



**COMMUNITY COVID-19 TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 18, 2020**

This meeting was held via Zoom.

1. Welcome and recitation of charge

Meeting called to order at 4:30pm.

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

Members absent: Kent Bridges

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 adopting best practice protocols for restaurants, lodging and other businesses. These recommendations would then go to the Select Board for resolution.

2. Minutes from May 11, 2020

Motion made by Terry Ann Lunt and second by Rick Barber to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2020 Community COVID-19 Task Force; approved 8-0, Bridges absent.

3. Review most recent disclosures from MCDC

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Reported he watched the update today from Dr. Shah; one additional death today and 26 people testing positive for a total number of 1,713 cases. As of yesterday, there were 1,533 confirmed and 180 probable, 223 people are in the hospital, 1,053 recovered. Of the confirmed cases, 380 were healthcare workers.

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ Reviewed the information from Kent Bridges. There were 300 more cases this week, using weekly as watching for trends. The hospitalizations have been stable, there are 37 hospitalized cases. Stabilized ICU patients, more recoveries and the deaths went from 65 to 70. In New Hampshire, the deaths went up by 40, and Massachusetts had an increase of 700 deaths this week, but their hospitalizations are going down, their ICU cases are going down and their tests are going up. Mostly it is a steady picture.

Rick Barber

- ❖ Informed the group that the Governor mentioned today that there is more testing available. The requirements for testing are no longer as strict as they were as more testing is available.

Pamela Sawyer

- ❖ Stated that at a nursing home in York, Durgin Pines, staff has tested positive for the virus. Because the available testing, all staff will be tested.

4. Working Groups

Marginal Way

- ❖ **Marginal Way Data (using Marginal Way people counter)**
 - ❖ Monthly for 2018 and 2019:
 - ❖ May: 30,000-32,000 users.
 - ❖ June 49,000-56,000 users.
 - ❖ Daily averages for May and June - 2,000-2,500 per day.
 - ❖ Increases to 78,000-84,000 in July & August.
 - ❖ Memorial weekend 2018-2019 (thanks to Jim Oliver).
 - ❖ Friday: 900-1,200.
 - ❖ Saturday: 2,400-2,500.
 - ❖ Sunday: 2,300-3,400.

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- ❖ Monday: 1,500-1,900.
- ❖ Memorial Day weekend in total, historically, the Marginal Way would expect 7,500-9,000 people.
- ❖ Many walkers go one way only, however, if you walk in both directions, you are counted twice.
- ❖ Paved path is 5 feet wide. At some spots wider (1 ft) with gravel on one or both sides.
- ❖ Some spots wider (Lighthouse) and some single file (around Beachmere).
- ❖ 9 public gateways; 2 private (hotels).
- ❖ No counts on Little Beach users, however, not walkers but rather hotel, surfers, and residents in the neighbourhood.

Joan Griswold was invited to participate in the meeting as Chair of the Marginal Way. Joan presented a slide show regarding the opening of the Marginal Way.

COVID Safety

References from Mass General/Brigham and John Hopkins

- *Hygiene - Frequent Hand Washing.*
- *Distancing.*
- *Self-screening.*
- *Masks.*
- *Culture - Social Responsibility (most difficult)*

COMPARISONS

- *Maine Botanical - still closed, lots of room to spread out.*
- *Rachel Carson - closed, narrow trail like ours.*
- *High Line (NYC) - closed, extremely constricted.*
- *Acadia - closed.*
- *Laudholm - brief visit, no bathrooms, carry in/carry out, spacious.*
- *Mass Hort (MA) - Elm Bank - members only, reserve time slot, spacious.*
- *Arnold Arboretum (Boston) - no parking, not bathrooms, no sanitation, spacious.*
- *AMC Huts - closed for the season.*

SUGGESTIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- *ONE WAY - Town to Cove (North to South).*
- *Everyone required to wear MASK.*
- *Physical distancing (how even possible on 5' wide path?).*
- *Keep moving at all times, except to grab empty bench. No congregating on path talking, blocking other walkers.*

