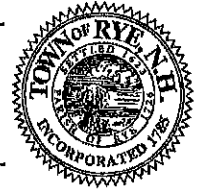




RYE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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To: Rye Board of Selectmen
From: Chief Kevin Walsh *KW*
Date: May 26, 2020

Re: Seacoast Police Chiefs, Commissioner Sheehan NH DOT, Commissioner Stewart NH State Parks, NH State Police Colonel Noyes, State of NH Commissioner Quinn phone conference

On 05/26/2020 at approximately 10:00 AM, Director Jennifer Harper of NH Homeland Security scheduled a phone conference with seacoast partners about NH beaches reopening.

Commissioner Sheehan, NH DOT and staff talked about the Route 1A plan. Ocean Blvd/Route 1A is to be closed to parking from Memorial Day until Labor Day.

The Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and the Town of Hampton have created a traffic pattern to accommodate the beaches and the businesses of Hampton. This has the potential to create traffic congestion for Seabrook, North Hampton, and Rye. In my opinion, Seabrook will get the majority of the congestion. If Hampton and Seabrook are grid locked, all traffic will flow towards Rye and North Hampton from Route 1, Route 101, I-95, Atlantic Ave in North Hampton, South Rd, Washington Rd, Elwyn Rd and side streets to Ocean Blvd.

Commissioner Sheehan said this new traffic pattern will be in place Friday, May 28th. The beaches are not open, but the Commissioner wants everyone to monitor things to see if the traffic grid locks, slows to stops, and how the congestion can be re-routed (if necessary) before the beaches open. This is a test weekend.

Commissioner Sheehan discussed the virtual message boards located along I-95, Route 101 and other Ocean Blvd locations; the messages can be changed. During the phone conversation, I asked how a police chief can send a request to change the virtual message boards' message. For example, if Ocean Blvd is grid locked/backed up, how can we send a message to the drivers of vehicles along the major routes to the NH seacoast? Commissioner Sheehan will be sending the seacoast police chiefs a communication plan. Part of the plan will be how DOT staff can coordinate messaging. An example I gave is a Sunday at 3PM and Ocean Blvd in Rye at Foyes Corner is backed up and all side roads in Rye now have heavy vehicle traffic. Again, Commissioner Sheehan assured us that the DOT communication plan will outline how we can communicate quickly to drivers and town employees.

State Parks and Chief Sawyer asked about NH State Parks plans and what the expectations are. He wanted an off-line conversation on how to manage Hampton Beach. I have requested a meeting with NH State Parks staff, specifically, with Meredith Collins on state parks plans. Rye and State Parks employees need to know the definition of social distancing and what the expectations are for the public. I want to review this with Attorney Hope Flynn, the Rye Police Prosecutor. The police staff will need training plans after this has been defined. That way the Board, police officers, fire department employees and NH State Parks employees are all on the same page with the goals for the public's health.

State Parks Director Phil Bryce said the State Parks summer hiring is slow. The labor pool is low and he expects the positions for State Parks will be understaffed and not trained before the beach opening.

Meredith Collins has shared the State Parks sign to be used for beaches and in Rye, she is including the Town of Rye seal. I am attaching the State parks sign. I am also attaching another sign for the Board to review. I have a quote from New England Printing. The print can be done in approximately 5 days.

I look forward to discussing this memo with you.

Thanks for your support.

Cc: Town Administrator Becky Bergeron
Fire Chief Mark Cotreau
Rye Highway Director Dennis McCarthy
Lieutenant Scott Blaisdell
Sgt. Bill Blais