



**COMMUNITY COVID-19 TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020**

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order at 4:00pm.

Member present: Bob Whitelaw, Chair
Pamela Sawyer, Vice Chair
Rick Barber
Kent Bridges
Rebecca Fox
Charley LaFlamme
Terry Ann Lunt
Buzzy Roy

Others present: Erich Fogg, PA, York Hospital
Officer Thomas Orlando

2. Minutes

There were no minutes available for approval.

3. Review of the Select Board meeting

Chair Whitelaw stated that he sat in for the short period of time with the Select Board. Turned the meeting over to Pam, because there was some discussion around Parks and Recreation Committee and some issues with the upcoming event on Sunday.

Pamela Sawyer

- Was taken aback at the Parks & Recreation when it was said by a couple people that they had reached out to her regarding the sandcastle contest this weekend and had not received anything.
- Did communicate later in the evening with Michelle Low, the co-chair of the committee.
- The committee did reach out to the Task Force to see if had any input on what they were doing. They had taken all the precautions they possibly could for this type of event.

- The event, Sandcastle Contest, is on Sunday, September 6, 2020 from 9:00am to noon. High tide is at 2:30pm.
- Have been working with Lt. Buttrick who will be providing CSO and Reserve Officer support.
- Spoke to Michelle that any volunteers that were going to be patrolling and monitoring the beach are required to wear masks.
- Parks & Recreation will be holding a big event on Sunday the 6th which will be "Art in the Park". They will be making sure that everyone is following the CDC Protocols and handing out masks.

Comments/questions:

- Rebecca Fox
- Kent Bridges

4. CDC Update

Charley LaFlamme

- On the Maine CDC website: nothing unusual, positivity rates are just under 2% at this point and Cumberland and York counties continue to be the two counties most affected and Androscoggin right behind, then Penobscot and Kennebec. Thought Penobscot would get a spike because of the Millinocket incident with the wedding up there. The county least affected is Piscataquis, which is the least populated as well, they have only had 8 cases. Cumberland has had 2,200 and York has had 851, Androscoggin has had 616 cases.
- By age it still continues to be the younger people who are more affected.
 - 20 year old+ - 765 cases
 - 30 year old+ - 710 cases
 - 40 year old+ - 667 cases
 - 50 year old+ - 733 cases
 - 60 year old+ - 525 cases
 - 70 year old+ - 356 cases
 - 80 year old+ - 346 cases
- The concern is the older people tend to die from it.
- Between men and women, the numbers are almost the same until you get to hospitalizations. There are 240 men hospitalized and only 183 women, so 57 more men hospitalized than women, but the other numbers are pretty close.

Erich Fogg, PA, York Hospital

- Have had no new hospital admissions since spoke to you all two weeks ago. Interestingly, the same two people that were admitted that week are still in the hospital but seem to be improving, no new admissions.

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- Nobody under investigation currently at the hospital. So, have that little bit of a blip there, the gaining criteria hasn't changed, it actually went down for the week of August 23rd to August 29th, the percent positive rate was 0.5%.
- Are noticing a slight trend, the last three weeks were doing less testing, so going back to the week of August 9th did a high of 1,075 tests.
- The week of August 16 did 1,032 and then last week did 966, seeing a little trend going down which could be attributed to the fact are weeding out of tourist season, which is probably driving a lot of traffic.
- Did see a little bit of the college students using the test site because a lot of the local universities required a negative COVID screen to get to campus and those kids are pretty much back on campus now. So maybe that's explaining the slight down trend.
- Everyone's watching the news, there was a wedding up in Millinocket, Maine on August 9th that had an outbreak of cases and the tentacles of that outbreak has reached York County. So apparently one of the guest at the wedding worked at the York County jail and now subsequently as of yesterday there's about 69 total cases attributed to the York County Jail in Alfred. There's a church in Sanford, the Calvary Baptist Church, the pastor of that church officiated the wedding up in Millinocket and several people from that church went to that wedding as well. There are at least five cases that we know of at the church.
- The Sanford Fire Department had a handful of cases as well, again, tied to that outbreak.
- Schools are getting ready to open in the next week or so, and all schools were **green** going into this week, but the Department of Education has put an asterisk next to York County and Penobscot County, given these two outbreaks and they will make their final decision Friday as to whether that status changes. And if it does, that may impact or delay the start of schools.
- The other thing coming into play in the news, is fall sports in the high schools. That's something that the Maine Principals Association voted to go forward with, then the State came back and said not so fast and took a strong position on that. So that has still got to be determined.
- That is the overview of what's going on here at York Hospital and extending out into our communities and our county.
- Most of the cases that have been seeing from the York County Jail are asymptomatic cases or mildly symptomatic cases.

