. The lower area will be the drainage area.
- The picture showed the Spadefoot Toad fencing that staff installed. Three-thousand linear feet of fencing was installed for the project.
- Nina showed the picture closer to the Gatehouse where there had been clearing done by the crosswalk. This is where the Gatehouse is going to be positioned. They are going to raise the Gatehouse and look underneath and measure to make sure the new footings are correct. Bob Hayden and crew will be doing the move of the Gatehouse and he wants to make sure it is perfect. Nina pointed out where the temporary gate was going.
- Chris asked about emergency access to the beach would be once the project was completed and Nina showed him on the slide where it would be. It will be at the east end of the primary dune. In that lower area there will also be the handicap accessibility area as the dune is much lower.
- Bill Carey asked about the basin regarding water collection. Nina said down the middle of the dune that will be a swale for rainwater collection.
- At the top of the primary dune there has been zig zag fencing installed and there will be planting done along that area.
- Nina spoke about outreach regarding the project. She listed the various ways the town is reaching out. Media release detailing the start of Phase 3 beginning November 12th. Relocating the Gatehouse. Off-Road Vehicle Beach closure. The Marsh Trail will be open to foot traffic only. Access updates will be posted on the Sandy Neck website: <https://townofbarnstable.us/sandyneckpark/>, www.BarnstableWaterResources.com, and the town's My Barnstable mobile app. Heather McCaron from the Cape Cod Times will provide updates through articles. Construction updates to be posted to the Story Map Project website. Barnstable Water Resources updates in weekly newsletter, and via the Town's weekly Barnstable E-News.
- Further communication: Communication directly to the Cottage Owners, via email. Continuous updates in the Barnstable E-News, and the My Barnstable app. Barnstable Water Resources is doing a weekly newsletter that they will continue to post new information. We will continue to do updates through the Town of Barnstable Social Media outlets as well as the Barnstable Water Resources website. We are trying to get everyone to go to the Sandy Neck website for the most current news. Nina reached out to the Sandwich Department of Recreation to make sure they were getting the updates out to their patrons.
- There were questions regarding the paving of the parking lots. Chris said that it is temperature driven, but with as many projects going on, there is one off-Cape plant that stays open pretty much year-round. He said that every plant has to close at some point for maintenance and that it is usually in the winter. Tom asked what kept Nina up at night and she said it was access. Things are moving along well. There was talk about Sandwich and what they are doing to reach out to their community as they are a large part of Sandy Neck. We really don't know how they get their information out. Nina said we would not be able to put the big flashing sign up at 6A as there is really no place to put it. We are doing everything we can to make sure patrons know what is going on.

Old Business:

Conservation and beach erosion along our coastlines.

- **Economic sustainability.**
- **Public outreach and public use & participation.** None.
- **Sandy Neck Beach Reconfiguration Project Update.** This information was included in the Staff Report.

- **New Business:**
- **Annual SNK Report:** Nina Coleman addressed the Board. ***See attached report.** This report is a synopsis of what has taken place over the year at Sandy Neck. Tracks comparative information over a five-year period. This report is required by two sets of our Orders of Conditions and will be presented to the Conservation Commission.
- Piping Plovers: Total pairs, fifty-nine. Number of eggs, Three hundred seventy-six. Eggs hatched, seventy-three, chick fledged, fifty-nine. Bill Carey asked the lifespan of a plover. Tom looked it up. Five to six years.
- Diamondback Terrapins: Number of nests head started, 10. Number of nests capped, 10. Number of nests, six hundred forty-nine. Number of nests predated, one hundred ninety-four. Nest potentially hatched, four hundred fifty-five. Another record-breaking year. We are pit tagging and finding that females are coming up more than once a season to nest. Predation was very typical. We are doing so well with the terrapins that we are giving organizations one turtle to head start instead of two. This year there are thirty-one organizations including schools that are participating in the head start program.
- Terns did a little better this year. One hundred seventy-one pairs of Least Terns in 2025.
- Sea Turtle strandings: This is from last fall and winter. Fifteen Kemps Ridley, four Loggerheads. Sixteen turtles at Sandy Neck. This includes Barnstable Harbor as Natural Resource staff walk the harbor to check for turtles.
- Wetland restoration: Twenty-five plus acres isolated freshwater wetlands were treated, as well as salt marsh and dune in front of parking lot.
- Enforcement: We will have our Safety Presentation in January, but we will go over some figures. Written Citations, fifty-one. Written warnings, ten. Verbal warnings, two hundred twenty-five. Permits revoked, five. No trespass, people, zero. No trespass dogs, zero. Chris Kelsey said that since Covid he has seen the alcohol violations have gone down. There were a couple of issues. There were sixteen calls to service for Sandy Neck this year and only one person put into protective custody. A good trend. Chris said a lot of credit goes to staff establishing a rapport with beach goers and having clear cut regulations. Tom asked about the percentage of campers who are from Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association. Wendy Paquette said not many.
- Revenue: Nina said we had another great year. Tom had some revenue questions. Tom said our fees had been raised significantly and we have seen the revenue go up. Nina said that the revenue included beach parking as well. Tom asked about Sandwich revenue. Nina said there was one year it went up and she didn't know why but it is supposed to go up in yearly increments. Tom asked why the owner lease fees are so variable. Bill Monroe said they are broken into two payments, one due the first of July each year and one due the first of January each year. He said they don't always come in when they are supposed to but that is why it is variable. Rich asked about the Off-Road Vehicle fees having an asterisk beside it. Nina said it was a holdover when there were other things embedded in the fees; she thanked him for pointing that out. Bill Carey said it would be a good idea if we showed in the report each year how much goes into the surplus account. Nina said that number was just certified and she would bring that number next meeting as it is public information. Kris Clark asked what the one thousand dollars in miscellaneous section. Nina said it was compressor donations.
- Escorts: We did seventeen escorts this year which means the Marsh Trail is doing well and many property owners chose to go the Marsh Trail instead of using an escort.
- Pheasant hunt is happening right now.
- There were two hundred and eighty-four tent camping nights.
- Campfire permits: Four hundred and fifty-seven.
- Two-wheel drive tests: twenty-three.

- Special Permits: Twenty-four permits. Donna said we need to start counting the permits that are for special groups that come without being charged.
- Daily Horse Permits: Twenty-Nine. Eighteen permits sold. This year we had to cut off horseback riding as of September because of construction.
- Walks and Talks: Five with Barnstable Land Trust. Three with Mass Audubon.
- Beach clean ups: One with Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association, (MBBA). One Coast Sweep with MBBA public, Board member, and Cape Cod Commission.
- Junior Rangers: Conducted in July, same as last year.
- Halfway House: Five permits and four overnight stays.
- Portable toilets: Eight units on the beach.
- Rich French talked about the great job the Department of Public Works did on the Marsh Trail this year. Bill Monroe asked about the status of the trails as they had been advised not to use some of them. Donna said the wind shifted, making the trails much better. She also said that staff had been out there digging and making the trail more passable.
- Bill Carey spoke about possibly creating another walking trail so people could get out by Mussel Point. There was much discussion regarding the pros and cons and it was ultimately decided to table the discussion for another meeting. Bill will do some research and get back to the Board.
- **Vote on Board Meeting Dates for 2026:** Donna addressed the Board. She had emailed all Board member with the dates for the 2026 Sandy Neck Board meetings to be held on the second Monday of each month. On a motion from Bill Carey and Seconded by Rich French the Board voted by voice to approve the 2026 Board meeting dates.

Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bragg, Operations Supervisor, Sandy Neck

Attachments:



ConComreport2025#
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November 10th –
Staff Report.pdf