

## **Supervisor's Statement**

*September 4, 2019*

### **Goose Hunting At Sandy Bottom Park Put on Hold**

Due to community concern, a planned action to reduce the goose population at Sandy Bottom Beach by allowing several authorized individuals to hunt the birds during open season has been put on hold.

Managing geese in public places is a common problem with no easy solution. Geese at Sandy Bottom impede visitors' full enjoyment of the beach, pavilions, play grounds, and lawn areas. They also create a public health hazard with their droppings. During the beach season our Buildings and Grounds department rakes the beach twice a day with special attention to public traffic patterns. The lawns are mowed almost as often and sidewalks are scrubbed by our Recreation Staff daily to remove goose droppings.

Very limited seasonal hunting has been a routine activity since 2015, when a park law was passed which allows nuisance wildlife to be hunted and/or removed by authorization of the Richmond Town Board. This has been done by skilled hunters, at times when the beach is not open for swimming, the park is closed and only after careful consideration for public safety. Never would this action to reduce goose population have been considered to take place on the holiday weekend by any party involved.

Richmond's Buildings and Grounds Department reminded the Board of this recurring action item during open session at the August 13th Town Board meeting and there was a discussion of past measures taken and the results. At the August 27th Town Board workshop, also open to the public, there was more discussion of need for additional control of the geese and their droppings as well as alternatives. Members voted unanimously on a resolution authorizing this activity for the Fall 2019 season. This followed prior protocol, using language crafted by a previous Town Attorney and complying with state and federal hunting laws. The local NYSDEC was also consulted.

**Due to the large volume of concerns indirectly voiced on social media several days prior to the start of the season, this action was placed on hold pending further discussion.**

Over the years, the Town has tried a number of measures to discourage geese from congregating at Sandy Bottom Beach, with mixed success. Use of loud noises and equipment does not deter the geese. Placement of decoys and reflective tape has been subject to vandalism and theft. Seasonal hunting, which is a common approach to discourage flocks from congregating, has put a small dent in the problem. Discussion of additional measures to deter the birds, such as limited fencing, the planting of tall grasses and changing the landscaping in the park area, has been ongoing. The 2019 budget begins to put funds aside for this kind of park update.

The Richmond Town Board remains open to considering cost-effective approaches suggested by residents and committee members, with the goal of preventing negative health impacts and supporting public enjoyment of the waterfront. To share a comment or research-based information on management of geese in public areas, please contact [csauers@townofrichmond.org](mailto:csauers@townofrichmond.org).