



**COMMUNITY COVID-19 TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 4, 2020**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

1. Welcome and review mission of the Task Force

Meeting called to order at 4:30pm.

Members present: Bob Whitelaw, Chair  
Pamela Sawyer, Vice Chair  
Rick Barber  
Kent Bridges  
Rebecca Fox  
Charley LaFlamme  
Terry Ann Lunt  
Alice Pearce  
Bruce Roy

2. Minutes from May 1, 2020

Place holder for future meetings.

3. Review most recent disclosures from Maine CDC

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Select Board voted to establish a Community COVID-19 Task Force. The Task Force is not intended to be a local medical or scientific authority on COVID-19. The purpose of the Task Force is to look specifically at Ogunquit's circumstances in developing a planned course of action to gradually reopen public and private facilities based on the recommendation of the Federal and State Health experts in compliance with CDC guidelines. The Task Force will make recommendations to the Select Board.

Chair Whitelaw stated that he had the opportunity and pleasure this past weekend to speak or e-mail with approximately 100 people. There were a lot of ideas from this correspondence. The number 1 overriding factor was about safety.

Our resident business owners or non-resident business owners, our visitors and our town employees, including Fire and Police, those who work in our town offices, public service workers and the Transfer Station and others are paramount important importance. Having said that, our community demand depends on a thriving business environment. Those are the general takeaways from what people have said to me, there are specifics, pages and pages of specifics. And a lot of them are very viable.

Charley LaFlamme was asked to give an update on the Maine CDC briefings.

Kent Bridges stated that there were no deaths today, and it appears that hospitalization due to the illness were down to 37. Maine keeps emphasizing that there are many, many recoveries from COVID-19 in the State of Maine, which is good news. Mr. Bridges stated that the Ogunquit Playhouse tracks statistics daily for Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont and that he would be happy to share that report with the Task Force.

Rebecca Fox stated that what the Playhouse is doing is fabulous, the committee does not have to re-invent the wheel. She reported that there were some very dire predictions that came out today from the CDC and the New York Times. The number of people in ICU and on ventilators in Maine is going in the right direction.

#### 4. Subgroups discussion

Vice Chair Sawyer, along with Chair Whitelaw, outlined the subgroups for consideration:

- Public Health
- Data Collection
- Business & Economic Reopening of Ogunquit
- At Risk Population

##### a) Assignments:

Terry Ann Lunt - Public Health group leader

- Buzzy Roy

Kent Bridges - Data Collection group leader

- Rebecca Fox

Alice Pearce - Business & Economic Reopening group leader

- Rick Barber

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- Bob Whitelaw
- Charley LaFlamme - At Risk Population group leader
- Pamela Sawyer

The group, at the end of the meeting will identify topics for discussion at the next meeting. A recommendation, after discussion of the topic(s), would be given to the Town Manager and the Select Board.

Charley LaFlamme stated that it would be helpful if all are involved in the conversation of the subgroups.

Buzzy expressed his interest, as a business owner, to be involved in the Business subgroup.

Motion made by Rick Barber and second by Charley LaFlamme to approve the subgroups; approved 9-0.

b) Expectations

c) Timing of reporting (next meeting)

5. Beaches and Marginal Way

Rebecca Fox:

- Regarding the Marginal Way, there is a very active Town Committee who have been organizing their thoughts and working out some of the suggestions with some of the pitfalls in them.
- It is a large discussion as it involves re-routing traffic potentially, not only affecting how many people are on the path but how many are removed to a sidewalk if it is only opened one-way.
- Could get some particularly good suggestions from the committee.

Pamela Sawyer:

- Pam stated that she wanted to talk about the beach. Agrees with Becky that the Marginal Way Committee has done a yeoman's job over the years, taking care of the Marginal Way and really need to listen to their recommendations.
- The beach is a different story. For those that like to walk the beach, should be open just for residents; and those that want to sit, and sunbath it should be open for everybody.

