



MIDDLETOWN
Rhode Island

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SECOND FREE SEASONAL BEACH PASS MAY BE RETURNING

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. (SEPTEMBER 3, 2024) – Middletown is considering restoring the second free seasonal beach parking pass for residents.

Suggested by Town Council President Paul M. Rodrigues and Councilor Barbara A. VonVillas after hearing from a number of people, the idea was discussed during a meeting Tuesday night in Town Hall.

Rodrigues and VonVillas said their research showed reimplementing the second free sticker would not add to wait times or negatively impact resident parking at Second or Third beaches next summer.

That's because the town has created an efficient, smooth parking system for residents and set aside enough spaces to make sure locals can get in without a wait, even during the busiest times.

The recommendation was referred to the town's Beach Commission for review and analysis before the matter was taken up again by the council. The volunteer board is expected to consider the issue at its Sept. 10 session.

"My concern is providing services for our residents," VonVillas said, admitting she wasn't a "beach" person, but heard from plenty who were frequent visitors and the second sticker was a popular topic of discussion.

Councilor Christopher Logan said he welcomed the idea of getting the second beach sticker, but he wanted to see the impacts too, saying there were consequences to every action. Currently, he said residents never have to wait to park at the beaches, even on the hottest, busiest days, a great arrangement he'd hate to lose.

Concerned about long waits during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, the town got rid of the two-for-one seasonal beach pass four years ago. At the same time, the town also made parking for Third Beach "resident only." Walk ons can access either beach for free anytime.

Figures from the beach office indicated approximately 8,400 seasonal beach passes were sold during the Summer 2024. Of those, 4,028 were for residents.

The town does not track how many households purchased second seasonal parking passes this summer.

For Summer 2025, in order get the second seasonal parking pass for free, a resident must buy the first. A seasonal parking sticker was \$90 for residents. The rate for the Summer 2025 will be set as part of the town's annual budget discussion, which kicks off in earnest next spring.

"We had an outstanding summer from a beach standpoint," said Will Cronin, who oversees the beaches as part of his duties for the town. "The weather was great from start to finish and I heard a lot of positives from our staff, beachgoers, really everybody."

Document Link: <https://mdl.town/Pass>