



COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE
MINUTES
MAY 11, 2020

This meeting was held via Zoom.

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order at 4:30pm.

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

On April 21st, the Select Board voted to establish a COVID-19 Community 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 and develop a planned course of action to gradually reopen public and private facilities based on the recommendations of Federal and State health experts and in compliance with the CDC guidelines. The Task Force will make recommendations, including to observe and enforce social distancing CDC recommendations in the town; including the Marginal Way, beaches, the village, Main Street, Shore Road, Beach Street and Perkins Cove, lines for take-out, etc. and best practice protocols for restaurants, lodging and other businesses.

2. Minutes

May 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Charley LaFlamme and second by Rick Barber to accept the minutes of May 1, 2020 as amended; approved 9-0.

May 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Kent Bridges and second by Pamela Sawyer to accept the minutes of May 4, 2020 as presented; approved 9-0.

3. Review most recent disclosures from MCDC

Charley LaFlamme gave an update on the Maine CDC briefing today from Dr. Shah, Maine CDC Director.

Kent Bridges reported that the Playhouse has tracked the statistics daily, not only for Maine, but for Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

The change in the statistics over the last week, in Maine the total cases have increased 21% (251 cases), of cumulative hospitalizations from last Monday are up 9% (16 cases), Maine deaths up 12% (7 cases) from last Monday. Massachusetts had a 14% increase in cases (9706), hospitalizations are down 11% for the week, but deaths are up 24% (975). New Hampshire, similar trends to what seeing here in Maine, 22% increase in testing, 10% increase in cumulative hospitalization and increase of 55% (47) deaths for the week.

Looking at a website called www.covidactnow.org which is a multi-disciplinary team of technologists, epidemiologists, health experts and public policy leaders who are working to provide the disease intelligence and data analysis on COVID-19 across the United States. This is a partnership with Stanford and Georgetown Universities. Some interesting facts about Maine, and specifically York County, the infection growth rate in Maine and York County is 1.06. This means that, on average, each person in Maine who is infected with COVID-19 is infecting 1.06 other people. Anything over 1 is bad, what this means is for Maine and York County that COVID-19 is growing but is growing at a relatively slow rate. In terms of positive testing rates in Maine, are at 11.3% positive testing which is up 6% from last Monday. According to the World Health Organization, they are recommending positive test rates in the 2-3% as being good. Maine is testing high, what that indicates right now is that the State is not doing enough testing.

Massachusetts infection growth rate is at .96%, which means theirs is shrinking a little bit as they are past the peak of their curve. Positive test rates in Massachusetts is at 14.5%, which is down from 16% last week.

The scientist do predictive analysis, one of their predictions for the State of Maine and York County is if keep on the current trends right now...over the next 90-days the

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infection rate could be 6%, deaths would be under 1,000 and would not tap out hospital capabilities.

If all the restrictions are lifted at this point across the entire state, the predictive outcome for the next 90-days, Maine and York County would reach it's hospital overload by June 10th, cumulative infection rates could exceed 70% and death rates could reach 1,000 (or over 1,000).

Rebecca Fox reviewed Critical Care Facilities; there are two main hospitals in York County that have critical care beds. York Hospital has 72 beds and 5 ICU beds, Southern Maine Medical Center has 150 beds and 9 ICU beds. Both hospitals have had COVID-19 patients; York Hospital 243 COVID patients, 49 in hospital and 8 deaths.

One-fifth of COVID cases in Maine have been healthcare workers. It is not just an issue of how many beds, but the staffing to take care of people.

An interesting modeling out of Oxford, which should keep in mind when discussing the beach, is that to keep the curve flattening and reducing is to maintain a social distancing level of 70%.

Currently there are 5 ICU patients in York Hospital and 5 non-COVID patients and 5 available beds.

