Hampton Beach State Park
Community Meeting
October 1, 2012

Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Area Commission member, opened the meeting and asked the panel and audience to introduce themselves.

Michael Housman, Supervisor of Parks Operation
- Thanked the Town including the Hampton Police and Fire Departments. Also thanked the Chamber, Precinct, Beach Commission, volunteers and elected officials.
- DRED & the Town of Hampton have signed a Joint Operations Plan that addresses integration of operations including trash collection.
- Thanked the Beach Commission and community for the Gala in June.
- Pay stations have been converted from pay by space to pay and display.
- An audit was conducted of the Hampton meters program and we will be making changes to the operation based upon some of their recommendations.
- The northern end of the beach was reconditioned and buried seaweed removed and the beach regraded.
- North Hampton Beach redevelopment – phase I complete and phase II has started.

Bill Gegas, South-Seacoast Regional Supervisor
- Thanked the 100+ staff that works in Hampton; many have left for the year. Several work groups: Lifeguards, Maintenance Crew, Park Patrol, South Beach, Seashell and regional staff.
- Received 5 Star rating again in 2012 from the National Resource Defense Council
- Held weekly team meetings to coordinate issues between park work units.
- Piloted time clock use at the park.
- Still working on vehicle management
  o Nightly entertainment
  o Staff and Park vehicles
  o Visitor Center parking
- Received approval this spring to extend pay station operation from May 1st – October 1st to be more in line with our park operational schedule. Rates for the shoulder seasons were also approved.
  o May 1st – October 1st : $2.00/hr
  o Other Dates: $1.00/hr
- Planning on enforcing parking until Nov 4th, when dates will be reevaluated (it is when the Town’s winter parking ban comes into effect).

Q: Will the state plow this winter?
A: Will plow as long as the pay stations are in operation. Would like to keep everything as open as possible through the entire winter but it depends upon revenue and the amount of snow.

Q: What are the hours of operation for the pay station?
A: The hours of operation are the currently posted hours however we will be reviewing these for applicability in the off season.
A: Predominantly business hours and will be weather dependent.
S: Need to be able to tell the truth about what are the hours of operation.
S: When you ticket people when the lots aren’t full then you spread ill will. Spring is different story.
S: Need to reach out to business owners so they can tell their customers.
S: Need clear signage.
S: Need signage between F St & H St by playground. Many first time visitors do not know where the pay stations are.
S: Need better signage at the entrance of the CPA lot.
S: CPA lot and North of Monument could be free use and only charge on busy days.
S: Le Bec Rouge is going to try to stay open this winter.
S: Since the new parking operation plan goes into effect tomorrow, can you suspend ticketing and do education? People can still pay the pay station.
Q: Is there an off-set for collection vs payroll?
  o Phil – Reduced rate reflects reduced service ie: lifeguards are not on duty.
    Need to collect park fees to provide services.
S: Use the CPA lot as an event lot and charge a flat rate if there is an event @ casino or super nice days. Put a sign out in the lot that says “pay station in operation” or “enjoy free parking today” so guests know.
S: Do guardrails meet federal standards? I don’t think they do and they are illegal.
S: Need to fix boardwalk handrails. I’ve spoken to park staff many times and no one does anything.
S: Park trucks are exceeding the speed limit on Ashworth Ave, not stopping at crosswalks and you have headlights and brakelights out. Your trucks are disgraceful.
S: Can’t identify your park staff at night, they should be wearing reflective vests.
S: South Beach gate is closed at 6:00 pm. Needs to be open longer so people can park there and walk up to event on the main beach when all the other lots are full.
S: RV Park has dogs and alcohol – let’s talk about public safety and enforcement.
S: Lights were not on in the south lot on July 5th.
S: Horses – There are 25/30 horses at a time on the beach running up and down. No control of them.
Q: Why do you keep the South Pavilion bathroom open and not the North Bathhouse in the winter? There is better parking at the North Bathhouse.
A: The South Pavilion bathrooms are central to the beach and closer to park facilities open in the winter.
S: The pigeon problem at NBH continues; you’ve created more work for yourself by not dealing with it. Park staff has to do extra cleaning because of the issue.

Jude David, Seacoast Facilities and Events Manager
• Wonderful season & amazing summer; tourists came up and said how amazing the facilities are. Lots more families are finding us again for what’s happening on both sides of the street.
• All facility and park use on seacoast is coordinated through her office. There were 22 events in 2011 and in 2012 54 events.
• Participants in the events go over to restaurants for after-parties, stay in hotels, and buy souvenirs.
33 Special Use permits were issued last year for large events open to the general public.

