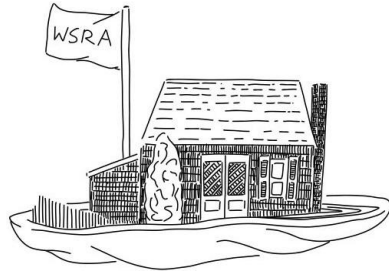


# Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association

*Promoting community involvement and communication*



*Summer Edition, 2023*

*It's time to pay your 2023 dues –  
please do so [online](#) or by mail*

*Marta Reese Flanagan*

## **Special Fall Town Meeting: September 18, 6 pm Wellfleet Elementary Gymnasium**

There are a number of issues coming up on the warrant for this meeting, including additional funding for the wastewater treatment facility at Lawrence Hill, funding for homeowners (including us) to upgrade our septic to “enhanced” I/A systems, and hiring of a town planner (instead of a housing person as proposed in last spring’s warrant and voted down). According to town administrator Rich Waldo, the Lawrence Hill item would add \$29 a year to the tax bill for the average home valued at \$789,700 and the town planner another \$32 if both town meeting and then the voting the next week on September 27th approve these issues. Other items include some zoning bylaw changes to increase the possibility of building affordable housing, limiting timber cutting within the National Seashore, outlawing “nips” (small alcoholic beverages’ bottles) because of their environmental impact, and minor changes to the dog leach rules.

For the last few weeks the biggest arguments, that affect what will come up at Town Meeting, are about a mitigation plan that was drafted to help us get the permit to finish the dredging. The meetings have often been heated, rather uncivil, and *ad hominin*. The details are complicated and can be read in the Selectboard [packet for their August 22nd meeting](#). The argument was over whether the town should enter an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to agree to mitigation of the muck in the Drummer Cove/ Blackfish Creek area. On one side where town officials, and the Dredging Taskforce, who though it was a good deal (even with some details not worked out), while others (mainly a large group of shellfish grant holders) who thought it closed the mitigation area for too many years, even though very little shell fishing is done there. Any that is done has mainly, but not entirely, been those who do “wild” shell fishing rather than have grants.



**Figure 4: Blackfish Creek typical sediment composed of med / fine sand and some silt.**

Some the argument and anger reflected distrust of the government, both at the town and federal levels. It all came to a head at the August 22nd Selectboard meeting when the vote, after several more hours of debate by the board and the public, was three no's by the board, one abstention, and one member's recusal because he is a shellfish person. However, three petitions about this issue will still be on the warrant for the Town Meeting and will probably be rehashed again there, even though with the Selectboard vote this is now over. It means there will not be any dredging of the mooring fields this year, and the costs in the future to all of us are yet unclear. In all probability, however, our taxes will definitely be going up even more than they would have been if another tax override to cover the now more expensive dredging is voted at the 2024 Town Meeting.

Details and summaries of these items are on the town website at: <https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/home/pages/special-town-meeting>.

Only Wellfleet voters can speak at the meeting, except with special permission of town moderator Dan Silverman. We can attend but are supposed to sit in the bleachers (not very comfortable for older backs, fyi), not on the gym floor because of the way votes are counted. One of the reasons our organization was formed was to give us at least some form of collective voice, in spite of these rules. We have had a representative speak at previous Town Meetings and may again this September.

## **Summer Programs**

We held two summer programs this year: one on water issues and a second on the state of the town. Because the town sent us one zoom address, and then used another, alas many members could not get into the state of the town meeting. We are truly sorry this happened, but it was not under our control.

The video for our State of the Water meeting can be viewed [here](#).

The video for our State of the Town meeting can be viewed [here](#).

The meeting on water was really informative about the town's water plans to protect all of our water into the future. It also included a fascinating discussion of using urine capture/diverting technologies ("pee-cycling") since a very large percentage of the Cape's harmful nitrogen comes from our urine.

The State of the Town meeting presented a rosy picture of what is going on here. But if you have been following the reports in the *Provincetown Independent*, or just the gossip over breakfast at various town watering holes, you know we are having some difficulties. Selectboard member Kathleen Bacon has resigned, and there will be an election on September 27th to fill the rest of her term. As of now, only resident Tim Sayre is running, although there could be a write in campaign for another candidate. Ryan Curley has been replaced as Selectboard chair by Barbara Carboni. Because he is a shellfish person, Selectboard member Michael DeVasto has to sit out some of the voting/discussion on the mitigation debate. Similarly, Barbara Carboni is the town planner for Truro for her day job so she sits out any discussion/votes on the Herring River.

The town is also missing lots of staff. We have an interim assistant town administrator, building inspector and treasurer. Our acting Health/Conservation staff member has resigned.

## **Town's bond rating is downgraded**

According to *Bloomberg News*, S&P Global downgraded Wellfleet's bond rating from AAA to AA+ in April and "retained a negative outlook" on the town as an issuer. S&P reported that our "high cost of living and home prices have challenged affordability for full-time residents, including town employees" and cited the fiscal problems of the last few years. The consequences of this means it will be more expensive for the town to finance its borrowing.