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- *ONE WAY signs in Cove, all access paths and Lighthouse to stop walkers from enter Marginal Way to go North.*
- *Policy for passing other walkers: announce loudly "Passing of Left".*
- *Notification (Town wide issue) to new guidelines for conduct on Marginal Way.*

QUESTIONS

- *Limit number of people on Marginal Way at any one time? Time slots reserved?*
- *GPS monitoring system to control numbers?*
- *Is there WAZE-like app for pedestrians to check for heavy traffic?*
- *Enforcement - number of people, congregation, no mask, etc.?*
- *Groups - birding, weddings, school (when in session)?*
- *Town hand out masks to walkers if necessary?*
- *Sanitizing benches, railings, (fences, beach stairs, footbridge)?*
- *Protect DPW or volunteer workers?*
- *Keep Marginal Way closed this summer?*
- *Shore Road foot traffic - getting people back from Cove to where they started from? Extremely constricted as well.*
- *Restrict runners after 7:30am? Senior hours?*
- *Safe role for volunteers? Visitor Services?*
- *Will public bathrooms be open? (otherwise the public will use private properties - happens already on Marginal Way)*

COVID GUIDELINES - MARGINAL WAY

- *Help keep Ogunquit Healthy.*
- *Walk at your own risk.*
- *Wear face covering.*
- *Social distance - 6'.*
- *Keep moving - don't linger.*
- *Carry your own hand sanitizer.*
- *Don't touch anything - we do not sanitize surfaces (benches, railings, etc.)*
- *Carry in- carry out your belongings.*
- *Stay on path - protect our native plants.*
- *If you are sick, stay home!*

Joan explained that she found the following poster on the Massachusetts Audubon Society website:

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Pamela Sawyer

- ❖ Thanked Joan Griswold for her detailed presentation. Whether to open or close the Marginal Way will be based on the recommendations by the Task Force to the Select Board, which would then be implemented by the town.

Bob Whitelaw

- ❖ Commented on the questions about access to Little Beach. Mr. Whitelaw suggested that Little Beach be opened up for those people who want to cross across Marginal Way to get to Little Beach.

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ The idea of having Marginal Way be one-way is interesting. How would this work with people being stuck in the Cove? Having signage that says it is one-way, would that be good enough?

Pamela Sawyer

- ❖ Asked if Alice if the Trolleys would be running this year. The answer at this point is - don't know.

Rick Barber

- ❖ Having a list of things to do and proper signage pretty much covers the same activities that is happening on the beach, walking around town on the sidewalks. As

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far as the one-way, as long as the list (signage) is posted, don't think that have to go one-way.

Joan Griswold

- ❖ Question about the 50 people gathering per State Order, does this put limitations on the number of people.

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Does not see the need for one-way on Marginal Way as long as masks are required. Comments on people who are jogging on the Marginal Way, suggested no jogging on Marginal Way.

Alice Pearce

- ❖ Commented on how some people walk faster than others. No jogging is probably not enough, not sure how to phrase it, there are some people that walk faster than others.

Beaches discussion on Phase II and charging for parking.

Motion made by Pamela Sawyer and second by Terry Ann Lunt to table the agenda item *Beaches discussion on phase 2 and charging for parking lots*; approved 8-0, Bridges absent.

Pamela Sawyer

- ❖ Commented on the opening of the beach today, May 18th, 2020. She stated that she had been to Main Beach twice and Footbridge Beach and took pictures of both. At present there is no signage saying "social distance, wear masks" or anything remotely like that. There were not many people at the Footbridge or Main Beach while she was present. Most people were social distancing and had masks on. There were a lot of surfboarders and people going out in kayaks at Footbridge. Stated that she did notice that the estuary beaches were being used from the Footbridge.

Lieutenant Buttrick

- ❖ Gave an update on the signage that had been ordered, stating that the lead time had gone from 2 days to 7 seven days since everyone around is ordering signage. He reported that all the signage had come in this afternoon and should be in place tomorrow.

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Businesses

Alice Pearce - presented a proposal for the Task Force to review:

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND OUTSIDE RESTAURANT & RETAIL FOOTPRINTS DURING THE UPCOMING TOURISM SEASON

RATIONALE

Open-air dining and shopping are likely the single most cost-effective way the town can support businesses this season.

