

Wellfleet Open Space Committee Minutes December 12, 2023, Zoom Meeting

Present (via Zoom): John Grieb, chair; Bruce Hurter, vice chair; Peggy Sagan; Liz MacDonald; Tom Slack.
Guest: Denny O'Connell, WCT; Cindy Batchelder

Meeting called to order 4:32 PM

Agenda approved.

Minutes of October meeting approved.

Chair report (J. Grieb): Deferred until liaison report on Community Preservation Committee.

Vice-Chair Report (B. Hurter): Nothing to report.

Standing Assignments

Property Management (B. Hurter): Bruce has completed a significant number of property inspections. He, John, and D. O'Connell will visit three properties where there is some concern about derelict structures, possible encroachment by abutters, and interest (by owner) in a public walking path.

Trail Guides (P. Sagan): Denny arranged a revision and small reprint (200 copies) of the Pilgrim Springs/Fox Island Marsh Trail guide, and Peggy has collated 100 new sets. Denny said he limited the print run because the trail map will need to be revised in the coming year to reflect the addition of new acreage.

Community Outreach (P. Sagan): Peggy reported that she and Denny met with the new principal of WES (Adam O'Shea) in October and with the teaching staff in early November. The school is very interested in continuing our partnership in the coming year, in accordance with the school's new teaching approach, The Deep Learning Initiative. Peggy wrote Adam earlier this week to determine next steps and establish a rough schedule for planning meetings and classroom visits.

J. Grieb mentioned that the Mass DOE contains a clear overview of the Deep Learning model.

Liaison Reports

WCT (J. Grieb): John asked Denny for an update on activities. He reported that WCT is focusing on finalizing the approvals for two Conservation Restrictions within the next few weeks, one adjacent to the Herring Overlook and the other abutting Hamblen Farm. Denny also noted that the Strategic Planning Process will resume after the holidays.

Friends of Herring River (T. Slack): Tom reported that construction is under way for the temporary bridge. The organization is currently focused on year-end fundraising efforts, and he encouraged committee members to donate if they are able.

Housing Partnership (B. Hurter): The last meeting was cancelled due to Zoom problems.

CPC (J. Grieb): John has been working with DPW to secure cost estimates for demolition and restoration work at Plue Heron so that we can finalize our proposal to CPC by the first of January. Issues involve the possible presence of unexploded ordinances from WWII Navy target practice. John noted that the Town will absorb most of the costs for this project, but that OSC will be responsible for certain expenses.

NRAB (T. Slack): Tom said the Board held an Executive Session last week to consider applicants for a consultant to develop a plan and budget for the Harbor study. The Board also continues to work on developing parameters for the Pond study, and they are looking to the funding model that Brewster and Harwich has employed. Denny asked what responsibility the Town has for area ponds since the majority of Wellfleet's ponds fall under the purview of the National Seashore. Tom explained that the Town wants to employ higher monitoring standards than what the NPS uses, which would require data collection from all ponds within the Town.

Old Business

5-year Plan: Peggy reported briefly on the Open Space Community Forum held December 7, commenting that the meeting was well attended – not just in number of participants (about 30) but also in the people who attended, including Chairs from several other Town committees; several members of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust Board of Directors; Barbara Carboni, SB Chair; and interested members of the community.

Bruce said that the moderator, Seth Rolbein, did an excellent job of encouraging discussion and of referencing how other Outer Cape towns deal with similar issues and concerns. As an example, he found it valuable when Seth pointing out two common approaches to controlling housing development: (1) requiring larger lot sizes and/or (2) promoting cluster development (with open space set-asides), similar to the 75 Lawrence Road model. John commented that he found the discussion around better linkage of parcels of land – to accomplish various social and environmental goals – to be beneficial. Following the meeting, Barbara Carboni said that she is supportive of looking at opportunities to knit together protected lands.

Although the forum was an in-person-only event, it was recorded. The recording is available on the Town website at: <https://reflect-townofwellfleet.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/3029>.

Recruitment of New Committee Members. Two community members are interested in joining the committee and learning more about our work. One, Cindy Batchelder (who both John and Peggy know from other volunteer organizations), attended today's meeting to get some understanding of the Committee's focus and working procedures. We encourage Cindy and the other candidate to sit in on future meetings and to reach out to John, Peggy, or other members with any questions.

Properties for Consideration

Not discussed.

Next Meeting – TBD

Meeting adjourned 5:26 PM (Note: The meeting ended prematurely when the Zoom connection was lost)

*Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Sagan, Secretary*