

## MINUTES OF MEETING OF July 23, 2024

Hampton Beach State Park Accessibility Feasibility Study  
Focus Group – Older Adults

DATE PREPARED: July 23, 2024

LOCATION: Virtual

ATTENDEES:	Scott Bogle	Rockingham Planning Commission
	Cassandra Mason	NH Council on the Arts
	Kristina Ickes	NH Department of Health and Human Services
	Jennifer Rabalais	UNH Center on Aging and Community Living
	Maureen O’Leary	Portsmouth Senior Activity Center & National Council on Aging
	Johanna Lyons	NH DNCR State Park Planning & Development Specialist
	Travis Pryor	GEI
	Nicole Rogers	GPI

PURPOSE: Focus Group Meeting – Older Adults

GPI led the discussion following a detailed Agenda. The meeting started with introductions followed by a project debrief and an open discussion period. The following topics were raised:

### Discussion Topics:

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#### 1. Identifying Accessibility Barriers:

- **Cassie Mason**
  - Raised concerns about older adults on fixed incomes lacking disability placards for free parking
  - NH Council on the Arts required to fill out accessibility workbook every three years for federal funding- talk about universal design concepts
  - Emphasized water access as a critical opportunity for improvement at HBSP
- **Maureen O’Leary:**
  - Inquired about the accessibility of the Seashell performance space for wheelchair users to which Johanna confirmed it is.
- **Jennifer Rabalais**
  - Emphasized the need to consider the entire beach experience for older adults and individuals with disabilities, rather than isolating specific barriers.

#### 2. Transportation & Parking

Discussion on the impact of transportation options, with historical efforts and challenges in implementing shuttle services at Hampton Beach.

- **Scott Bogle**
  - Mentioned past efforts and the feasibility challenges, including funding issues
  - 20 years ago private trolley but lost funding
  - Transit service along Route 1 – was looked at but a long and costly route
  - FTA funding hit hard due to census urbanized areas

- Shuttle service between downtown and beach (improving access to labor pool and freeing up parking at beach)
- Seafood shuttle is a good model

### 3. Wayfinding:

- **Jennifer Rabalais**
  - Emphasized the importance of having an accessibility map so folks know where the accessible features and access point are.
  - Accessible Maps – using a pictorial base for non-English speaking individuals
- **Nicole Rogers**
  - Recommended reaching out to accessibility applications to add user content regarding accessible features at park

### 4. Maintenance/Jurisdictions

- **Scott Bogle**
  - DOT will build sidewalk/bike infrastructure but Towns are often left to maintain.
  - Recommendation to revisit sidewalk maintenance agreements / relationship

### 5. Adaptive Equipment and Staff Training:

- Adaptive beach walkers desired
- Reservation system for equipment is supported
- Recommendation to partner with adaptive equipment outfitter to provide additional equipment and transport via mobile railer due to lack of storage at park
- **Potential Partnership: NE Passage**
- **Maureen O’Leary**
  - Emphasized the importance of fighting against ageism
  - **Resources:**
    1. Reframing Aging Resource
    2. NCOA Connects – free webinars for award winning programming for older adults

### 6. Communication and Information Transparency:

- Noted the lack of accessible information about services at Hampton Beach.
- Suggestions for creating a dedicated website and improving signage with plain language, larger fonts, and better contrast.
- **Jennifer Rabalais:**
  - Recommended information distribution at Town Libraries and Senior Centers
- **Maureen O’Leary**
  - Recommended using City itself for information distribution – newsletter
  - Recommended having a communications director to distribute information to groups
- **Scott Bogle**
  - Key finding from aging communities’ study was that older adults were often not getting information because many towns have shifted to digital information sharing and there is a real need to get paper information out there
  - Recommended reaching out to TASC Volunteer Driving Program

### 7. Future Partnerships and Outreach:

- **Scott Bogle**
  - Noted the low survey response rate and suggested additional outreach to groups like Grant State Independent Living, ABLE New Hampshire (Advocates Building Lasting Equity), SALT (Self Advocacy Leadership Team), Hampton Parks & Recreation (Rene Boudreau)
  - Hampton Walking Group (referenced as part of Hampton Aging Communities study)
  - Access Navigators (Anne Weidman + Todd Hanson)

- TASC (Transportation Assistance for Seacoast Citizens) Volunteer Driving Program
- **Maureen O’Leary**
  - Recommended collaboration with Access Navigators (Anne Weidman +Todd Hanson)
- **Jennifer Rabalais:**
  - Recommended AARP New Hampshire
- **Kristina Ickes**
  - Recommended a local contact
- **Maureen O’Leary**
  - Recommended the following resources in regard to fighting ageism and providing award winning programming
    1. Reframing Aging Resource
    2. NCOA Connects – free webinars for award winning programming for older adults

### Upcoming Events:

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- **Beachability Event:** July 25<sup>th</sup>  
[https://www.nhstateparks.org/NHStateParks/media/NHStateParks/PDFs/Committees/Hampton%20Access%20Study%20Committee/BeachAbility-Event-\(002\).pdf](https://www.nhstateparks.org/NHStateParks/media/NHStateParks/PDFs/Committees/Hampton%20Access%20Study%20Committee/BeachAbility-Event-(002).pdf)
- **Beach Pop-up Event:** July 27<sup>th</sup> (with tables at Main Beach, South Beach, and North Beach)  
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-nh-parks/projects-and-improvements/current-projects/hampton-beach-accessibility-study>

### Recommendations Summarized:

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- **Parking**
  - Consider parking solutions for older adults who are on a fixed income and may not have a placard
- **Transportation**
  - Introduce shuttle service from off-site parking to the beach to ease access – look to Seafood Festival as model – would require local / private funding as FTA funds are extremely limited
  - Revisit maintenance agreement for sidewalk maintenance
- **Wayfinding**
  - Install accessibility maps with pictorial base
  - Reach out to accessibility applications to provide user content to accessible features at HBSP
- **Adaptive Equipment**
  - Provide a variety of beach wheelchairs that cater to different needs, including beach walkers
  - Implement reservation system
  - Partner with third party for equipment rentals and transport
- **Training**
  - Recommend staff take reframing aging workshops
  - Integrate programming for older adults

- **Communication and Information**
  - Distribute information in paper form to town libraries, town newsletters, senior centers, housing complexes, etc.
  
- **Future Partnerships and Outreach**
  - The following resources were identified for NH State Parks staff to collaborate with in future:
    - AARP NH
    - NCOA Connect
    - Access Navigators
    - TASK Volunteer Driving
    - GSIL
    - Able NH
    - SALT
    - Hampton Parks & Recreation

**Action Items:**

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- Nicole to follow up with email containing the meeting notes.
- Participants encouraged to take and share the survey within their networks.
- Suggestions for further groups to contact for more diverse input.

These minutes constitute our understanding of the discussions and conclusions reached. Please advise us within ten (10) days, in writing, of any exceptions or corrections.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Rogers  
Project Manager

cc: Robert White, GPI  
Travis Pryor, GEI  
Alison Brady, GEI