

Simpsons Point Public Access Facility Citizen's Advisory Committee

MINUTES

September 2, 2021, 6 p.m.

Members Present: Marko Melendy (RCWC), Mike Lyne (Rec Commission), James Ecker (Citizen), John Muench (Citizen), Will Wilkoff (RCWC) Anne Banks (Citizen)

Members Absent: Bike and Pedestrian Committee Member

Town Councilor Present: Steve Walker (District 2) (Chair) Dan Ankles (At Large)

Staff Present: Dan Devereaux (Coastal Resources Manager), Dan Sylvain (Harbormaster), Tom Farrell (Parks & Recreation) Ben Gould (Park Ranger) Heather Brown (Animal Control)

Minutes: (1:38) August 19, 2021, Minutes accepted unanimously. No corrections noted.

Correspondence: (3:10) Walker asked for any correspondence. Melendy indicated that he had received correspondence from a citizen (Sue Stableford) asking consideration to be given that dogs do have an impact on some of the citizen users of Simpsons Point. Melendy read aloud the correspondence. Ecker indicated that he had correspondence from Sherry Britton a resident and abutter. Ecker read aloud the correspondence, which stressed concerns surrounding loitering and late-night activity. Walker indicated that a resident Henry Heyburn suggests the bike racks be moved to a safer area.

1. **Facility Capacity (5:58)**

Defining Capacity ~ Appropriate Controls ~ Enforcement Measures

Walker began the discussion with parking capacity. He indicated that there are approximately 15 vehicle spaces in the new shoulder parking area which equates to approximately 3 to 4 trucks with boat trailers attached. Walker indicated that this is similar parking capacity at Wharton Point. Walker pointed out other local water access facilities with similar capacity in effort to provide comparison and perspective. Simpsons Point is unique, meaning there are not many other public accesses like it in the area. Devereaux explained that capacity of certain aspects of the facility can be defined easily but defining overall capacity is difficult. Walker stated that there is a definite need for additional bicycle capacity and additional bike racks should be considered. Ecker states he feels capacity should be considered in context of the neighborhood the facility is in and the land the Town currently owns and there should be consideration given to the types of uses the town would like to encourage at Simpsons Point. Melendy stated in other conversations with the Brunswick Rivers and Coastal Waters/ Recreation Commission Task Force members, improved shoulder parking and road resurfacing should not result in less access to the facility by prohibiting additional on street parking. Muench stated when he thinks of capacity it comes down to the amount of people using the shoreline and beach access points, not necessarily the parking. Muench reaffirmed that on high temperature days when high tide falls in the middle of the day, cars are parked well beyond the newly created 15 space shoulder parking. He estimates well over 20 cars being down there at any given time. Wilkoff suggested people capacity would take care of itself if the vehicular traffic were controlled. He suggested if the town restricted parking along the road people would find legal places to park and access the facility. Ecker reiterated that when the road resurfacing and the shoulder parking was approved the Town Council was clear on the number of cars (15-18) the new shoulder parking would accommodate. Furthermore, he indicates that on those hot days in the middle of summer people are parking along the shoulder of the road past the added shoulder parking area and creating the same public safety issue the new