4. Working Groups

- Beaches, Waterway Access — Bob Whitelaw

Power Point Presentation:

***Beaches, Waterways
Recommendations for the Select Board***

PHASE 1

Beaches

- Ogunquit Main and Footbridge beaches open subject to the following conditions:

Activities

- Walking, surfing, paddling, fishing.
- Those with physical limitations are welcome to remain in position on the beach.
- Sports related activities prohibited.
- Social distancing protocols in place per Public Health working group recommendations.
- Reminder: Dogs prohibited on all beaches.
- Estuary access prohibited due to tide considerations.

Parking

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- Limited parking open at Main and Footbridge beaches.
- 2019 and 2020 sticker holders only.
 - Note: as some who qualify for stickers have not been able to receive stickers, those with Transfer Station stickers or expired beach stickers will be allowed to park.
- Visitor Services allocates spaces based on need.

Important Considerations and Needs

- Appropriate PPE for Visitor Services colleagues.
- Beach users asked to wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- No congregation on the beaches.
- Necessary signage in parking lot; other public information tools.
- Necessary signage at the beach entrance.
- Metered lots remain closed until cleaning protocols can be developed.
- Select Board will determine appropriateness to move to the next phase.
- Health metrics in place per Public Health working group recommendations for surveillance and impact of beach openings.

Timing & Tides

- Parking Opens at 9:00am; close 4:00pm.
- Beach opening and closing times may be different.
- Visitor Services personnel empowered to close parking due to limited access caused by an excessive high tide.

Bathhouses

- Restrooms remain closed until future phases are implemented and cleaning protocols are in place.
- Main Beach bathhouse construction scheduled to end on May 20.

PHASE 2

Activities

- Walking, surfing, paddling, fishing, swimming.
- Chairs, blankets, etc., allowed; six feet social distancing in place for non-family units.
- Sports related activities allowed in designated areas as determined by lifeguards.
- Estuary access allowed with social distancing protocols in place.

Parking

- Parking open to residents and general public at a limited capacity level as determined by the Select Board.
- Parking times extended 8:00am to 6:00pm.
- Parking open at Main, Footbridge, North Beaches.
- Subject to cashless transaction capabilities in place.

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Important Considerations and Needs

- *Appropriate PPE for Visitor Services colleagues.*
- *Beach users asked to wear masks.*
- *Necessary signage in parking lot; other public information tools.*
- *Necessary signage at the beach entrance.*
- *Metered lots can open if cleaning protocols have been developed.*
- *Select Board determines appropriateness of moving to the phase.*
- *Health metrics in place per Public Health working group recommendations for surveillance and impact of beach goings.*

Timing & Tides

- *Beaches open at 8:00am; close 6:00pm.*
- *Visitor Services personnel empowered to close parking due to limited access caused by an excessive high tide.*

Bathhouses

- *Restrooms operate based on recommendations from Public Health working group.*

PHASE 3

Activities

- *Walking, swimming, paddling, fishing, surfing.*
- *Chairs, blankets, etc., allowed.*
- *Sport related activities allowed.*
- *Typical seasonal rules in effect.*

Parking

- *Parking open at Main, Footbridge, North Beaches.*
- *Metered lots open.*
- *Sticker holders and general public.*
- *Visitor Services in place to manage parking compliance.*
- *Subject to cashless transaction capability in place.*

Important Considerations and Needs

- *Appropriate PPE for Visitor Services colleagues.*
- *Public Health group determines protocol for metered parking sanitation.*
- *Health metrics in place per Public Health working group recommendations for surveillance and impact of beach openings.*

WATERWAYS

- *Waterway access only from Footbridge Beach in Phase 1.*
- *Waterway access from Footbridge Beach and Main Beach in Phase 2.*

Vice Chair Pam Sawyer continued the discussion about the beaches and waterway access.

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- ❖ Public health and public safety are featured in every phase of opening of the beaches and the waterways.