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- If look back historically, when the beach is open there is an influx of people both residents and tourists sitting side by side, there is no social distancing. There is no way to safely monitor anything at this time.
- Must look at creative ways to open the beach and how to do it safely.
- Big concern is enforcement, even with the town's incredible Police Department, they cannot be expected to walk up and down the beach all day monitoring activity.
- The Beach is going to be one of the biggest tasks.
- There are many, many things to consider: the public health aspect, the management of people aspect. The gatherings, the restrooms, the bathrooms, all that go along with opening the beach.

Charley LaFlamme:

- What has been done at the golf courses is that they have set up somebody at the parking lot. We have natural gatekeepers here already, the people from Visitor Services. They have done a great job in the past, and this would be one more thing they could do.
- It is a good idea to open to just residents for us to see how that goes, have the people from Visitors Services there to remind people of social distancing.
- The biggest concern for the elderly that use the beach and the Marginal Way, is the bathrooms. Must open the bathrooms if are going to allow people down to the beach and on the Marginal Way.

Terry Ann Lunt:

- Was going to suggest earlier is that we get an update from Pat as she is in touch with people from Southern New Hampshire and our adjacent towns, we need to know what they are doing and what they have decided.
- In *Seacoast Online* this past week, the Town of York indicated that mid-May they are going to be opening their beaches for limited active use, which means people can walk, people can swim and people can surf; and then on June 1 they may expand it a little bit. That could have a direct impact on us.
- Do not know what Town of Wells is doing. Old Orchard just issued an order last week, though not adjacent, it has a large beach just up the coast. They have been open all winter and are open as a walking beach.
- Really need to know what is happening in those other beach communities to understand the impact on our beach and the number of visitors, etc.

Rick Barber:

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- Agreed with what Terry just said, thinks that Pat's information will help a lot, to have a little bit of knowledge of what is going on.
- There has been a lot of talk about can we have just locals and what defines a local. Is it a resident that is here only a couple days to come up to their second home, etc.?
- Have a concern with asking people to use stickers, because not everybody who lives here buys a sticker because you can walk to the beach.
- Do not want to put responsibility on the town to create special beach pass for each individual resident, that could get a little bit challenging.
- We might be able to open the beach, limited to walking or swimming...no sitting.
- Visitor Services is a nice idea, concerned that most of the people who work for visitor services fall under the at-risk category. Not sure if they are the people who the town needs to put on front lines monitoring who is coming in and off the beach.

Buzzy Roy:

- The other towns and their beaches will be a driving factor.
- Wants the beach open, moved here to go to the beach every day. Anybody who thinks that we're going to have a resident only beach or going to be monitoring who goes on the beach...it is open for all or open for none, there is no way to dictate who is a local, lives in town, works in town.
- If someone decides to stay at a cottage for 14-days, are they not a local? Lives in the town, why can't they walk to the beach.
- And then to put it on the Police or Visitor Services to figure out how to run that parking lot in a busy summer, in the middle of the summer, now going to tell people they can't come to the beach.
- Ogunquit should be the last beach to open.

Terry Ann Lunt:

- Just like to echo what Buzzy said because our beaches are considered a public accommodation. So we cannot restrict access to it at all. It is a public beach and it is a public accommodation. Under the law cannot restrict access to it for really any reason.

Kent Bridges:

- That is one point I was going to raise; it is a public beach.
- If were to open the beach at some point for that two-week trial period, what does success look like? How do measure success?
- Enforcement is going to be a tough thing to do.

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- A dozen people walking together on the beach. That does not necessarily mean that they are not social distancing, they could be a family of 12 and they live together. It does create a problem. Then thinking about the resource side of it, how do we enforce it, or how do we monitor what is going on?
- How do we deal with special accommodations? If were to open the Beach and the Marginal Way, it takes more people to monitor the activity or if it takes special sticker or something like that, it gets a little tough.
- Not saying that it is impossible, to open the Beach and Marginal Way, but these are things that need to be considered along the way and how to mitigate that risk as well as the social distancing and the safety risks.

Chair Whitelaw:

- One way to kind of limit outside people being on the beach, even though you cannot limit it at the beach point, is closed parking.
- Everything, every action and every thought has a reaction.
- We must get to a point where we cut this down into a point where we can all make a recommendation to the select board, so stickers maybe?
- It is a great discussion because getting a lot onto the table, going to have to figure out. How are we going to make a decision and what is going to be the timeline?
- Will have to see what the governor says tomorrow. She might come out and say she is under a lot of pressure right now. Maybe she comes out and says, we are going to have a more expedited opening of our natural resources, including beaches, it could happen. Have got to be ready for that because do have some specific issues around our population and the people who live here.

