

Town of Wellfleet

Rights of Public Access Committee

Meeting Minutes: February 3, 2022, 2:30 p.m.

Committee members present: John Riehl, Steve Blanchard, Barbara Carboni, Melissa Yow, Sonya Woodman

Others present: Dick Elkin, Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action Committee; Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable

The meeting was called to order by Steve Blanchard. The agenda was reviewed. There were no public comments. The minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting, as corrected, were approved by vote 5-0.

Consequences of sea level rise for coastal access in Wellfleet. John Riehl gave summary of Cape Cod Commission's recent Low Lying Roads presentation. Work focused on to what extent the roads near harbor would be flooded due to sea rise, but did not cover how access to harbor for shellfishing or swimming would be affected. Some access points will be severely limited; for example, Powers Landing and Fisherman's Landing. There is need for study of the impacts on these activities; first build database and then create action plan. Where might funding be found?

Nancy Civetta reported meeting with Cape Cod Commission on availability of federal funds to help towns identify areas most at risk of inundation: salt marsh, fish passage, shellfish resources. Identified Herring River Project, Powers Landing ; Kellers Corner, Lieutenant Island Road. Town provides 25%; federal program matches 75%. Jay Norton will be heading up. Steve Blanchard asked if consideration is given to harbor floor/shellfish beds. John Riehl noted HDYLTA area as example; it may lose shellfish farming area. Melissa noted that slopes at Powers Landing and Omaha Road may become steeper. How to get study started/funded? Too late for Town Meeting this year. RPAC, Shellfish Advisory Board and Shellfish Constable's office could work together. John Riehl moved that RPAC undertake project to investigate effect of climate change and sea level rise on citizens and shellfishermen in Wellfleet Harbor. Motion was seconded and carried 5-0. RPAC will work with Climate Change Committee, Shellfish Advisory Board on this.

Lt Island Heron Point Road survey. Steve Blanchard had begun drafting language for explanation in Town Meeting warrant of the request for funding for this survey. (Issue is that path on plan does not correspond to where path is on the ground). Melissa will take this on and complete. Sonya will investigate deadline for finalizing explanation

Lt Island puddle. John Riehl reported he had talked with Melissa Lowe, (Director) Mass. Audubon Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary; she is skeptical that Conservation Commission will approve new proposal. We need to brainstorm new ideas (e.g., new carts). Commission might approve a one time use of bank sand, but that will go away, and we will be back to same place; replenishment would be required. There was discussion of how puddle had been created; where gravel had been permitted in other locations; what might be acceptable to Commission; safety reasons to maintain the road as passable, including by Shellfish Department. Dick Elkin shared photos showing tidal flow into the puddle. There was discussion of whether this is a “road” or should be called something else (beach?) Commission may not consider this a road.

Melissa noted that there are studies showing that adding sand is beneficial to marsh; worth investigating (Silver Spring Harbor). Dick Elkin stated that sand is aggregating in marsh. There was difference of opinion. Mark Borrelli, director of Coastal Processes and Ecosystems (CaPE) Lab, will be consulted; a site visit is needed. John Riehl posed question: if we are allowed to deposit sand just once, are there other solutions? Sonya Woodman noted that this is one of the only access points close to the working area; its loss would be significant. RPAC’s charge is to maintain access for shellfishermen and public.

The Cape Cod Commission’s chronology viewer was displayed by Nancy Civetta; area appears as road until around 2014, when washout appears in puddle area. John Riehl stated that Melissa Lowe would not be opposed to going to Conservation Commission with bank sand proposal. Let’s go ahead; deposit bank sand; monitor results over time; see what a longer term solution might be. Motion was made to propose to this solution to Mass Audubon, for approval by Conservation Commission. Motion was seconded and carried 4-0. Melissa Yow and Sonya Woodman would revise existing document.

Research and catalog ways to the water. Steve Blanchard has some questions in reviewing his sites. Mayo Beach E is supposed to be Map 20 Parcel 20, but there is no such thing; not known to Assessor’s database. 3.51 acres; was it absorbed into Marina? Does anyone know history? John Riehl stated that when he has such questions he goes to Nancy Vale, Town Assessor. Nancy Civetta displayed AxisGIS map for Wellfleet to clarify area in question. What are “finger piers,” or where were they? The area was identified as southeast corner of main pier. Suggestion was made to add number and street name to spreadsheet.

Next meeting date/topics. John Riehl proposed as topic: access points after Herring River Restoration. Next meeting to be determined by email. Sonya Woodman will chair the net meeting. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded; motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Carboni