

# Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association

*Promoting community involvement and communication*



*Martha Reese Flanagan*

*Late Summer Edition,  
2022*

***It's time to pay your 2022 dues –  
please do so [online](#) or by mail***



*photo by Susan Reverby*

## **Special Town Meeting: September 10<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM**

Elementary School ballfield, 100 Lawrence Road

Rain dates September 11, September 17 and September 18

As always at town meetings, since we are not registered Wellfleet voters we are seated outside the main area and are not allowed to speak unless given permission from Dan Silverman, the town moderator. Despite this, it is worth going to town meeting to see how the decisions are made, and what concerns are being raised by our non-seasonal resident neighbors/voters. If you ever wondered how town policy "sausage" is made that affects your taxes and quality of life here, this is your chance.

The warrant for the meeting (44 pages long) is on the town's [website](#). The major issues on the warrant involve the transfer of funds, the purchase of Maurice's Campground, and the hiring of a human resources director for the town staff. Key points include:

1. Paying just over \$44,000 in last year's bills out of the current fiscal year budget.
2. Accepting a capital spending budget of \$200,000 for such items as pond stair improvements, new pickup truck for the Fire Department, department of public works projects, and bulletproof vest replacements for the Police Department.

3. Moving \$639,200 from free cash (still not approved by the state's revenue department) to the Stabilization fund needed to maintain the town's bond rating.
4. Adding a human resources director to the town staff (salary: \$115,000).
5. "As a critical step in identifying and preserving the health of the harbor," a proposed survey of the harbor's flora and fauna . The survey we now have is 50 years old.
6. Purchasing the 21.25 acres of Maurice's Campground, 80 State Highway, for \$6.5 million, "for general municipal purposes, including, without limitation, for housing purposes and other uses." If agreed to at the meeting, it has to be voted upon at a ballot question that allows for an override of Proposition 2 1/2 that limits taxation. Other questions include using at least three acres of the site for affordable housing, and raising an additional \$225,000 from taxes for fiscal 2023 for operational expenses.
7. Changing zoning bylaws to allow for affordable lots or homes in "otherwise unbuildable lots solely for the purpose of deed-restricted affordable single-family homes."
8. Other articles include: renumbering of general bylaws and zoning bylaws, use of a pole for telecommunications at Newcomb Hollow Beach, changes in unclaimed property to allow the town to retain funds, plastic water bottle ban, revision of the natural resources advisory board's mission, prohibit the feeding of wildlife while allowing bird feeders on private property, a non-binding advisory to allow LeCount Hollow/Maguire's Landing parking lot for those with taxpayer stickers only (that includes us).

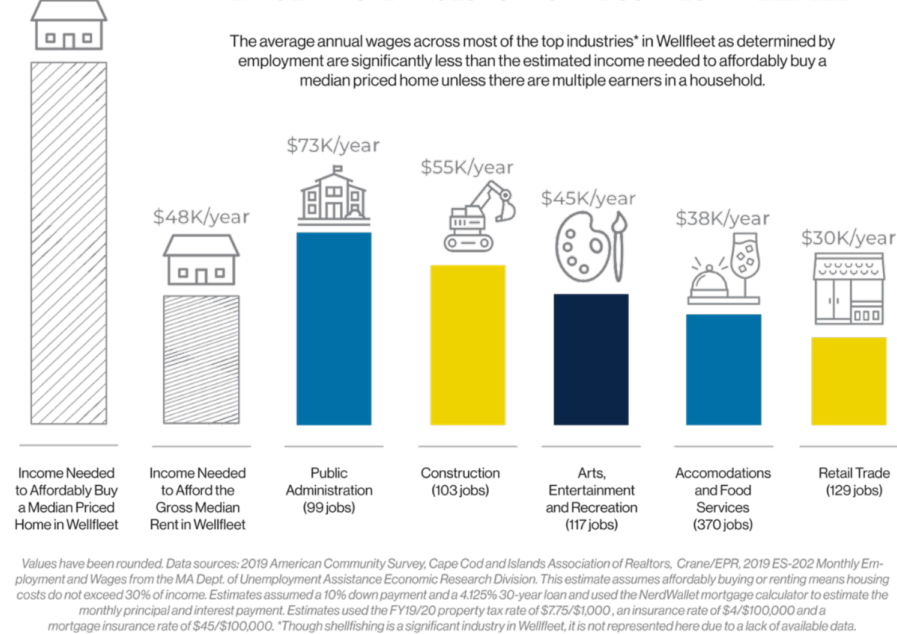
After the town meeting, town voters must also vote by ballot on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> on three questions to allow for override in the budget: 1) funding the new human resources director, 2) exempting the bonds issued to pay for Maurice's Campground from the provisions of proposition two and a half, and 3) assessing an additional \$225,000 in taxes to cover the cost of running Maurice's this fiscal year.

### **Maurice's Campground and Affordable Housing (the fine print)**

The town's opportunity to have 21.25 acres for housing and other municipal activities is now on the town meeting agenda and in the warrant. There is a Maurice's Campground taskforce at <http://www.wellfleethousing.org> where many of your questions can be answered. The plan is to allow the Campground to keep running, mainly as housing for seasonal workers, for the next six years as the town plans for development of new housing. The campground now has 12 cabins, 16 tent sites and 180 campsites. Key concerns going forward, if the land purchase is authorized at town meeting and by the subsequent voting, include: 1) will there be a waiver from the health department for the 35 cesspools now on the property so that they do not have to be upgraded immediately, and then perhaps yet again six years from now in response to the new development or changing regulations; 2) what other uses might be made of the space?; 3) what kind of arrangements are being made for water with Eastham that is building housing quite nearby, and might be extending their water system? and, of course, 4) how much will this be raising taxes to cover the expenses to buy, run and convert the space to housing?