Trying to extend the season and in conversation with national groups for spring/fall events.

A new Seacoast events guide published and in October a new brochure to promote local services will be available.

NH Made Store did well this year & supported local merchants and artists.

S: In York Maine there is a store that features prison art for not very much money.
S: Make sure the products in the store are truly NH Made and not repackaged.

Q: What is the status of the catering RFP?
A: The existing contract goes to March. Jude and Phil have begun discussions on how to frame the next RFP. The RFP will be open for all to respond to. We are evaluating the needs of the kitchen and determining the costs to renovate; it is expected to cost tens of thousand of dollars. Need to work within the state contract system to be able to offer multiple catering options too users of the facility.

S: The Blue Ocean Society really thought they were going to open a science and nature center in the store space and at the last minute they were kicked out. This would be a huge attraction for families – the exhibit would be a touch tank, fish prints and craft area for the kids.

Q: How much space is needed for the exhibit?
A: The size of the store.

Jude stated that she is planning more family/outdoor recreation events and will publish schedules & send to local business owners.

Ed Parr, Chief, State Park Patrol

- Posting the pay stations with new signage about fall rates.
- Programmers confirm that at midnight the new rates will be in effect.
- Patrolmen will remind park guests that meter enforcement is in effect.
- Pay & Display transition was uneventful; it is the system most used in NE and surrounding communities.
- Most problems with the pay station are usually due to impatience.
- Language button on the pay stations will give instructions in French, Spanish and German
- Quebec Ministry of Tourism has helped with French Canadian translation for signage.
- When the transition from pay to park to pay and display happened some cars were towed from leased spaces. Signage is changing in the spaces leased to overnight accommodations to say “Permit Parking Only” and “pay station receipts not accepted”.

Q: What are the hours of enforcement of the pay station?
A: Enforcement can be random; hours of operation are a set time.

Q: Are all the spaces on Haverhill Ave leased?
A: Yes.

Q: Can a sign be put up to dissuade people from turning in and looking for a space?
A: A sign was installed last year, we can look to see if there is a better placement.
S: Guard against perfection – it is a work in progress and we need to have an open discussion.

Lee Brennan, Asst Chief, State Beach Patrol
- 17 new guards this year.
- First year in new facility and it is terrific.
- Many assists over the summer. The Director granted overtime pay during riptide events.
- Almost 300 lost children reunited this summer. New facility allowed better view of the beach.
- 13 guards are posted on the beach daily from the Jetty to Rocky Bend. Main job is to monitor swimmers.
- Lifeguards patrol for holes that are unsafe and cause damage to beach cleaning equipment.
- Thanked HPD and HFD for the prompt response
- Encouraged anyone to call the lifeguards at 227-8717 to report issues on the beach.

Gary Bashline, Asst Supervisor, South/Seacoast Region
- New contractor cleaning the beach this year, we had a slow start and some equipment problems but it got sorted out.
- Hoping to purchase a new tractor and beach rake.
- The state spent extra funds to rent a beach rake to ensure the beach would be clean.
- 2.5 tons of trash removed from beach after the 3 day March heat wave.
- The canvas street banners will be removed after Columbus Day to be cleaned and repaired.

Q: Will Rocky Bend be maintained in coming years?
A: Yes

Q: Will outlets be fixed on light poles?
A: They’ve been fixed and we now have a central GFI outlet.

S: The landscaping around the monument is looking very nice, is there plans for the other beds?
A: Yes we will be weeding this fall prior to new plants being installed.

S: 300,000 visited the Hampton Beach webcam

S: The garbage trucks should not be parked across from McDonald’s, unsightly and them smell.

S: Need a crosswalk at South Beach; many overnight guests are walking to the pier.

S: Street sweeper is important. Parking lots have never been cleaned.

S: Need a hotline to report things to be fixed, can be a phone mail box and also a website.

Q: What is happening with the benches this winter.
A: The boardwalk benches will stay in place except the few that are between Great Boar’s Head and Rocky Bend. Most of the Seashell benches will stacked up but we can leave a few out for visitors.

Q: Why weren’t the jet skis used this summer?
A: Two of trained operators did not return this summer. It was moored at the pier since our four wheeler had trouble towing it. We’re planning on training more staff next year.
S: I just want to say you captured the essence of the old beach with the new buildings and hopes that South Beach will be improved next.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.
Respectfully submitted, Johanna Lyons