Public Safety

Terry Ann Lunt

- ❖ Implementation of the recommendations will have to be done in concert with the town's leadership, Public Works, Police, EMS and all of the Town employees who are affected by the recommendations.
- ❖ It would be helpful to review what was behind the Select Board making the difficult decision to close the beaches, what was the pressing set of factors that caused them to step up and do it. What was the motivation to make this decision; was it to eliminate congestion in town and to create a disincentive for people to come into Ogunquit.
- ❖ When thought about the risk of public congestion, focused on the following questions which drive when and how open the beaches:
 - When the beaches open, what are the public health measures that need to be taken to open them safely.
 - How do implement the new measures and when can get sufficient measures in place to prevent congestion.
 - What resources are going to be needed, personnel, materials, public education & information, modification of structures, walking routes, parking staffing and many other considerations.
- ❖ Answering those questions can drive when we can safely open and under what conditions, including the parking and major walking routes.
- ❖ And finally, how will know whether the activities are working around prevention of infection spread and sufficient adoption of public health and safety measures. What activities do need to undertake, who is going to undertake them, how frequently will look at objective data and some observational data collection and review.
- ❖ The overall recommendations really embody well-tested, successful public health strategies, trying to change behavior, that is what public health is all about. This can only be done through community wide adoption, largely through self-regulation and voluntary compliance. The entire community needs to embrace these changes; and support, encourage and model the changes.
- ❖ Compliance action, to get people to change behavior, to want to change behavior, has to rely on the public health strategy rather than individual enforcement actions.
- ❖ Primary recommendations include:
 - Controlling capacity.
 - Social Distancing.

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- Limiting number of parking spots available.
- Increasing the widths of walking routes.
- Queuing limitations and queuing marks.
- Utilization of face coverings (mask) when can't social distance.
- No cash parking fee payments.
- PPE and gear for beach employees and volunteers.
- Plentiful resources in all areas to make it easy for people to sanitize their hands and masks available.
- Cleaning and sanitizing all public spaces on and around the beaches including bathhouse, benches and other high contact areas.
- The major way to get this done is through public education and information to optimize self-compliance and self-regulation.
- Significant resources and time are needed to implement and put in place to protect the public health.
- Staff orientation and training to incorporate new expectations that will be required and to help them encourage people to social distance, not congregate and move along without conflict; and to help them manage conflict if it occurs.
- Will need lots of materials; content design & distribution, additional signage in additional places, mark & block off parking lots and sidewalks, routing and queuing, additional personnel in Public Works & Facilities.

Buzzy Roy

- ❖ Suggested that fishing on the bridges should not be allowed to allow the flow of foot traffic to keep going.
- ❖ Need to make sure that all staff have masks.
- ❖ Are the going to get liability insurance and hazard pay for this job as it is not the same job that they had last year.
- ❖ Either open the parking lots or close the parking lots...dead set against resident only parking.

Vice Chair Sawyer stated that have been in contact with Visitor Services, they have protective equipment and are doing training. Also giving the staff the option as to whether they want to work as a lot of them are in the "At Risk" category.

- Data

Kent Bridges

- ❖ In terms of the beaches and the data around that, Kent stated that he and Becky have been looking at data across multiple different areas trying to

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figure out what can be presented to the Task Force to make data-driven decisions.