Comments/questions:

- Bob Whitelaw
- Charley LaFlamme
- Rick Barber
- Rebecca Fox

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5. Update from the field

Officer Thomas Orlando

- An update on our end. The weekend after the last meeting had Officers and/or CSOs at Main Beach and Footbridge Beach lots and beach entrances. On Saturday about 400 masks were given out and Sunday about 200.
- Continue to do some proactive and reactive checks for businesses. Doing random spot checks at businesses for compliance. It has been well received and really had very few violations. Any issues that were encountered have been minor and were corrected right away while doing the check.
- Of the masks that have been going out, we started giving out individually wrapped masks, or if we don't have those available, the Officers and CSOs are using gloves just to help limit the spread of any germs when handing out masks since are handing them out to lots of people.
- There are two mailboxes for masks, self-service mask dispensers. There's one at the Main Beach bathhouse, and then another one at the Marginal Way entrance on Shore Road. The Police Department has been assisting and filling those for Department of Public Works, keeping them full. Those have the individually wrapped masks in there, that way people aren't touching them.
- Continue to provide PPE to all the Town departments and any residents in town or anybody who asks. Have given out lots of PPE to anybody who needs it.
- As far as the reactive business checks, had a handful of complaints over the past two weeks. But again, it's been very minor or there have been no concerns when actually responded and checked on it.
- The Marginal Way was a spot that had a lot of complaints about no masks in the past. That's not happening so much anymore, very low. Last week Police Department gave one ticket to one person who refused to wear a mask. But otherwise, there's been very good compliance and as a result have been receiving very few complaints about people not wearing masks on the Marginal Way. That's going pretty well with what is being doing there. There's the mailbox at the Shore Road entrance and then halfway through at the lighthouse. That is where have been keeping an Officer or typically a CSO to hand out masks or remind people to wear their masks.
- Regarding equipment, Dave Riccio applied for a State Grant which a part of that grant was for cameras. Given the time of year, have lost some CSOs going back to school or just back to regular jobs. Have deployed some cameras in the more remote lots or even down at Main Beach. That way, because we just don't have as much staff, are able to cover ideally the same amount of area and then deploy our resources where they're needed. Can monitor the cameras at Footbridge Beach or North Beach or Main Beach. If see a lot of non-compliance, then can send an Officer to that area instead of just purely guessing where they should be.

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Comments/questions:

- Pamela Sawyer
- Rebecca Fox

6. Review of recent citizen contact

Rick Barber

- Really is very quiet.
- Guest of ours are saying how they're really comfortable here in town because they're walking around, and people are wearing masks and people are respectful.
- Our guests are saying they felt very comfortable on the beach because they could walk down and get away from crowd.
- I think we're all doing a darn good job right now.

7. Sub-Group Reports

Data

Kent Bridges

- At the meeting two weeks ago Becky and I are recapped the prior meeting we had with Mike Blazejowski where we reviewed his beach congestion model, his beach crowding model and reported at that meeting that the numbers that Mike derived were very similar to what we did through looking at other data we had.
- Went away from the meeting, two weeks ago with a task to come back to the Task Force and recap some recommendations and considerations for the Town to consider, if not for this season, to control or limit crowds on and around the beach. If not for this year, for future consideration next season or the following season if we're dealing with pandemic conditions or any other conditions. So, Becky and I compiled four points that wanted to discuss with the Task Force today and are going to kind of tag team through those.

Rebecca Fox

- May have a new normal going forward, where don't want to be in crowded situations. That way might have been comfortable in the past, whether there's an acute pandemic or not. And the other is to see if there were some issues that could recommend to the Town or its Committees or Boards to work on over the fall and winter that might be more general.
- The first issue is entrance. The entrance ramp to the beach is the main area of congestion and know that it's used for all sorts of functions, passenger drop off, access to restaurants and clothing and the bathrooms and the lifeguards walking to

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and from the beach and also it's the location for any emergency vehicle that comes down there.