Alice Pearce:

- Just wanted to reiterate, there must be similarities as we are talking, asking Pat to kind of track what is going on in York, Wells, Rye Beach. She is working with a wide net of coastal towns who must have groups like this that are also talking about how to open a beach safely. I wonder if there is any way to collectively find out what they are thinking about doing in terms of how they are going to open their beaches.
- Borrow best practices from each other, similar to the idea that we should all be coordinating our efforts to open the beaches.
- There is probably a lot of good "best practices" already being discussed in circles just like this that we can maybe all adopt or, at least have a template and then adopt to our local situation.

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Chair Whitelaw:

- Pat and I need to go talk to people in Wells, York, etc. who may be in the same position that we are in terms of a task force. It might be a good idea for the three main towns up the coast here in Southern Maine to coordinate their efforts. I throw that out there as a discussion point, not as an opinion, but as a discussion point. Would like to know if anybody has strong feelings on coordinating our activities with other towns?

Pamela Sawyer:

- Should be talking with all the other towns to see what they are doing, it should be a coordinated effort because we are all so close and our beaches are contiguous all the way up, down.
- One of the things that the Select Board needs to look at is if Town keeps the parking lots closed no revenue comes into the Town. The revenue from the parking lots, is over \$2 million which helps everybody in terms of the operational aspects of the Town and our taxes. If you close the parking lots that goes away. If you want to hire new Volunteers or extra Visitor Services people you do not have the money to do that. So there are many facets to all of this.
- If the beaches in Massachusetts are closed or up in Newburyport and coming up that way are closed, they are going to continue up the coast to come up here too. So that could be a bigger influx than we normally have during the summer.

Chair Whitelaw:

- Human nature is such that if people are going to come here, they are going to find a way. If we get inundated, we may be inundated so have to come up with a solution in advance of what human nature dictates.
- You can see that in California, people just disregarding the Governor's policy and running to the beach. Cannot have that here, so got to have a really interesting, firm, strong, wouldn't say enforceable, because don't know if enforceable is the right word, but program for our beach.
- So that if Massachusetts stays closed and 10,000 people from there come up here, could you stop them, probably not. We have got to come up with the right solution here.

Terry Ann Lunt:

- Want to remind you that the Governor's Executive Order has limits on the number of people that can gather in one place right now. That is going to be

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a constraint until that is changed. In May it is 10 people and then in June 50 people.

Chair Whitelaw:

- Chair Whitelaw stated that he was invited to attend the Select Board meeting tomorrow, May 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Must come up with something on the Beach issue and the Marginal Way.
- What does the Task Force want to do next and what should be telling the Select Board, would like to bring the views of the task force to the Board.

6. Public input and questions

Barbara Ferraro  
Karola Mait  
Mike McDonald

7. Preparation for Select Board meeting on Tuesday

Chair Whitelaw asked for input from all members of the Task Force as to what should be presented to the Select Board on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Recap of the meeting:

- Have successfully created the working groups which will come back with recommendations next Monday.
- Have agreed that the Marginal Way and Beaches will be managed, the discussions and recommendations will be managed by the group as a whole.
- Chair Whitelaw will talk to the Town Manager and get access to other towns and report back on that.
- Chair Whitelaw will contact Joan Griswold about the Marginal Way and report back on that.
- Need to add Perkins Cove to the list for discussion.
- Meeting between Charley and Pam regarding the At-Risk population and bringing this subject to the Select Board.
- Review of the river and waterways and access to them.
- Housekeeping items (Terry Ann) - subgroups, a centralized e-mail for the task force and how to work as a body.
- Subgroups - list of topics that each will work on, prioritization, guidance on how to make recommendations.

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8. Adjourn

Motion made by Kent Bridges and second by Alice Pearce to adjourn the meeting at 6:32pm; approved 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl L. Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager

Next Meeting: Monday May 11 at 4 :30 p.m.

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