Relaxing the rules regarding outside sales also underscores the town's commitment to safe dining and shopping. Guests will feel safer in an outdoor setting.

Restaurants - *Zoning flexibility allows our restaurants to come as close as possible to maintaining their current capacities (seating limits, etc.) by utilizing the outdoor areas of their properties (lawns, parking lots, etc.) to allow for lower customer density.*

Retail - *Zoning flexibility allows our retail businesses to provide more safe circulation space within the shop, and let shoppers see a selection of products in a comfortable and healthy manner before they enter the store or while waiting in line to visit. Most of our shops will currently be allowed five customers at a time, compared to the hundreds that typically visit on any given day during the summer season.*

SUMMARY

Restaurants:

- ▶ *Select Board would need to relax some sections of the zoning ordinance, e.g., off street parking & loading, signs and possibly lighting.*
- ▶ *Process for liquor consumption approval based on BABLO regulations.*
- ▶ *Restaurants would be required to follow protocols for outside dining, based on Maine DECD guidelines.*

Retail:

- ▶ *Select Board would need to relax some sections of the zoning ordinance, e.g., off street parking & loading, signs and possibly lighting.*
- ▶ *Retail businesses would be required to follow protocols for outside retail sales, based on Maine DECD guidelines.*

DETAILS

1) Outdoor space:

Businesses should be allowed to maintain their current capacities (seating limits, customer

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occupancy, etc.) but may utilize the outdoor areas of their properties (lawns, parking lots, etc.) to allow for lower customer density. In the case of multiple tenant properties, the tenants and owners would establish the priorities. No additional seating beyond what has been previously approved on the latest license would be allowed.

Town manager or designee shall be authorized to administratively allow town parking and public spaces to be used for alternative purposes within reason. Such spaces could assist with curbside pickup, pedestrian walkways, or the opportunity to reduce customer densities. This shall also include the authorization to create temporary parking spaces if needed. All such modifications must be made in writing and reported to the Select Board at the next available meeting.

Requests for these allowances would be considered on an individual basis and could be recognized provided that businesses acknowledge that this consideration is only a temporary accommodation that the town is extending in the extraordinary circumstances of the current pandemic; accommodation will cease as soon as the state of emergency is terminated by the Governor or other time as determined by the Select Board.

In exchange for these temporary allowances, each business must be following the operation guidelines created by the Maine DECD for their business category. Repeated failure to adhere to stated social distancing, sanitary and safety standards could result in the rescinding of these temporary allowances.

2) Signage:

We request a moratorium on the sign ordinance through December 31, 2020 with the following stipulations.

- ▶ All businesses be allowed to have one outdoor sign (2 ft x 3 ft sandwich board).
- ▶ No restrictions on signage on the outside of business windows.
- ▶ No restrictions on flags or banners attached to a building promoting the theme "Open for Business" or "Welcome back".

3) Parking:

Appropriate town staff should work with businesses on a case by case basis to identify parking needs for curbside delivery and takeout, making allowances where possible for designated parking spots. Take each business on a case by case basis, to be reassessed each month as we transition to expanded business openings.

4) Lighting:

The Select Board should relax the restrictions on outside lighting in expanded dining and sales areas if necessary, for safety or aesthetics, if it does not adversely affect passing motorists or produce unnecessary glare.

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IN CLOSING

Many towns are also considering allowing businesses to expand into private and public outdoor space, shutting down parking spaces to create more room for pedestrian walkways, and closing specific streets and rerouting traffic for restaurants & shops to expand into that space & provide additional space for pedestrian social distancing.

According to "HospitalityMaine", Governor Mills is supporting this flexibility to help the tourism economy.

These include, but are not limited to:

In Maine: Rockland, Portland, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, York, Bath, Kittery

In New Hampshire: Hampton Beach, Manchester, Concord, Nashua, Keene

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ Asked about restaurants having their usual capacity, how is that measured? Alice explained that tables would have to be six (6) feet apart.
- ❖ The other issue is lines in front of shops and restaurants and maintaining distances. Alice stated that would have to figure out the traffic flow to adhere to the extremely strict re-opening guidelines.

