

**Hampton Beach Area Commission  
100 Winnacunnet Road  
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842**



Town of Hampton



NH Dept of Resources & Economic Development



NH Dept of Transportation



NH Office of Energy and Planning



Hampton Beach Village District



Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce



Rockingham Planning Commission

**Annual Report  
September 29, 2008**

**Introduction**

The Hampton Beach Area Commission (HBAC) was established in June, 2003 by the New Hampshire legislature under RSA 216-J:1–J:5 to assist in the implementation of the Hampton Beach Area Master Plan. Its duties include consultation and advice to the town and to state agencies to accomplish the goals set out in the 50-year plan.

The HBAC is comprised of representatives of all major stakeholders in the Hampton Beach area. There are two members each from the Town of Hampton and the Hampton Beach Village District, and one member each from the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce, the Rockingham Planning Commission, the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP). Commission members at the close of this reporting year were as follows:

Name	Representing
Fred Rice	Town of Hampton
John Nyhan	Town of Hampton
Tom McGuirk	Hampton Beach Village District
Geannina Guzman-Scanlan	Hampton Beach Village District
Chuck Rage	Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Fran McMahon	Rockingham Planning Commission
Doug DePorter	Department of Transportation
Meghan McPherson	Office of Energy and Planning
Brian Warburton	Department of Resources and Economic Development

During the past year, the Commission's officers were as follows:

Fred Rice	Chairman
Doug DePorter	Vice Chair
Brian Warburton	Secretary/Treasurer

The State Department of Resources and Economic Development, through its local State Parks Division office, and the Town of Hampton, through its Planning office, provided administrative and technical assistance to the Commission.

## **Background and History**

During its first year (2003-2004) the Commission conducted a series of “Visioning Workshops” to develop concepts for economic development, zoning, parking, pedestrian and traffic flow needs, and future development potential. The product of these sessions provided the basis of design for the \$12 million infrastructure improvement project implemented by the Town in 2004-2006.

In 2004-2005, the Commission used the conclusions and recommendations of the Visioning Workshops as the basis for establishing subcommittees in four specific areas: community development, beachscape, zoning and redevelopment, and transportation and parking. Each subcommittee defined the main requirements within its area, and began developing goals and plans for specific activities.

In 2005-2006, the Commission began development of several specific plans based upon previous work and input received at a public hearing. The majority of the emphasis was on traffic and parking improvements, and seeking support for replacement of the existing Hampton River Bridge.

Since 2006, all four subcommittees have finalized their plans and goals, and have undertaken other new and specific projects and actions in fulfillment of the Commission’s responsibilities. Work during the past year has included the following:

### **Community Development Subcommittee (Tom McGuirk, Chair):**

This subcommittee provided ongoing assistance to developers by reviewing plans and suggesting possible options for modifying or improving building design and other features that would blend in more appropriately with the “Victorian Village” theme that has been recommended for the beach area. Significant progress was made in the development of a “design guidelines” booklet, which would act as a reference to assist developers in the future.

### **Beachscape Subcommittee (Geannina Guzman-Scanlan, Chair):**

The beachscape subcommittee ensures that the Commission is aware of the actions of the Hampton Beach Village District Precinct’s Beautification Committee, which has implemented numerous projects that improve the overall appearance of the beach, to include the attractive flower gardens at the Hampton River and Route 101 entries to the beach. It has also established new flower gardens and planted a Liberty Elm tree at Bicentennial Park. The subcommittee is

currently working on obtaining approvals for the installation of welcoming banners on the light poles along Route 1A at the southern entrance to the beach.

**Zoning and Redevelopment Subcommittee (Fran McMahon, Chair):**

The subcommittee continues to work with the Town Planner, the Planning Board and the Rockingham Planning Commission to recommend revisions and updates to the Town's beach zoning regulations that would improve overall standards throughout the beach area. For the second year in a row, recommended zoning changes pertaining specifically to the beach area were defeated at Town Meeting. This may have been due, in large part, to the length and complexity of the warrant articles being a deterrent to understanding them. Efforts to improve beach zoning will continue.