## **Openings on Town Committees**

There are openings on a number of the town committees that seasonal residents can join, listed just below. Please consider applying to join one of these if your expertise or interest is in any of these areas, or encourage any full-time Wellfleet people to do so too. A number of these meetings are hybrid or on Zoom. Anyone interested should get in touch with Rebekah Eldridge, the executive assistant to the town administrator at [Rebekah.Eldridge@wellfleet-ma.gov](mailto:Rebekah.Eldridge@wellfleet-ma.gov).

Here is the list:

Board/Committee Vacancy List August 21, 2023

Board of Health – 3-year term – 5 Members 1 Alternate  
1 Alternate position open

Board of Water Commissioners – 3-year term – 5 Members, 1 Alternate  
2 Alternate positions open

Board of Registrars – 3- year term – 4 Members  
1 Vacancy

Building and Needs Assessment Committee – 3-year term – 5 Members  
2 Vacancies

Cable Internet and Cellular Service Advisory Committee – 1-year term – 5  
Members  
1 Vacancy

Conservation Commission – 3-year term – 7 Members, 2 Alternates  
2 Alternate vacancies

Council on Aging – 3-year term – 9 Members  
1 Vacancy

Cultural Council – 3-year term – No more than 15 Members  
5 Vacancies

Dredging Task Force – 3-year term – 7 Members  
3 Vacancies

Finance Committee – 3-year term – 9 Members, 2 Alternates  
1 Vacancy

Natural Resource Advisory Board – 3-year term – 7 Members  
3 Vacancies

Planning Board – 3-year term – 7 Members, 2 Alternates  
1 Voting Member Vacancy  
2 Alternate Vacancies

Recreation Committee – 3-year term – 7 Members  
2 Vacancies

Recycling Committee – 3-year year term – 7 Members, 2 Alternates  
2 Alternate Vacancies

Rights of Public Access Committee – 3-year term – 5 Members  
4 Vacancies

Wellfleet Public Library Trustees – 3-year term- 7 Members  
1 Vacancy

### **OneCape Summit**

The OneCape Summit, organized by the Cape Cod Commission, brought together town officials, local and state politicians, various Cape organizations and businesses, for a two day meeting on July 31 and August 1. This year a lot of the discussion focused on what can be done about housing, zoning, and water issues. WSRA president Susan Reverby attended, see photo of her in discussion with a Cape Cod 5 banker during a break.



If you would like to watch the discussions or read about the topics, see <https://onecape.capecodcommission.org/>. Some of the work being done on these issues across the country is fascinating, including organizations called YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard).

## Private Wells

There are half a million private wells in Massachusetts, and there is no state regulation for them, only for “city water.” There is a move afoot to have the state create some regulations for testing, with loans for improvements for low income qualified people. Nothing has happened yet, but we will keep on top of this. Massachusetts state government suggests you have your well tested. For more information on this, see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/protect-your-family-a-guide-to-water-quality-testing-for-private-wells>.

## Joint meeting of Seasonal Resident groups on Outer Cape

WSRA board member Carl Sussman attended a meeting on August 18 of seasonal/part-time resident board members from Provincetown, Truro, Eastham and us. The issues are both similar and different in each town. This group used to meet pre-Covid. We will continue to learn from what other town groups are doing and to see what applies, or does not apply, to us.

## 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade

Once again we participated in the annual 4th of July parade, although we need some new signs for our organization now.

It is always a lot of fun and a great Wellfleet tradition.

After the judges made their call, we awarded the grand prize for the best float to Mac's



photo by Phyllis Bretholtz

## Poolite or Wellfleetian?

In case you ever wondered: Wellfleet is named for the English Wallfleet (or sometimes spelled Walflete) oyster, not a place in England. The early English settlers here took to the islands, especially Billingsgate. At one point there was an effort to name the area near Griffith Island, Poole, after the seaport “on the English Channel in Dorset. When the town was finally divided, Wellfleet was name chosen.” See Everett I. Nye, *History of Wellfleet, From Early Days to Present Time* (Wellfleet: Everett I. Nye, 1920), p. 7.

And in case you wanted to know when Wellfleet started to attract summer visitors, historian Everett Nye reported the following in 1920:

“Since the decline of some of the earlier industries of the town, the population, which reached its height in 1850, has materially lessened.

The exodus of city people to the country and seashore during the summer season which has greatly increased in recent years has benefited Wellfleet as well as other Cape towns.

As houses on the outskirts of town were vacated by reason of removals to the village or to other towns, the residences have been purchased or hired by city people, who enjoy sea breezes and summer rest. Many cottages near the shore, the beaches or ponds, have been erected.

In the summer months, the population of our town is nearly doubled by these sojourners, who, having come one year, are almost sure to repeat the experience.” (Nye, *History*, p. 42).



*Work continues on the Herring River restoration project.  
Photo by Phyllis Bretholtz*

### **Dues and donations, please**

WSRA counts on its members to pay dues without receiving an annual invoice. Dues and individual donations are WSRA's only sources of funding-- \$25 for a single membership or \$35 for a family/household membership per calendar year.

To pay by PayPal:

- Renew your [Family Membership](#)
- Renew your [Individual Membership](#)
- Make a [Donation](#)

You may also mail your payment to:

WSRA  
P.O. Box 1323  
Wellfleet, MA 02667-1323

If you would like more than one member of your household to receive email from WSRA, please [email](#) us!

**THANK YOU!**

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