

AAC Meeting Notes 8/23/18
Animal Advisory Committee Minutes
Thursday, August 23, 2018
Sawyer Free Library- Friend Room

Members Present: Alicia Pensarosa, Beth Klinefelter, Jennifer Jackman, Jodi Swenson, Jennifer Schmorrow, Dianne Corliss
Council Liaison Present: Jen Holmgren

Meeting called to order at 6:32pm
10 minutes allocated for public comment:

Public in attendance:

Alyssa Duncan
Maureen Vallis
Jennie Myer
Julie Wyman
Deborah Cramer
Heather Hall
Laurie Sawin
Josie Waldron
Sheryl Reed
Chris Brayton
Linda Brayton

Linda Brayton:

Wants to maintain separation between Good Harbor Beach (GHB) and other beaches
Changes to dog ordinances have been incremental for good reason
Changing the leash law for all the beaches would mean large sweeping changes that impact over 3,000 dog owners and their families in Gloucester
Support April 1st for GHB-believes that will show that the City is making an effort
If there are early closings on some beaches, other options should be opened up

Jenny Myer:

Shared love for dogs and wildlife
Witness dogs track on the beach after closure
Believe that dog lovers are nature lovers-no need to be in conflict
We must move beyond our comfort zone to protect what we love

Heather Hall:

Advocate for all shorebirds not just plovers
Shared her stories about volunteering with plovers over the season
People are passionate when it comes to animals, there should be no sides
No reason why recreation and conservation cannot work together

Deborah Cramer:

Spent many hours watching shorebirds here across the eastern U.S.

Supports the recommendations to close Wingersheek and GHB as of April 1st

Excluding Wingersheek from the closure will increase the number of dogs there-increase the public health issue-will also allow them onto Coffins where plovers are nesting

Not just about plovers, least terns are a threatened species, that haven't been given the opportunity to nest there due to human disturbance

13 of 19 species migrate along Wingersheek beach in the spring and currently

The conflicts occur up and down the eastern seaboard: clear laws, enforcement, and education efforts overcome the conflict

Mass Audubon will provide help, they want to help

Susan Goodall:

Supports an earlier date in which dogs are allowed on beaches in September

Maureen Vallis:

Newcomer to Gloucester

The birds have been endangered since 1986, she believes we should have come further, they should have more protections

We need more education enforcement

Public comment ended 6:46pm

Minutes approved from 8/2/18

Discussion about wildlife feeding ordinance, add the same language to the beach ordinances

Discussion about increasing the ordinance fine for feeding or disturbing wildlife- increase it up to \$300

Define the water bird language-get rid of terns, say gulls, pigeons or waterfowl, and coastal water birds

Suggested language:

No person shall disturb, harass, harbor or feed directly or indirectly gulls, pigeons, waterfowl, coastal shorebirds, or crows on any streets, beach, or other public property or anywhere in the downtown area unless properly permitted by the appropriate state and federal wildlife authorities

Action results in a \$300 fine per incident/violation

Discussion about leaving the original coyote ordinance, no changes recommended, however, increase the fine to \$300 per incident/violation

Discussion about increasing penalty for violating section 4-2-\$300 per violation

Discussion: concerns about not making language specific enough to make it stick

Discussion about wording for wildlife-how to include all wildlife

Discussion about prohibiting dogs on beaches after April 1st:

- Solves disturbance issue while Plovers are trying to nest
- Keeps the plover season from conflicting too closely with our high beach season
- Moving up the September date for dogs allowed on beaches is not supported by Chief McCarthy
- Discussion about changing the dates on all beaches or just selecting specific beaches
- GHB, Wingersheek, Plum Cove, Cressy Beach off leash-maybe close all those on April 1st

Discussion about the enforcement issue and signage-do we need to change the signs with each change in plover nesting?

- Will closing all beaches dilute enforcement or strengthen it?
- Is consistency more important than compromise?
- Should we focus on Wingersheek and GHB for the next season and see how it goes before closing all beaches?
- Simplify signs if we are only going to close two beaches

Education over the winter to Gloucester and out of towners-decide on outreach, implement the plan, and show the City Council before next season
Make people aware of how important the plovers are

Discussion about calling the EPA for the issues and people breaking the law

Discussion about making our recommendation plausible so that it “sticks”

We all agreed to close down just Wingersheek and GHB on April 1st, although it might increase confusion

Discussion about language, discussion about current ordinance:

We should separate out GHB and Wingersheek

Dogs shall be prohibited from GHB and Wingersheek from April 1st -Sept 30th annually

GHB-even numbered days

Wing-odd numbered days

Should we add a disclaimer? Subject to change based on shorebird nesting seasons

Jen Holmgren will reach out to Chip Payson for guidance on how to word this ordinance to make it as clear and concise as possible

Discussion about dogs on beaches and the fines-increase fine to \$300

Litter ordinance:

Discussion about making the fines consistent across the City

Littering fine should be raised to \$300 on beaches

Suggested ordinance:

No person shall throw, drop, release or otherwise dispose of directly or indirectly into any harbor, river, or pond or on to any beach garbage, refuse, rubbish, bottles, cans, containers,

paper, cigarette butts, balloons, wrapping material, glass, filth or any noxious or dangerous liquid or solid

Litter Language and wildlife language should be added to the beach regulations also

Discussion about buffer zone for plovers and prohibited activities inside the protected areas

Suggested language:

Buffer zone of 50 feet around any area will be established around any area designated as protected for wildlife. Prohibited activities in the buffer zone include whiffle ball, frisbee, soccer, volleyball, paddle ball, and any other activities that involve objects that can fly or roll into the restricted area

Discussion about adding inflatable violation fine

Discussion about increasing fines for beach violations

Agenda items 4-7 moved to the next meeting

Jennifer Jackman suggested adding a periodic reporting requirement for ticketing, citations, and fines paid through the City

Allow us to view complaint reports

Next meeting Wednesday September 12th 6:30pm

Meeting ended 7:59pm