

Dear Members of The Orleans Select Board:

We write to you as residents of the Town of Orleans and as representatives of our entire neighborhood to express deep concerns over longstanding issues at Kent's Point. As you know, 20 years ago, Charlotte Kent wished for these magnificent 27 acres to be preserved in perpetuity. But today, countless preservation challenges and quality of life issues have emerged. Those are principally in three areas: the environment and protection of the land, personal safety, and quality of life issues in the neighborhoods surrounding Kent's Point.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Erosion is dramatically changing the landscape of our shorelines across Orleans and at Kent's Point. But compounding the impact of climate change is excessive overuse of Kent's Point year-round. That overwhelming overuse is creating unintended new trails, impacting existing plant life and preventing new growth. On these special 27 acres, where birds were once ubiquitous, today they are nowhere to be seen. Dramatic increases in foot-track from visitors across the Cape are having an environmental impact, causing the quality of the overall experience to decline. Put simply, the land is deteriorating quickly and excessive overuse is major driver of it. Further deterioration would send a message to constituents across Orleans that the Town is not doing what it can to protect its treasured assets.

PERSONAL SAFETY AT KENT'S POINT

Increasingly, because so many visitors are not respecting the land and because visitation has become so unwieldy, safety issues have emerged at Kent's Point. Local residents have even experienced broken bones and injuries. Young children—even infants—have been jumped on by pets. As a result, some seniors fear injury and local families with young children are choosing to stay away because of the possibility of an accident. It shouldn't be that way.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

As you likely know, the area around Kent's Point is one enjoyed by walkers, runners, dogs and young children. These are quiet local roads. Yet, dramatic increases in car traffic in recent years have culminated in a normative culture of truly excessive, reckless, unaccountable speeding. Cars visiting Kent's Point, at nearly all hours of the day, are driving at very high speeds, while a stop sign at the intersection between Keziah's Lane and Frost Fish Lane is barely adhered to.

It is not hyperbole to say that the risk for accidents is extremely high each and every day, especially in the summer months. Speeding and reckless driving is posing a genuine threat to pedestrians, children, bicyclists, and other drivers—all while creating local quality of life challenges. As visitation to Kent's Point rises each year, the problem has only worsened. It has gotten truly out of control. We're asking that something be done.

A POTENTIAL SOLUTION

We, as a community, have brainstormed potential solutions. One such solution for the Town would be to require visitors to have Orleans Beach Stickers to use Kent's Point. This would, in effect, make use of Kent's Point specifically for Town residents—and we believe it would whittle away at these interconnected issues.

Why and what evidence do we have of that overuse? During the third week of October, neighborhood residents conducted a car count over the course of seven days (including rainy days when visitation to Kent's Point was limited) at five different times. We found that the majority of visitors were not from Orleans. In the summer months, we know anecdotally that the vast, vast majority of visitors from Memorial Day through Labor Day are not local residents. We believe there are, annually, 45,000 visitors each year – and likely tens of thousands more. Many do not respect the area for the special asset that it is.

With overwhelming overuse causing deterioration to the land, responsibly managing the number of visitors by requiring Orleans Beach Stickers could make a major difference to allowing this unique landscape to heal. Further, responsibly managing visitation could meaningfully decrease the risk of an injury at Kent's Point, as well as on the roads surrounding it. We believe that requiring a beach stickers is a simple, achievable, and sound way to do just that.

What would the outcomes be and how could it be enforced? If the Town were to require Orleans Beach Stickers for use of Kent's Point, we anticipate that one of two things would occur. If it helps effectively and responsibly manage visitation, the land will benefit, deterioration will slow, and Kent's Point can be more effectively preserved. However, if this proposed solution is ineffective at discouraging overwhelming visitation from non-residents, then it could present a small but meaningful revenue source for the Town through ticketing—revenue that could go back into preserving the Town's environmental assets, supporting our local police officers to keep us safe, improving our roads, or enhancing our public schools. Should the Town hire for an individual over the summer months to ticket illegally parked cars, Kent's Point would be an obvious site for enforcement. In the winter months, the Town could consider having the Orleans Police Department issue tickets to non-stickered visitors—revenue for which could help support the budgets of our valued local officers who protect us each and every day in a world-class way.