- ❖ Data is not always the answer for everything, experience is too.
- ❖ Trying to find data about California and Florida as to what happened when they opened their beaches.
- ❖ What is happening in Georgia now that a lot of the businesses are opening, what is the impact.
- ❖ It may be too early to tell and tough data to find to directly correlate an action to something happening (spike).
- ❖ Relevant to the beaches opening, wanted to present the possibilities in terms of capacity.
- ❖ Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission cites that the year-round population at 1,337 with 1,081 seasonal units. In the peak season they are calculating 3.5 people in those units which equates to 3,784 additional people.
- ❖ Hotels, motels, and bed & breakfasts and inns, they are calculating 5,072 units with peak capacity per unit at 2.25; cottages 3.5 per unit for an additional 14 people.
- ❖ The additional seasonal population according to this commission could be upwards of 8,870, added to the year-round population this adds up to right around 10,200.
- ❖ This does not address the day-tripper population, which surges 20,000 to 30,000 per day in the summer.
- ❖ Looked at a 2019 DPA report for visitors to Maine Beaches, 27% of visitors come from Massachusetts and stay overnight, 56% of the Massachusetts people are day-trippers. New Hampshire at 7%, 24% are day-trippers.
- ❖ As think about opening the beaches in without dates, here are some data points:
 - For May think the maximum town population for year-round, seasonal and Airbnb would be around 3,800 people.
 - For June, that is when lodging opens up to in-state residents, do not know what that will be = 3,800+ is the potential capacity.
 - July, assuming that the 14-day quarantine is lifted early, could be up to the 10,000 number quickly. It depends, not only on the restrictions being lifted, but on the people and whether they will stay away... we do not know.
 - Tried to substantiate these numbers with parking lot statistics.

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ The big unknown is the number of people coming in for the day, especially in good weather and more on weekends.

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- ❖ The 56% of Massachusetts that does not stay for the night but comes for the day, that is the number for all of Maine beaches and is probably much higher for beaches in southern Maine.
 - ❖ With gas prices the way they are, people will be driving to beaches.
- Businesses

Alice Pearce

- ❖ Update from the Governor's Office last week:
 - Retail and restaurants are able to open June 1st in some capacity.
 - State approved guidelines have been released for businesses.
 - Important concern for the business community is the opening of the beaches and the Marginal Way which are the town's key natural attractions that bring people to Ogunquit. This is important to the business community.
 - If going to be a task force the is making recommendations to the Select Board then our beach opening should include a recommended starting date for Phase I.
 - Had conversations about Phase II and Phase III, but Governor's Mills has delineated Phase II, III and IV at the State level.
 - Maine is the only State that has gone out that far in their planning regarding 14-day quarantine process.
 - Need to see how things go before recommending any opening dates to the Select Board for Phase II and III.
 - Monday, May 18th would be the preferred opening date to see how it goes through the week as there are usually more people around on the weekends.
 - The group talked about May 18th, May 25th and June 1st and the pros and cons of each of those dates. May 18th would give the town time to have a soft opening to see how things go before Memorial Day Weekend.
 - The group also suggested that the beach and parking lot opening times be different, open the parking from 9:00am to 4:00pm in Phase I and opening it up a little in Phase II, but have the beach open to walking, paddling, swimming and surfing during the traditional hours of 6:30am to 11:00pm.

Rick Barber

- ❖ What are we doing with the businesses in this process; technically nobody is supposed to be coming here from out-of-state until June 1st, as far as parking for out of state (non-sticker holders)?

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- ❖ What would work out well with parking is that anybody that has a sticker or is a resident can go on the beach. Also, you do not need to have car to go to the beach, you can walk onto the beach as it is a public way.

Bob Whitelaw

- ❖ Two things that have to determine as a group:
 - Are we going to make a recommendation tomorrow?
 - Are we going to put dates in?
 - What are we going to do about Footbridge?
 - Remember these are recommendations to the Select Board.
- At Risk Populations

Pam Sawyer

- ❖ CDC defines the "At Risk" population as individuals over the age of 65 and people that have underlying medical conditions.
- ❖ Encourage people to go on the website, Restarting Maine's Economy, and see that the "At Risk" population is.
- ❖ If you are an "At Risk" it is your decision, need to stay home, need to follow the CDC guidelines...need to social distance, need to wear a mask.
- ❖ If you do want to come to the beach and are looking at beach openings, how do you manage someone "At Risk"?
- ❖ Was at the beach, there are six handicap spots (for parking) near the benches. Those will be open regardless which phase that the town is in.
- ❖ May want to propose that people who are "At Risk", that they sit in front of their cars in the handicap spaces.
- ❖ There are benches under the awning in the summertime, will need to look at them and how they are used. May want to look at use by people that meet ADA regulations, people with walkers, wheelchairs, canes, etc.
- ❖ Need to look at how to keep those benches clean.
- ❖ There is a high population of people over 65 in Ogunquit, need to be cognizant of that and go forward that way.
- ❖ Making a specific recommendation to say you can or cannot walk the beach, how you identify yourself breaches civil liberties so should not be doing that.

