

Attention Residents and Visitors of Charlestown,

We would like to inform the community that the town's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) teams regularly conducts drone flights over the Charlestown and Quonochontaug Breachways, as well as the Charlestown shoreline, as part of ongoing environmental monitoring and data collection efforts. These flights are a routine part of our GIS program to better understand and manage local geography, shoreline conditions, and infrastructure.

In addition to mapping, our drone operations support various public safety and emergency response activities, including fire operations, search and rescue, accident reconstruction, police scene security, event safety, and beach safety/lifeguarding assistance. The drones used by our GIS/UAS teams, including the DJI Mavic 3E, DJI Matrice 30, and DJI Matrice 350, are equipped with advanced features such as thermal imaging for locating heat sources in emergencies, RTK positioning for precise location data, LiDAR for detailed topographic mapping, and payload delivery systems for emergency equipment, such as flotation devices along our beaches.

Periodically, the GIS/UAS teams also conduct training exercises, typically at Charlestown Town Hall, Ninigret Park, or on our beaches during the season. These exercises are essential for maintaining proficiency in drone operations and ensuring readiness for emergency situations. While these exercises may involve drone flights in the area, they are part of our ongoing commitment to safety and operational excellence.

We want to clarify that these routine drone flights are unrelated to any current news reports or external activities. The presence of drones in the area should not be confused with any other operations or incidents. There is no cause for concern, and our team's activities are conducted in full compliance with local laws, regulations, and safety protocols. We are committed to transparency and assure the public that our drones are used solely for lawful, beneficial purposes that support public safety and environmental management.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation. For any questions or further information, please contact Stephen McCandless, GIS Coordinator / Coastal Geologist / UAS Operations Manager at smccandless@charlestownri.gov. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Charlestown G.I.S
17th of December, 2024