In our view, while this solution wouldn't solve the myriad issues surrounding Kent's Point, it would be a logical, enforceable, and achievable first step to correcting what has become an unmanageable situation.

OUR MESSAGE TO YOU

We know there is a deep history surrounding Kent's Point—a history that preceded many in our neighborhood. But we're writing to say we're focused not on the past, but on the future. We

want to work together—constructively and productively—to solve these challenges, which we we assure you are very, very real. We care about preservation, protecting these treasured assets, and about solving these very real quality of life issues that afflict our neighborhood. Put simply: we're hoping to work *together*—not antagonistically—on solutions.

CONCLUSION

Attached you will find a petition that our neighborhood has put together asking for you to look into these matters and explore answers, as well as a fact sheet for background information.

To reiterate our message to you once again: we want to work together, and we believe we can work constructively to find answers that meet the needs of residents throughout Orleans, meet the interests of the Town, and make a difference to the communities surrounding Kent's Point.

Should you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Respectfully,

Devon Puglia
Keziah's Lane Resident

Mary Ellen McAndrews
Keziah's Lane Resident

Robin Herr
Keziah's Lane Resident

Anne Sigsbee
Keziah's Lane Resident

Joanna Cannon
Keziah's Lane Resident

FACT SHEET ON ALARMING TRENDS AT KENT'S POINT

Kent's Point is a treasure for the Town of Orleans and an unrivaled asset for our community. Purchased by the Town from Ms. Kent 20 years ago to be preserved in perpetuity, it's a place unlike any other.

But in recent years, truly startling trends have emerged, principally in three areas: dramatic environmental deterioration, personal safety, and quality of life surrounding the land.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION

As we all know, erosion is a major issue across Orleans and Cape Cod, but at Kent's Point, it's occurring at a rapid pace on the shoreline. However, that erosion is compounded by truly excessive overuse year-round. With hundreds of visitors per day, unintended new trails are emerging, significant overuse is harming existing plant life and preventing new growth, while birds—which used to be ubiquitous on the land—are, today, hard to find. Overwhelming and unregulated visitation is causing the quality of the experience to decline significantly. Kent's Point—an environmental treasure—has deteriorated rapidly over the past several years.

It requires responsible management.

This special piece of land must be respected and protected. We have to take action now by responsibly managing access, because excessive overuse is impacting the area.

SAFETY ISSUES

Dramatic increases in foot-traffic from visitors across the Cape are not just having deleterious environmental effects on the land. They're also presenting safety challenges to fellow visitors as well. In recent years, there have been injuries on the trails at Kent's Point, and because these 27 acres have become so overwhelmed by overuse, local residents in our town—seniors, families with young children, and more—have been discouraged from enjoying Kent's Point for those reasons. Those safety issues, which stem from overuse, should warrant immediate attention by the town. There are residents of our town who do not use Kent's Point because of the potential for injuries.

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

The area around Kent's Point is one enjoyed by walkers, runners, dogs and young children. Yet, dramatic increases in car traffic in recent years have culminated in a culture of truly excessive, reckless, unaccountable speeding by visitors. Cars visiting Kent's Point,

at all hours of the day, are driving at very high speeds on quiet local roads that walkers and runners enjoy. That speeding is posing a genuine risk to pedestrians, children, bicyclists, and more. There has been damage to local landscapes and property, deterioration of the road, and myriad potential accidents. Each year, the risk only grows, and without it being addressed by the Town, the problem will only worsen.

