

For Immediate Release  
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PM

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The Town has begun the next phase of connecting donors with the 455 engraved Sandwich Boardwalk planks recovered from the Mill Creek saltmarsh after January's vicious storm.

The planks, part of the 220 feet of Boardwalk torn from the main structure, were carefully separated, tagged and logged on a spreadsheet last month by a group of volunteers known as the Plank Gang.

The pilot program—launched ahead of next year's anticipated Boardwalk replacement project—was designed to help town officials gauge what is necessary to reunite the remaining planks with their original donors.

"We've learned that relying on volunteers to carry out the labor-intensive effort of dismantling the more than 1,500 remaining planks is an unrealistic goal," said Selectman Charles Holden, a member of the Plank Gang. "But we are committed to creating another opportunity to connect people with planks."

The Plank Gang consisted of members of the Geezer Brigade who helped raise money and build the existing walkway in 1992, volunteers from the Friends of the Sandwich Boardwalk, and eight members of the Sandwich High School Key Club: Kate Cowan, Brigid Kelly, Caitlin Kelly, Kaitlyn Landry, Katelyn Lerch, Abby MacLachlan, Riley Spurr and Jacob Sullivan.

Dean Coe, one of the driving forces behind the Geezer Brigade, said reading the inscriptions on the plank while dismantling the segments "reminded me of how significant the boardwalk has been to this community not just in the last 30-plus years but since its inception in 1875.

"It is not only historically significant and a Sandwich and Cape Cod icon, it has been a unifier and gathering place like no other," Coe continued. "As we passed planks from one to another, we touched the threads of a community fabric. It brought back memories of so many conversations and stories."

Town officials will work with the general contractor to coordinate the reunion effort once work begins on reconstruction. The remaining sections of boardwalk will remain intact until the contract is awarded and demolition begins, no sooner than late this fall.

Town staff will spend this summer working plank by plank to match entries on the Plank Gang spreadsheet with lists compiled during the engraving programs of 1992 and 2001-07. In many cases, the wording on the plank has been scoured by the elements or contact information is outdated. In those cases, sequential photographs of planks taken in May could help staff figure out the mystery donors, though matchmaking of the heavy and difficult to handle planks is challenging.

Holden asked everyone for patience as the process plays out.

"We know how important this project is to residents and visitors alike," he said. "We will continue to work on a strategy for donors to retrieve planks." You can help by supporting this effort, the restoration of the boardwalk and with your patience.

The Town has already received communications regarding approximately 500 planks. Please do not expect an immediate response but do know we are working diligently behind the scenes. Please do send us your plank inscription and email address so we can reach out to you as this effort continues. If you know your board is still secured to the boardwalk please do not attempt to remove it we will have a separate effort when the boardwalk is rehabilitated. If you are interested in this project please do not call town hall. Instead, email this address created expressly for this project: [boardwalk@sandwichmass.org](mailto:boardwalk@sandwichmass.org).