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Stated that he knows of one restaurant that will not be re-opening, asked if Alice knew of any others that may not re-open.
- ❖ Buzzy stated that he will not be re-opening for this season.

Data

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ Stated that she and Ken have been amassing data on all sorts of subjects.
- ❖ The weekly data is more important to follow as can look at trends better.
- ❖ Goodall Hospital in Sanford was not mentioned last week, they do not have ICU beds but does have an emergency room. It is part of the Southern Maine Medical Center system.
- ❖ York Hospital released information on May 11th, they have tested 583 people with 42 positive which is a rate of 7%. Have had 17 COVID inpatients, 6 have recovered, 5 have died, 3 were transferred to a more critical care bed in another hospital and 3 were transferred to hospice home or rehab facility. The hospital has had quite a bit of experience with testing and have had people in the ICU.

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- ❖ Looked at parking capacity data: there are approximately 1,150 paid parking spaces that are town-owned (including 412 at Main Beach, 192 at Footbridge Beach, 195 at North Beach). The rest are at Perkins Cove, Obeds and Lower Lot which are hourly parking rates for increased revenues. There are a bunch of free spaces around the town in the village and Jacobs Lot.
- ❖ Scott Heyland, CEO, estimates that there are between 500-600 private spaces in town.
- ❖ This brings the total of approximately 2,200 spaces to park in Ogunquit.
- ❖ Also looked at the age spread. According to the voter list, 27% of voters are under 55, 22% are ages 55-64 and 51% are 65 or older. This reflects the year-round population, rather than the summer residents.
- ❖ Looked at the tax base in town: \$9,214,000 comes from resident property owners (both voters and non-voters), \$1,800,000 comes from commercial properties.
- ❖ Next week will be looking at the effect of increased testing. Right now you can get tested if you are a healthcare worker, if getting pre-op elective surgery and can get tested if you have symptoms. Going forward the hope is the expansion of a minimum daily testing rate and more testing for high risk workers such as grocery store workers.

Note: see attachment to minutes for additional data.

At Risk (Vulnerable Population)

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Stated that most of the information comes from the Maine CDC, have quite a lot of information about Vulnerable or At-Risk populations.
- ❖ Had a conversation with Doug Wilson from the Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging(SMAAA). They have expanded the "Meals o Wheels" program to include everybody and anybody who is homebound. They are not requiring the criteria on income right now, so if homebound, they will deliver to the home.
- ❖ Stated that he will be on a weekly Zoom call with SMAAA, who gets together with the Maine CDC and the Maine Council on Aging.
- ❖ Sent out information to Chair Whitelaw and Town Manager Finnigan regarding an AARP webinar on "Trends in the COVID Response".
- ❖ Ogunquit is the oldest town in the oldest state in the U.S.

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Public Safety

Buzzy Roy

- ❖ Holistically need to promote sloganeering, promote mask use, try to make sure businesses do the best they can for tracing, spacing outside of restaurants and businesses to no interrupt the flow of traffic/pedestrians. Want to work pedestrian traffic going one-way
- ❖ Wanted to let employees know if don't feel safe going to work, can reach out to OSHA or the Maine Labor Board for when you can refuse work and not effect benefits.
- ❖ Want to work with the business owners for a sense of trust to help them mitigate losses for their businesses, show faith and trust that will do the right thing and work with them and allow them to try to operate their businesses as best they can within the guidelines.

Terry Ann Lunt

- ❖ Most concerned about congestion on the sidewalks and downtown. Possibility of doing one-way pedestrian traffic for social distancing.
- ❖ This past weekend there were a lot of people in town and a lot of people doing their walks on Route One. Only saw one couple and one party of three that made no effort to social distance and did not have masks, out of approximately 50 people.
- ❖ This will be the challenge.

Task Force Comments:

Bob Whitelaw

- ❖ Shout out to colleagues at the Transfer Station, thanked them for their service and their comments.

Buzzy Roy

- ❖ Just slogans "No Masks, No Maine" "Don't make us ask, wear a mask".

Rebecca Fox

- ❖ Address the congestion in town, have not talked about the Cove very much.
- ❖ Anything the town can do to make visitors feel safe about going into a business, store or restaurant is going to benefit everybody

Rick Barber

- ❖ Only thought is talking about other issues like parking and where people are going to be on the street.