- The issue is the inability to social distance and the low mask usage going on and off the beach and certainly the CSO and Police presence have helped with this. But they can't always be there.
- Came up with two ideas of what could be explored.
- The first is to create another ramp, so that one each would be one-way.
- The closest other existing ramp is the steel one that's quite steep and it's also potentially an area of the beach where the tide is even higher.
- There was historically, an attempt to redesign that whole area and also re-stripping the parking lot which would involve permission and design.
- Doubt that that's the kind of project that's going to be a priority given the financial situation that are going into.
- There might be an opportunity if that's ever done to see whether it's possible to put another ramp on the other side of the canopy seating area.
- The second idea is to find out a little bit more about an alternative pathway, which is around the Norsemen, to get to the beach to try to reroute people that way.
- There are some big issues with that: who owns the land, who owns the lane, who owns the path, would that lead to destruction of the dunes, which certainly wouldn't want to happen.
- Is it possible to widen the path, would town want to do that. There are all sorts of issues in there to explore. If you only have one entrance that's congested, you either have to create a go-around or you have to create another entrance. Don't really know whether either of those options will play out. But those were the two discussion points.
- The potential action item for the entrance congestion is to recommend exploring additional entrance to reduce single ramp congestion.

Comments/questions

- Pamela Sawyer
- Robert Whitelaw

Rebecca Fox

- The second one is high tide, which is another difficult one. The tide mark varies but the area on the beach where you can sit is dramatically reduced when the tide comes in, which all know.
- Tourists may not be aware of this limited space and those entering and exiting the beach experience increased congestion as the beach narrows with the tide.
- A walkway could be created, extending along the front of the Norsemen and canopy area. That was what Mike Blazejowski particularly designed, he measured the high tide area and there could be two rows of people sitting safely but that the third

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row up to the water that would be created, would be a walkway. So how that walkway would happen would be perhaps cones or lines or sand markers of some kind and who would do that and the timing of when that would happen, do set it up early in the day or would set it up two hours before the tide was coming in and ask people to move. Logistically, it's not an easy one.

- And the other issue is to advertise the tides; when high tide is so that people are more aware of when the beaches are more crowded. That could be a sign on Route One or that could be lodgings handing out time tide charts in their brochures; handing out something when people check in telling them when the tides are, signs that say when high tide and that the beach will be more congested. Something so that people would recognize the fact that it's safer to go to the beach at low tide.
- The two items from that are to recommend exploring a walkway system and also to advertise more when it is high tide.

Comments/questions

- Rick Barber

Kent Bridges

- Consideration number three that was discussed is limiting the beach population. With the current recommendations of the 12-foot social distancing between parties that computes to about 4,000 beachgoers; at 6 feet it is 7,800.
- The recommendation is to explore limitations imposed by other towns or benchmark other towns, how they are limiting the population on their beaches, do some benchmarking at the state level.
- Figure out a way to know what's going on at the beach in terms of the size of the individual parties that are looking at, have struggled with figuring out the average summer beach population. Think have got it pretty close but finding out a way to get a really good solid count on that and then extrapolate that from that the numbers that may be beachgoers.
- The issues to consider are maintaining a count, enforcement in any methods of potential beach closure. If have to close part of the beach or the tides, those are some things to consider.
- Potential action items recommend research into success and or failure of towns that did impose actions, both in coastal and in lake communities and estimate the maximum beach capacity and just and adjust parking to correlate with that.