shoulder parking was meant to alleviate. Ecker suggests restricting parking on Simpsons Point Road and seeing how this works initially. Anne Banks commented that there needs to be more enforcement during those high usage times. Devereaux suggests, after discussions with Officer Dan Sylvain that parking be prohibited on both sides of the Simpsons Point Road from Pennell Way intersection easterly to the end of Simpsons Point Rd. Officer Sylvain provided the width of the road and the width of the widest emergency vehicles and suggests that parking be prohibited from the end of the added shoulder parking down to the intersection of Pennell Way. Sylvain also stated that he would ask the parking enforcement to make more trips to this area during those high usage times. Melendy reiterates that if the improvements to the area result in less access for the public than what was there before is this the best use of public dollars. Melendy also asked, now the area will be officially open for swimming and advertised as such, will this put additional user pressure on the facility that is not currently accounted for. John Muench stated that he doesn't feel that prohibiting on street parking outside the designated shoulder parking would discourage many folks from using the facility. Muench referred to Barnes Landing as an additional public access point in the area where people can swim. Devereaux explained the differences between the two access points and the types of uses they provide the public. It was also brought up that there is no parking access for Barnes landing and anyone wishing to use the access point must park alongside the Penneville Road. Ecker agrees with prohibiting parking along the road as described and that the road resurfacing and the added shoulder parking have made it safer for the public. Ecker suggests putting additional careful thought into no parking signage and adding a sign that indicates violators will be ticketed and towed. Tom Farrell has received concerns over the lack of handicapped parking spaces nearest the water access area. Park Ranger Gould indicated that he gets repeated requests for handicapped parking nearest the water access. Sylvain suggest bike racks and ADA assigned parking be outside the boat ramp apron. Placement of these assigned spots outside the apron will help avoid obstructions to public service and safety vehicles using the apron for turning around i.e. emergency vehicles, garbage trucks, etc. Ecker suggests adding a strip on the easterly side of the road. Ecker suggests a formal parking pass to allow folks to park overnight for camping on the islands but otherwise people should be prohibited from parking at night. Anne Banks points out that most other public water access facilities prohibit parking dawn to dusk. Melendy mentioned the possibility of pavement striping that indicates each individual parking stall. He also suggested that if there is not enough parking there during the day, allowing people to park there overnight will exacerbate the parking problems that exist during the day. Walker suggested tabling the discussion on overnight uses and proceed with voting on the following recommendations to the Brunswick Town Council:

ACTION ITEM ~ Motion by Walker to recommend to the council the following:

- 1- Clearly post no parking at the site.**
- 2- Adding additional signage (Violators will be ticketed and towed)**
- 3- Striping the east side of the road.**
- 4- Prohibit parking on Simpsons Point Road Westerly to the Pennell Way intersection.**
- 5- Add two additional bike racks positioned out of the way of any vehicle traffic.**
- 6- Designate an ADA parking spot closest to the access point.**

Unanimous of the Advisory Council Members present.

2. Seasonal Boat Launch Use (42:20)

Walker explained there has been several attempts by the town to reopen Simpsons Point Boat launch for off season boat use. Devereaux supplied copies of those request in the Advisory Councils packets. Walker further explained the complexities of the requests and based on past efforts there seems to be little enthusiasm from the Maine DEP and IF&W to allow this to happen. Walker explained that if the area was reopened for off season usage the town could not restrict the types of boats being launched. Tom Farrell clarified that the initial requests to reopen the boat launch was based on the safety concerns of shellfish harvesters and the fact of whether the closure was helping to mitigate the loss of

eelgrass. The eelgrass mitigation report was inconclusive of these facts. Dan Ankles asked if there was any eelgrass observational period taking place now and will this area be included in the recent state funded eelgrass mapping study? Ankles suggested that a recommendation to the council to leave the status of the facility as is, hand carry only, until more environmental observations can be made through the statewide eelgrass mapping initiative. Banks indicates that on behalf of the residents of the area she would suggest keeping Simpsons Point and its current uses as is.

ACTION ITEM (51:15) ~ Motion by Banks to recommend to the Town Council to keep Simpsons Point uses restricted to hand carry boats and emergency access only. Discussion by the Advisory Council members ensued. Unanimously supported.

Ecker requests that the Town list the Simpsons Point Advisory Committee as one of the town committees and post agenda and minutes under that committee on the Towns Website. Devereaux explained that the recorded video is posted under the public forums tab, however under that tab there is no place to post agendas or minutes. Devereaux will check with the towns website folks and see about rearranging the advisory council under town committees tab.

MEETING ADJOURNED 7:04 PM