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- ❖ Commented that one-way on Marginal Way will not work well, as well as one-way on Shore Road. To monitor and police would be more work.

Charley LaFlamme

- ❖ Would like to emphasize the point that over half of the population in Ogunquit is over 65 years old.
- ❖ The CDC has some great guidelines on how to protect yourself.
- ❖ There is some great help in town, Police are there to do well-being checks, become a member of SMAAA and they will deliver meals.

Alice Pearce

- ❖ Underscore that the business will be doing the right thing, want to show that they are good community partners.

Terry Ann Lunt

- ❖ No matter how good we are or what we do, there are a lot of people who are carriers and can spread the virus. The virus is in charge, we are not in charge, so no matter what is done not going to be able to protect everybody from risk.
- ❖ Need the model the behavior to protect one another as best as can.

Pamela Sawyer

- ❖ Thanked everyone who did great presentations today.
- ❖ Would like to see a place on the website where all of this data and information could be posted.
- ❖ Be safe, social distance, wear a mask and be respectful.

5. Public Comment

Comments and questions from:

- Janice Marcus
- Karen Topchik
- Michael Sgambati
- David Fazzino
- Jim Hartwell

6. Any motions on recommendations for the Select Board

Motion made by Pamela Sawyer and second by Rick Barber to recommend to the Select Board that the Marginal Way be opened on Monday, June 1st pursuant to the recommendations from Joan Griswold (MWC), page 6 (which includes *Help keep*

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Ogunquit Healthy, Walk at your own risk, Wear face covering, Social distance - 6', Keep moving - don't linger, Carry your own hand sanitizer, Don't touch anything - we do not sanitize surfaces (benches, railings, etc.), Carry in- carry out your belongings, Stay on path - protect our native plants and If you are sick, stay home), with two-way traffic, and that Chair Whitelaw will write up the presentation that is to be delivered to the Select Board on May 19th; approved 7-1, Lunt in opposition, Bridges absent.

Motion made by Buzzy Roy and second by Terry Ann Lunt to present to the Select Board the '*PROPOSAL TO EXPAND OUTSIDE RESTAURANT & RETAIL FOOTPRINTS DURING THE UPCOMING TOURISM SEASON*' from Alice Pearce; approved 8-0, Bridges absent.

7. Adjourn

Motion made by Rick Barber and second by Buzzy Roy to adjourn the meeting at 7 :05pm, approved 8-0, Bridges absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl L. Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager

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Additional Data

Marginal Way Data (using Marginal Way people counter)

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- > Monday: 1,500-1,900

Memorial Day weekend in total, historically, the Marginal Way would expect 7,500-9,000 people

Many walkers go one way only; however, if you walk in both directions, you are counted twice. Paved path is 5 feet wide. At some spots wider 1 ft with grave on one or both side. Some spots wider (Lighthouse) and some single file (around Beachmere). There are 9 public gateways; 2 private (hotels). No counts on Little Beach users, however, not walkers but rather hotel, surfers and residents in the neighbourhood.

York Hospital released some cumulative information on May 11th:

- 42 positive Covid tests of out of 583 (7%)
- 17 Covid in-patients: 6 recovered, 5 had died, 3 were transferred to a more critical care bed in another hospital, and 3 were transferred to hospice, home care & a rehab facility

Town Parking:

There are 1,150 paid spaces that are Town operated: including 412 main beach, 192 Footbridge and 195 North Beach. Then the Cove, Obeds and the Lower lot (have hourly rates for increased revenue) (Thanks to Ray Hamlin)
Free spaces such as Jacob's, Upper Lot, Fishermen in the Cove, around the Village area, Stearns, etc.

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Scott Heyland estimates 500-600 private parking spaces in Town including Beach St, Hutchins, Shore Rd, restaurants in the Cove, Angelina's etc.; approximately 2,200 spaces.

Age Span according to the most recent Town Voter's List: 27% of voters are under age 55, 22% are ages 55-64, and 51% are 65 or older.

According to the tax revenue base in Town, \$9,214,000 comes from resident property owners (voter and non-voters) and \$1,800,000 comes from commercial properties.

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