**Transportation and Parking Subcommittee (Doug DePorter, Chair):**

The subcommittee has actively promoted measures to replace the two-lane Underwood drawbridge over the Hampton River with a four-lane fixed span, rather than rehab the existing structure. The replacement would accommodate the growth anticipated for the area, eliminate the traffic delays caused by the drawbridge, and create adequate evacuation routes necessitated by homeland security and public safety concerns. Based upon input from the Commission and the Hampton Board of Selectmen, DOT has agreed to do a much-needed rehab in two phases, with the first phase starting in 2009. There would then be an eight year window, during which the Town and the Commission could attempt to arrange funding for a replacement before the final, long-term (25-year) rehab measures would have to be implemented in 2017. In May, the Town of Hampton formed the "Hampton River Bridge Task Force" to pursue the construction of the new bridge. The Commission will head this effort, and is currently working with State Rep. Nancy Stiles of Hampton to get the bridge on the 10-year plan and to secure public and/or private funding within the available timeframe.

The most critical needs at Hampton Beach are parking and transportation. During the past year, the subcommittee has initiated procedures to seek a grant that would fund a complete revision and update of the Rockingham Planning Commission's Route 1A and 1B Corridor Study. After some unavoidable delay, the RPC has provided the Commission with a scope of work for the study, and a grant application is currently being developed. The result will be a single, comprehensive, objective study of the existing parking situation at Hampton Beach, the economic impacts related to parking, and the transportation elements that must be an integral part of the plan. The resulting update will serve as a baseline for the development of future parking and transportation capabilities.

### **Hampton Beach State Park Redevelopment Project**

The Commission was asked by the State Parks Director to participate in interviews to select and recommend an architectural firm to perform the design work for the replacement of the Seashell complex and the construction of other needed improvements, to include new bathroom facilities and an information center. The Commission's unanimous recommendation of Samyn D'Elia Architects was adopted, the project has gone through an extensive public review as part of the design, and it is now ready to go before the legislature for funding. This project is needed to replace the current facilities, which are deteriorating due to age and no longer meet the needs of the public.

### **Earth, Sea and Space Center Proposal**

In 2005, the non-profit "Friends of the Earth, Sea and Space Center," selected the State Park land near the river, currently used for parking, as its first choice out of many potential sites in the seacoast area, for a year-round educational and recreational museum facility. Estimated attendance at the Center could reach 400,000 visitors throughout the year, which would be the catalyst for making Hampton Beach a year-round destination. Potential revenues to the state are estimated at nearly \$900,000, which is triple the current parking revenues at this facility. The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan, and so the Commission has assisted the "Friends" group in gathering information and support for the project. A significant amount of private capital has been raised by the "Friends" toward a feasibility study and preliminary design, and Governor Lynch and DRED Commissioner Bald have been briefed on the proposed facility. The "Friends" group anticipates gathering sufficient additional information and revenue projections to justify an indication of positive support at the state level for the feasibility study to proceed.

### **HBAC Annual Schedule**

The Commission takes a summer hiatus from Memorial Day until the Seafood Festival in order to accommodate the busy summer schedules of most of its members. As a result, it is difficult to meet the appointment and reporting schedule set forth in RSA 216-J on a timely manner. An amendment to that establishing legislation will be proposed during the next year as a means to improve the Commission's operating and reporting cycles.

HBAC Annual Report  
September 29, 2008  
Page 5...

On behalf of the entire Hampton Beach Area Commission, I would like to express thanks to the entire Hampton legislative delegation, especially Representative Nancy Stiles and Executive Counselor Bev Hollingworth, for their interest, support and assistance on various HBAC projects and efforts.

This concludes my third and final year as Chairman of the Commission, although I will continue to serve for one more year as a member. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Chairman, and it has also been most gratifying to see the progress that has been made on a wide variety of projects for the betterment of Hampton Beach. I am sure that the next Chairman will pursue the Commission's goals with diligence and enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick C. Rice  
Chairman

