
Seabrook Beach Re-Opening Summer 2020

Town Manager - May 28, 2020



Introduction

The Seabrook Board of Selectmen have instructed management to develop a beach reopening document reflecting the policy determinations of the Board with regard to a future reopening of Seabrook Beach. Seabrook Beach is a town owned beach that is considered to be one of the finest beach areas in New Hampshire. There are some of the largest destination restaurants on the coast at Seabrook Beach, along with a large fishing cooperative and a vibrant fishing/party boat industry. Seabrook Beach is a town asset, primarily utilized by our residents and those that rent homes at Seabrook Beach. Due to the scarcity of parking the Seabrook shoreline does not see as many visitors that are not residents or renters as other area beaches, although our restaurants and fishing/hospitality industry draw many out of town visitors.

There has been some discussion relative to the status of Seabrook Beach, and how our Beach is impacted by Governor Sununu's emergency order(s). The Board of Selectmen, in reviewing their options, have ascertained that the Town of Seabrook is in fact governed by Governor Sununu's beach closing emergency order, and will reopen Seabrook Beach in conjunction with the date established by the Governor. The Board of Selectmen desire to afford Seabrook residents the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful asset that is Seabrook Beach, with an opportunity for exercise, sun, and recreation. This goal is balanced by the need to ensure that such a reopening protects the health and welfare of Seabrook, and N.H., residents.

Re-opening Seabrook Beach Phase One

The Seabrook Board of Selectmen have issued policy guidance relative to a phase one reopening of the Beach. That policy guidance includes:

1. An initial "resident only" goal for Seabrook Beach.
2. A limitation of "density" at Seabrook Beach that would allow a safe opening of the beach. This will, in part, be driven by parking restrictions. Social distancing protocols must be observed.
3. Closely adhering to the public health guidance offered by the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the CDC.
4. The date of reopening shall be determined by the guidance offered by the Governor's Reopening Task Force, and the Governor.

In order to meet the goals set by the Board of Selectmen the following recommendations are made.

1. For the 2020 season no parking “placards” shall be issued.
2. The current parking ban on Route 1A, promulgated by the State of New Hampshire, should be continued.
3. The Parking lot on Route 1A currently controlled and maintained by the Town of Seabrook shall:
 - a. Have the “north lot” closed.
 - b. have the south lot open to resident (stickered) parking only.
 - c. Have the north exit closed to entrance and exit traffic.This effectively reduces parking capacity by 50%, and restricts that availability to Seabrook residents only, meeting the Board of Selectmen’s policy directive.
4. Limit on street beach parking to resident only (stickered) parking.

There has been some discussion of simply prohibiting all on street parking, which would further reduce beach density. I recommend resident parking only, but the more severe limitation is available to the Board.
5. Allow the hiring of the seasonal traffic enforcement personnel, which we have frozen per the policy of the Board.
6. Increase the current fine for illegal parking. I have asked the Police Chief to give some guidance on this after the Board gives a policy preference on the size of the fine increase.
7. Retail Restrictions: To follow state guidelines
8. Restaurant Restrictions: To follow state guidelines
9. Lodging Restrictions: To follow state guidelines. It should be noted that current guidance calls for a 14 day quarantine period for visitors to New Hampshire from out of state.

The Board, through the adoption of this policy, authorizes a reopening of Seabrook Beach on June 1, 2020.

The Board has taken input from the public, and has communicated with the Governor's Reopening Task Force, with legal counsel for the Town as well as with legal counsel for Governor Sununu.