

Simpsons Point Public Access Facility Citizen's Advisory Committee

MINUTES

August 5, 2021, 6 p.m.

Members Present: Marko Melendy (Marine Resources), Mike Lyne (Rec Commission), James Ecker (Citizen), Melissa Archbell (Rec Commission), Jon Muench (Citizen), Will Wilkoff (RCWC Commission)

Members Absent: Anne Banks (Citizen) (Bike & Pedestrian Committee Rep.)

Town Councilor Present: Steve Walker (District 2) (Chair)

Staff Present: Dan Devereaux (Coastal Resources Manager), Dan Sylvain (Harbormaster), Tom Farrell (Parks & Recreation)

1. Introductions

Introduction of members were made.

ACTION ITEM: Elections Mike Lyne nominated Councilor Walker to Chair. James Ecker Seconded the nomination. Vote was unanimous of the members present.

2. Review Citizens Advisory Charge

Councilor Steve Walker explained that Simpsons Point has become one of the few premium hand-carry coastal access points in the area. With increased usage comes issues surrounding multiple uses. Councilor Walker explained the Brunswick Town Councils advisory board charge in detail.

3. Prioritize Task List

- 1) Advise the Town Council on Facility Operation and Management Policies: Tom Farrell provided a copy of a presentation he provided at a joint committee meeting between Parks and Rec Commission and the Rivers and Coastal Waters Commission. Devereaux explained the history of the user conflicts and some of the work already done by the two commissions to date. Devereaux stated the user conflicts still exist. Chair Walker recommend that those user conflicts be identified in Task one of the Town Council charges. There were no objections.
- 2) Provide Comment on Final Facility Designs: Chair Walker explained that the paving was completed and there there wasn't much to do under this charge outside of repairing or replacing the existing launch infrastructure. Tom Farrell explained that the facility is in disrepair and in need of being replaced but that it could be repaired for short term by existing recreation maintenance staff and stockpiled feldspar. The repair would likely last for the next three to five years. Chair Walker suggests that infrastructure needs for access from the Towns property. Parallel parking was already address with the repaving of that portion of the road. Consideration of purchasing additional property that would create a contiguous track of land to the shore from the existing town property.

- 3) Assessment of Transportation Management Issues: Chair Walker indicated that assessment of road striping and permanent bike racks should be considered under this Charge. James Ecker would like to discuss parking on the entire section of the road. He also suggests that the council consider discussing pedestrian and bicycle neighborhood connectivity.
- 4) Development of Facility User Education Program: Chair Walker indicated that some of this is ongoing through the Rivers and Coastal Waters information brochures now on site. He suggests discussion surrounding signage, kiosk, and website information. Educate users on abutting private property.
- 5) Assessment of Annual Operating Expenses: Chair Walker suggest delaying this charge until the previous charges are dealt with.
- 6) Ongoing Stewardship: Chair Walker suggest delaying this as new stewardship recommendations will develop with further discussions on uses.

4. Discussion

Tom Farrell suggests the council have focused discussion on access to the water through the recently purchased Cornell property. Tom stated that increasing this access will alleviate some of the congestion at the end of the Simpsons Point Road. Dan Deveraux suggests the purchase of the sliver of property, currently owned by the Fords, that bifurcates the town owned parcel and the end of the road. This would help alleviate trespass issues as people make their way up and down the shoreline from the town's property. James Ecker suggests having a conversation and making recommendations that deal with users trespassing on others property, specifically the abutting properties. Chair Walker indicates that this would really be part of Charge 4 User Education. Melissa Archbell suggests that an overview map be supplied at each meeting, because some may not be familiar with local names. Chair Walker briefly explained the location of the parcels being discussed by the Council. Melendy asked for an update on the availability of the Town's Water Access Funds. Chair Walker explained the funds were recently appropriated to another water access site. Jon Muench suggests that he has environmental concerns with the property being so close to the ocean and already eroding banks.

Tom Farrell asks the council to consider looking into previous Town Council requests to reopen the facility to trailered boat launches in the offseason. He indicated that if the Town is going to plan long term, this requests to reopen in the offseason needs to be rectified. Chair Walker explained the history of the closure of Simpsons Point and the rules and decisions that keep it closed to all trailered launches. Dan Devereaux explained that several committees have written to Maine DEP and requested consideration to reopen in the off season (November to April) over the years to no avail. Chair Walker suggests that there is not much this committee can do about this issue other than recommend an action to the Town Council. Marko Melendy encourages the Town to think about the long-term impacts if DEP ever does allow propellered boat launch at the site in the future.

Tom Farrell suggests immediate council consideration for recommendation in Charge 1 to address the issues with animals, namely dogs. He states the recreation department deals with several complaints about dog's interactions with users of the facility. Chair Walker suggests that there is already a lease law. Melendy stated that dogs can be off leash if they are engaged in training and the council should encourage additional animal restriction. He also suggests immediate resolution on amending ordinance language that precludes swimming at the site and adding additional no trespassing signage to help

detract users from using abutting beaches. Mike Lyne suggests the access point is tidal and this should be taken into consideration. Tom Farrell suggested bringing the park ranger to the next meeting to discuss user issues he has been seeing at the facility. Will Wilkoff stated that it may be pertinent to ensure the park ranger is working during peak usage at the site.

ACTION ITEM: Marko Melendy make a motion to authorize Parks and Recreation to repair the existing landing with stockpiled town feldspar and the recreation departments maintenance crew immediately, Mike Lyne seconded the motion, unanimous of the members present.

Mike Lyne asked if the boat launch is permanently discontinued would there be need for infrastructure at the end of the road anymore? Tom stated that due to the fragile shoreline bank at the point of access there would be work required, regardless of whether or the planking is there, to shore up erosion. Furthermore, any work outside routine maintenance would require a town engineer assessment.

Chair suggests the next meeting be focused on making recommendations in the Town Council Charge 1. James Ecker inquired on whether these meetings are open for public comment. Chair Walker advised that there is comment through call in and zoom in. James Ecker suggests the advisory council implement a public comment period at every meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:06 PM