A COMMON-SENSE SOLUTION FOR THE TOWN OF ORLEANS

All of these issues—environmental challenges for the land, safety concerns, and reckless driving—all (at least partly) stem from irresponsible overuse of Kent's Point. But it doesn't have to be this way. There are simple, common-sense, achievable solutions to these interconnected problems. Residents who are concerned about environment, preservation, and quality of life issues want to work constructively with the Select Board and the Town to solve for these very real problems.

One possibility would be to require Orleans Beach Stickers to use Kent's Point. By requiring an Orleans beach sticker, the Town will be in a better position to care for Kent's Point and manage the environmental damage. Mitigating excessive foot-traffic from visitors outside of Orleans will dramatically slow the pace of deterioration of these 27 acres, and deliver an enhanced experience for those in our town. As climate change affects the globe, for us here at home, we see the impact each and every day on our coastlines. That's why protecting Kent's Point is so important, and it's why we urgently need to curb excessive use to preserve it.

We know this can make a difference because local residents conducted a count of cars parked at Kent's Point. Over the course of one week in late October, residents checked cars at five different times per day (7AM, 8AM, 12:30PM, 3PM, 5PM). The findings? Out of 129 cars over the course of the week in October, 56 cars were stickered with Orleans Beach Stickers, and 73 were non stickered. That means approximately 57% of visitors are coming outside of Orleans in the fall months, with a substantially higher ratio likely in the summer based on anecdotal evidence from neighbors. In total, we estimate there are a minimum of 40,000 visitors annually, and likely thousands or tens of thousands more.

Requiring Orleans Beach Stickers to visit Kent's Point is a simple, achievable, enforceable solution for these interconnected issues, which could even deliver a meaningful source of revenue for the town. Because for us as a town, we have a simple choice: will we proactively take steps to respect and protect the uniqueness of Kent's Point? Or will we allow it to continue to rapidly deteriorate through inaction?

Kent's Point is beloved – but it's being loved to death. The time has come to take proactive action to protect this important asset. We can do that by requiring Orleans Beach Stickers to solve for a host of important issues.

PETITION TO THE ORLEANS SELECT BOARD

Kent's Point is a treasure for the Town of Orleans and an unrivaled asset for our community. Purchased by the Town from Ms. Kent 20 years ago to be preserved in perpetuity, it's a place unlike any other.

But in recent years, startling trends have emerged.

Erosion is dramatically changing the landscape. Excessive overuse year-round is creating unintended new trails, impacting existing plant life and preventing new growth. Dramatic increases in foot-track from visitors across the Cape are having deleterious environmental effects, causing the quality of the experience to decline significantly. And because these 27 acres have become so overwhelmed by overuse, local residents in our town—seniors, families with young children, and more—have been discouraged from enjoying Kent's Point.

If we don't act now, our ability to preserve it—for this generation of residents and the next—will dwindle.

This special piece of land is deteriorating quickly, while a variety of concerns—safety issues, injuries, and more—have emerged due to overwhelming use. Kent's Point must be respected and protected. We have to take action now, because the status quo will only further deterioration in the years ahead through inaction.

That's why this petition is calling on the Orleans Select Board and the Town of Orleans to look closely at the matter and help identify answers. One potential solution should be to require Orleans Beach Stickers to use Kent's Point. By requiring an Orleans Beach Sticker, the Town will be in a better position to care for Kent's Point. Mitigating excessive foot-traffic will dramatically slow the pace of deterioration of these 27 acres, and deliver an enhanced experience for those in our town. It is also a logistically simple and enforceable solution.

Climate change is affecting the globe, but for us here at home, we see the impact each and every day on our coastlines. That's why protecting Kent's Point is so important, and it's why we urgently need to curb excessive use to preserve it. Today's Orleans residents—and tomorrow's—are counting on us to do just that. The time has come to take proactive action to protect this important asset.

Agree to sign your name to send a loud and clear message that you believe in respecting and protecting Kent's Point, and that you believe the Town of Orleans should take action to preserve the land, prevent overwhelming overuse, and identify responsible solutions for challenges that will only grow in the future.