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Really self-directed at people who are "At Risk". If look at the CDC guidelines, the Maine CDC recommends in more than one place about "At Risk" people.
- ❖ "At Risk" people should stay at home when possible.
- ❖ Bathrooms are a place that could be a problem, the in and out of bathrooms for somebody "At Risk".

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- ❖ Concerned about Footbridge Beach as well as the bridge at Perkins Cove, and the other bridges on Marginal Way regarding the lack of room for social distancing. Will have to come up with some type of guidelines as to how to use the bridges.
- ❖ People can sit in their cars with the windows down and not even have to get out of their cars which is a good option.
- ❖ Consider signage for people to be respectful of others that may not be as mobile or healthy as everyone else.

5. Initial Recommendations for the Select Board

Chair Whitelaw

- ❖ Process Points-
 1. Task Force is not allowed to meet unless in a public forum.
 2. Task Force is not allowed to reply to the Chair's e-mails as a group.
- ❖ Everyone on the Task Force has worked a ton of hours, gone out and have done a lot of work and have a lot of thoughts that have been put into this.
- ❖ The question before the team is, before putting up a recommendation to the Select Board, take some public comment.

Motion made by Rick Barber and second by Buzzy Roy to allow the public to get involved at this juncture of the meeting; approved 9-0.

Public comments/questions from:

- Joan Sulis-Kramer, Israel Head Road
- Josh DeSalvo, Main Street
- Neil DeLuca, Berwick Road
- Rick Barber
- Mark Duffton, Hoyts Lane
- Thomas Schulz, Youngs Crossing North
- Amy Forbes, Riverside Lane

Chair Whitelaw

- ❖ Recommended to open the beach to residents and non-residents with its regular hours and Main Parking Lot open from 9:00am to 4:00pm and Footbridge Beach and the Parking Lot are not open; starting on the day that the construction on the restrooms ends for Phase I.

Discussion was held among the Task Force regarding the opening of the beach(es), parking lots and date of opening.

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Motion made by Alice Pearce and second by Charley LaFlamme to open the Main Beach for its normal hours, the Main Beach Parking Lot, free of charge, with no restriction on residency on Monday, May 18, 2020; in favor Bob, Kent, Alice, Rick and Charley; opposed Terry, Pam, and Buzzy, no vote from Becky.

Motion made by Alice Pearce and second by Charley LaFlamme to open the Main Beach for its normal hours, the Main Beach Parking Lot which includes charging for parking on weekends with credit cards only, no restriction on residency, on Monday, May 18, 2020 pursuant to Phase I recommendations; approved 8-0, no vote from Terry.

Motion made by Rick Barber and second by Charley LaFlamme to open the Footbridge Beach for its normal hours, the Footbridge Beach Parking Lot which includes charging for parking on weekends with credit cards only, the Footbridge with appropriate signage on each end of the bridge about social distancing/masks, no fishing on the bridge, no restriction on residency, on Monday, May 18, 2020 pursuant to Phase I recommendations; approved 8-1, Becky opposed.

Motion made by Pam Sawyer and second by Rick Barber that with these amendments the document is accepted for Chair Whitelaw to make these recommendations to the Select Board at their meeting on May 12, 2020 at 6:00pm; approved 9-0.

6. Adjourn

Motion made by Rick Barber and second by Buzzy Roy to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm; approved 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl L. Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager

Next Meeting: May 18 at 4:30 p.m.