

PROVINCETOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JUDGE WELSH ROOM
October 16, 2012
6:30 P.M.

Members Present: Dennis Minsky, David Hale and Mark Irving.

Members Absent: Lynne Martin (excused) and Barbara Prato (excused).

Others Present: Brian Carlson (Conservation Agent) and Ellen C. Battaglini (Recording Secretary).

HARBOR COMMITTEE

Members Present: Jerry Irmer, Mel Cote, Chris Brooke

Members Absent: Susan Avellar and Phillip Scholl.

Others Present: Rex McKinsey (Harbormaster).

Chair Dennis Minsky called the Joint Public Meeting with the Harbor Committee to order at 5:00 P.M.

DISCUSSION:

Report on the environmental monitoring of Ryder, Freeman Street and control beaches by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies - Amy Costa is a biologist with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, which is responsible for the environmental monitoring study pursuant to the Commission's Order of Conditions related to beach raking. She appeared to present a very preliminary report on the Coastal Beach Environmental Monitoring Program findings. The variables monitored during the project included compaction, wrack (biomass and percent cover), bacteria, invertebrates (core and pitfall traps), pore water and beach profiles. The first graph of data shown in the report was related to the raking schedule. Each beach was monitored the day prior to raking, the next high tide after raking, 7 days after raking and 14 days after raking. Monitoring was postponed three times when the beach was not raked as scheduled. The second graph showed the weight of material removed by the rake. An overview of the monitoring design was explained on the second page of the findings. Ms. Costa pointed out that the wrack line was not consistently raked throughout the project. That is an issue that needs to be addressed at some point during the project. If the wrack line was not raked, they can reduce a lot of what they monitor. If it is going to be raked only above the wrack line, in the soft sand that people use, they would need to know that so they do not continue to collect unnecessary data. What the project was supposed to do was to monitor above the wrack line, the wrack line and below the wrack line under the assumption they were picking up the wrack. But they need to determine the extent and consistency of the wrack removal. Therefore, the data being presented is just from above the wrack line.

Dennis asked on how many occasions the wrack was raked and why. Ms. Costa thought that the wrack on Ryder had not been consistently raked from the middle to the end and not at all since at least September. And in terms of Freeman Street it was harder to tell. Usually the wrack line is on an incline, so she thought that might have something to do with the issue. Rex thought that it would be a matter of speaking with the DPW drivers, as the machine can get down to the wrack

line. The stakes to guide the drivers did not last long and there were six different drivers using the rake. Adjustments in the raking schedule for next year can be made when all of the final information is obtained. Frequency of raking, whether both beaches should be raked at the same, how far down into the wrack line should be raked and getting the drivers to stay away from the vegetation are issues to be discussed before next year.

Rex asked Ms. Costa to explain the bacteria data. She said it was hard to say anything conclusive as this was an unusual year because of temperatures. There was bacteria growing in the sand as early as May and it was still growing. The scientists looked at wrack weight, percent cover and bacteria and they are still trying to figure out what is causing what. The correlations table in the report showed factors that were studied to determine the influence of different environmental variables on the changes observed in sediment compaction, wrack and bacteria. It appeared that raking had the strongest influence on compaction and wrack at Freeman and on bacteria at Ryder. Overall average levels were highest at Freeman and lowest at Ryder. Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the relationship of the different variables monitored during the study to the four dependent variables (compaction, wrack weight, wrack percent cover and bacteria). Environmental factors such as precipitation and tide data appeared to have a stronger influence on the variables than raking. Precipitation in the previous 24 hours had a greater effect on bacteria than any other variable measured. Ms. Costa explained that having only one year's data makes it difficult to draw conclusions. The more data collected, the more accurate the analyses. Dennis asked when the final report might be ready and Ms. Costa thought the final report might be completed by December.

The preliminary report also showed beach profiles. There was an overall decrease in sand at the Ryder Street beach and an increase at the Freeman Street beach and control areas. Rex thought that the transport of sand would be valuable in light of the Town's goal to draft a comprehensive beach management plan. The conclusions suggested that the beaches performed differently, the beach raking had some effect on wrack and compaction (Freeman) and bacteria and compaction (Ryder), natural, physical factors (precipitation, tide height) had a stronger impact than raking on many of the variables studied and anecdotal observations showed that the aesthetic value of Ryder Street beach had improved and little change was observed at the Freeman Street beach. There was a suggestion that beach vegetation needed to be better protected and the raked area needed to be consistent in terms of whether the wrack line is always raked or never raked. Dennis reported that 90% of the birds observed in the raking areas throughout the season were pigeons or house sparrows. No shore bird of consequence was observed.

Rex would like to see some recommendations from the scientists about what protocols should be continued or expanded and what protocols should be dropped based on the first year of study. The Harbor Committee will need to go back to the Board of Selectmen in the spring for a vote.

Receive public comment on the first year of the beach raking pilot project – Rex received a comment from Ben deRuyter of Whaler's Wharf who observed that the Ryder Street beach was being used more and that the aesthetics of the beach had improved. Brian has not received any public comment.

Comprehensive beach management and resource protection planning process and Mass. Bays grant application – Rex reported that there are other municipalities applying for grant money. Because Provincetown is looking to build a model for beach management that other towns could use, that may help in getting the grant money. It is a planning grant. Rex explained

that the process would be to review other plans to use as a template in terms of what the public wants, what the resource needs and how to move forward, utilizing the PCCS for the scientific components. Greg Berman of Woods Hole has helped with the grant writing and would be involved in working on the plan if money were granted, as would Jo Ann Muramoto of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod. Graham Geiss would work on sediment transport. Also, the work of the PCCS on the beach monitoring project would be expanded to include an analysis of all Town beaches. In the grant time cycle a draft management plan would then be presented to the Town during the summer in order that summer residents could have input. Pat Hughes and Owen Nichols would be involved in the project. Once public hearings have been held and any adjustments to the draft plan are made, another public hearing would be held and the plan then would be ready by December of next year. If the Town does not get the grant, some of the beginning groundwork can be done to get the plan going and then apply in the next grant cycle when it will not just be about getting a plan together, but about starting an implementation phase as well. Once the planning phase is done, the Town may be able to get money on the basis of hazard mitigation as affected by climate change. Dave suggested applying to the Community Preservation Committee for money to fund the plan.

ADJOURNMENT: *Mark Irving moved to adjourn at 6:00 P.M. and it was so voted unanimously.*

These minutes were approved by a vote of the Conservation Commission at their meeting on _____, 2012

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen C. Battaglini

Approved by _____ on _____, 2012
Dennis Minsky, Chair