Comments/questions

- Pamela Sawyer

Kent Bridges

- The fourth consideration that that was discussed a couple of weeks ago is looking at the parking lot and assuming that limiting parking space will have some sort of an impact on beach population right there at Main Beach and may disperse it, just to reduce that beach congestion. Talked about reserving some spots specifically for residents, that's not the way it works now. That may help matters.
- Balancing the town parking lot revenue with the safe beach conditions, increased parking lot fees to make up for potential loss of revenue. These are all things that were considered and talked about. This would be a good recommendation for the town as well.
- Talked about, and would recommend to the town, doing some research on reservation systems. There are other towns that do that, get your parking space in advance.
- Develop an application that shows availability in our parking lots. Have communications between Visitor Services and the road signs that will guide tourists to the spot where they have the best opportunity to have some space to themselves on the beach.
- These parking lot reductions may be limited, but it's something for the town to consider and look into. Maybe the limitations are on weekends and holidays when the volume is the highest based on the parking data that have looked at.
- Pilot a program with Visitor Services staff having input to these processes.
- Previously discussed was having considerations around limiting parking during high tides, which is pretty impractical to do. It's hard to empty lots during high tide or restrict them because by the time the tides come around the lots are usually full. Maybe some thought around that and just drive that to ground if it's something that makes sense or not.
- The issues are: have three beach parking lots that currently have a little over 800 parking spaces, have a couple other lots in town, have pedestrians coming to the beach, have trolley drop-offs, a bunch of different ways to get to the beach. Getting our hands around what those numbers are is still a challenge.
- All things the town should be looking into and figuring out: what are the sources of beachgoers and what is the impact of controlling parking.
- The second thing that was considered is increasing the appeal of Footbridge and North beaches by adding vending machines or food trucks and the like to disperse the crowd, a bit more.
- Some of the issues that that will have to consider during this is, there are zoning issues.
- What are the impacts on neighborhoods and getting neighborhood input about these plans.

- Interest from vendors, fair bidding, garbage, electrical, water access and Shoreland Protection. Would recommend the town over the next several months consider possibly for the next season.

Comments/questions

- Rick Barber
- Pamela Sawyer
- Bob Whitelaw

Rebecca Fox

- Wrote this up as a document, would suggest sending to all Task Force members to review and pick up at another meeting with some serious recommendations for the Select Board to review or Planning Board if some of these ideas are feasible.

Public Health

Terry Ann Lunt

- Only a teeny bit to report, would like to yield time to Bob McBreen if okay.
- The only comment that have is the data from the Marginal Way folks indicates that during August the usage of the Marginal Way was 75% of what it was in 2019.
- Their guesstimate is 90% mask compliance. The only comment they had was the mailbox with free masks seems to empty up fairly frequently. Oftentimes when people come there isn't a mask there, and they also thought it was a good place to indicate that about social distancing...if you are not able to social distance on Marginal Way please wear a mask.

At Risk

Pamela Sawyer

- Stated that she didn't have anything new to report.
- The only thing that would say is that all are exhausted. All are of tired of washing masks, wearing masks, sanitizing hands, washing hands, eating outside, social isolation. There is a lot of frustration, exhaustion, underlying depression, all these things that you see. Need to be cognizant of the fact that are still in the throes of this pandemic and not to let guard down, whether it's someone who's 20 to 80 all are still at risk.

Business

Rick Barber

- The grant that people are applying for, there's like 250 million or something like that for businesses to apply. That came out last week from the Governor's office. Otherwise just seeing the businesses all trying to follow policies as closely as they can.
- The change in weather and changing seasons can make people think that it's done, it's over. As businesses and as residents, need to remind ourselves that it's still here. Just because the season's over doesn't mean that pandemic is.

Buzzy Roy

- Also, just as a point of business would definitely like to have a conversation about the use of food trucks.
- Secondary also like to start finding about clawing back some of the public use spaces for private businesses, getting it back so we don't set a precedent that they'll be using those spaces next year.
- One of the things not to do with business but is more to do with all the children, teachers and parents who have kids in our district going back to school here next week. We are in York County, in a **green county**, but also in a **green county** with a little asterisk* next to us. The only district that is going back full time is Wells-Ogunquit.
- Just want all to be aware that for the students and teachers this is a big transition next week.
- Wish them the best; and whether sports work out that will find its way but first and foremost, let's make sure we do that everything to make sure they are healthy, happy and safe.

Bob McBreen

- Have very different data than what was discussed earlier for York County.
- One of the things, I think, the problem with your data is you're looking at cumulative numbers instead of recent numbers.
- York County positive tests are the highest that they've been during the pandemic on a seven-day average.
- This started before the outbreak at the jail.
- York County Jail is currently at 74 cases.
- Stated that his data is one-day and seven-day averages, can also do fourteen-day averages.

Comments/questions

- Bob Whitelaw

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- Kent Bridges
- Terry Ann Lunt
- Rebecca Fox

8. Public Comment

Comments/questions:

- Kirsten Ross

9. Any Motions for recommendations to the Select Board

There were no motions for recommendations to the Select Board.

10. Adjourn

Motion made by Buzzy Roy and second by Charley LaFlamme to adjourn the meeting at 5:59pm, approved 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl L. Emery, Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager