

Bay State Council of Divers

Meeting Minutes for June 19, 2019

Meeting held at the SSN's Clubhouse, Quincy, MA time 7:38PM to 9-ish PM

Attendees:

Jim	Brady	OCA
Susan	Copelas	NSF / Dive the World Adventures
Angelo	Correnti	SSN / BSC President
Theresa	Czerepica	SSN
Douglas	Eaton	SSN
Tom	Gaitley	ECD / New England Photo Guild
Ken	Hayes	SSN
Teri	Hayes	SSN
Mary	Howard	NSF / BSC Secretary
Dan	Houlihan	ECD / DivARC
Craig	McMannus	NEADC
James	Nannery	MWDC / BSC VP
Ray	Porter	NSF
Dave	Stillman	Project Deep
Mike	Vaughan	NEADC
Jon	Willis	SSN

Organizations represented:

Dive the World Adventures
East Coast Divers (ECD)
MetroWest Dive Club (MWDC)
New England Aquarium Dive Club (NEADC)
New England Photo Guild
North Shore Frogmen's Club (NSF)
Old Colony Amphibians (OCA)
Project Deep
South Shore Neptunes (SSN)

Rockport, MA Beach Access "Issue" update

Jim Nannery gave some history: In '90s permit requirement was instituted. There was no fee and no fine associated with this permit requirement, and after a while the practice of pulling permits lapsed. In 2019 some residents at Back Beach brought Rockport Town's attention to this, suggesting both a fee and a fine. Permits are now required, must be pulled at DPW Mon-Thu during office hours.

There was a meeting on June 4th with the assistant head of the Rockport DPW, Rick (Rich) Souza, and the Rockport Police Chief. Dave Stillman, Whitney Boyle, Jim Nannery and others attended the meeting. At the meeting it was noted that the Town of Rockport is offering a "service" to people who use their beaches. Permits are required of those conducting SCUBA

classes as well as “groups” of divers. At this time there is no clarification of what number constitutes a “group”. A month ago, the number 12 was floated, but others have heard 8. Groups without a permit will be asked by the police to leave the premises.

The beach “regulation” requires commercial ventures to get permits, but it was noted that this is selectively enforced since non-dive groups are not asked whether they have permits.

NOTE: The Beach Access Law, signed by Gov. Dukakis in 1986, specifically states that beach access is allowed to any scuba diver where swimming is permitted.

NEXT STEPS:

We will need to get the word out to divers, dive shops, etc. that the Bay State Council of Divers (BSC) is working on the issue. In the meantime, **please do not do anything rash!**

Draft a letter to give to town residents requesting letters/attendance at town meeting. Anyone who knows people in Rockport, please speak with them about this issue and asking for support for divers.

Town of Rockport is putting themselves in jeopardy by diverting police to frivolous matters, especially in a tourist town.

Document any interactions/confrontations with Rockport residents or police. Please keep a copy, and an electronic copy, of any permits you pull. Please send documentation info to rockport@baystatecouncil.org.

Diver Dollars: Suggest the use of \$2 bills by divers would be a good way to make diver money known to Rockport establishments. \$2 bills can be requested of banks and distributed to dive club members at meetings, etc.

In the end, we will possibly be going to court. Jim will contact attorneys we have used in the past.

Great Annual Fish Count, July 20:

Dives at various locations. Meet at Stage Fort Park with your findings and lunch will be available. Raffle prizes will be awarded to anyone who turns in a survey form.

Women’s Dive Day, July 27:

8AM-12noon at Stage Fort Park, Gloucester. They are anticipating a large group this year, 150 participants. Lots of great raffle prizes!

Next meeting: scheduled for **Wednesday, July 24, 2019** at the Neptunes’ Clubhouse at corner of Quarry Street and Joyce Road. We will be discussing the Rockport matter further.