The need is real as the lack of affordable housing is getting more dire. According to [Redfin](#) the median price for a house in Wellfleet this July was \$690,000 and only nine homes were sold in that month. Meanwhile, 44.4% of the homes sold went above list price in a very competitive bidding war. Zillow reports, too, that home values in town have gone up 16.4% over the past year and now the typical home value is \$870,363.

## AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES FOR TOP INDUSTRIES IN WELLFLEET



### Speaking of Water, there is the dredging...

Over the last two years the dredging of the main channel and the inner harbor was completed. Left undone is an area called Area 2 that includes parts of Chipman's Cove and the mooring field, last dredged in 1957, that was supposed to be done this fall. In the complicated language of government speak, there is now a debate about whether such dredging is "maintenance" or "improvement" dredging. If it is the "improvement" kind -- because it has been so long since last the last dredging that the area is deemed to have reverted to a natural state -- then the town is on the hook for either providing additional conservation land (presumably taken from the HDYLTA shellfish flats) for mitigation, or paying millions. Negotiations have been murky with deadlines passed that should have been met and the failure to obtain appropriate permits. As of now, negotiations are back on so stayed tuned here.

### Speaking of Water, then there is the sewage

Changes may be coming in the next few years to our septic requirements. As now written, if you sell your property it must have a Title 5 inspection and be up to code. While such systems control some of the bacteria, they are not as good in removing nitrogen which is a continual problem for the Cape's watershed. Too many nitrates in the groundwater can lead to contaminated wells, dangerous algae blooms in our ponds, and toxic consequences for fish, fowl, and humans. The state's Department of Environmental Protection is considering adding nitrogen reduction and other new rules to current requirements. Since upgrading or replacing a septic system is a major expense, there are now plans for some loans not just to those who meet an income requirement or are using the property as a primary residence. This allows home owners to upgrade to what are called I/A (innovative and advanced) systems that do a better job of removing nitrogen before it gets into the groundwater. None of these changes have happened yet, but they are on the horizon. In Wellfleet, the Clean Water Advisory Committee, chaired by Curt Felix, is monitoring these changes and making proposals. Reports of their meetings and agendas are on the town [website](#).

### Speaking of water, the Herring River Restoration Begins

After nearly twenty years of thinking and planning, the Herring River Restoration Project is set to begin this coming year with the demolition of the current dike on Chequesset Neck Road near Great Island. (A temporary bridge will be in place during construction.) This will allow increased tidal flows into the marsh. Keep your eyes out for more herring to journey to our ponds for spawning and the growth of new places for our shellfish to live. For more information on their progress, see <http://www.friendsofherringriver.org/>.

Knowing how much talent exists in the non-resident community, the Friends of the Herring River (FHR) requested we that they are searching for a new Executive Director to lead the non-profit organization that has spearheaded the 20+ year effort to restore more than 1,100 acres of the Herring River. This \$70 million coastal salt marsh project is the largest project of its kind in the Northeast. The Executive Director will be joining FHR at a critical phase in its evolution as the Restoration Project moves from planning and permitting into construction. While the project is under the auspices of the Town of Wellfleet, FHR serves as a keystone partner for the restoration and as its primary outreach and advocacy partner. This is an exciting opportunity for the right person to make a huge impact, both on the community and on the environment. For more information visit [www.herringriver.org](http://www.herringriver.org). Application due Nov. 1, 2022

## Some things don't change



*photo by Phyllis Bretholtz*

## Who, not Where, is Waldo, our town's new administrator

Late in the spring, Rich Waldo, Provincetown public works director for the last decade, was selected as Wellfleet's newest town administrator. Waldo has lived on the Outer Cape for 17 years and is raising his family here. A civil engineer by training, Waldo is finishing a masters' degree in public administration. WSRA president Susan Reverby spoke with him in August about his concerns for the town going forward. What came across clearest was his passion for our community and the Outer Cape, and his openness to making the town function up to its capacity.

Not surprisingly, Waldo focused on the state of the cleanup of the town's fiscal mess. We are getting there, although something called "free cash" will not be certified by the state's Department of Revenue before the September 10 town meeting. "Free cash," according to the Division of Local Services of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue is "a revenue source that results from the calculation, as of July 1, of a community's remaining unrestricted funds from its operations of the previous fiscal year based on the balance sheet as of June 30." Such money is used "to support current-year operations or to provide a revenue source for the ensuing year's budget." It is usually three to five percent of the town's budget and is used to sustain strong credit ratings for bonds. Because of the town's fiscal crisis, the Department of Revenue was not able to do the needed certification in time for the September town meeting. It is hopeful this will be done soon.

Waldo is also focused on the need for housing. In previous years, he noted, many of the Outer Cape towns relied upon housing in the Mid or Upper Cape to solve the problem. Now these areas, too, have few affordable houses for buying or renting, exacerbating the problems of towns like Wellfleet. Our challenge is to use a variety of mechanisms to make



as much rental/ownership of property available to the needs of our community. For example, it is necessary to live within the town's borders to obtain a commercial shellfishing license. He is hopeful that both the new development on Lawrence Road, and eventually at Maurice's Campground, will make a big difference in our community where there is so little land available.

Waldo is also excited about the changes the Herring River project may bring to our wildlife, fisheries, and management of water. The Lawrence Road development will also help with the water concerns for its buildings, as well as the Fire and Police departments, and parts of Duck Creek.

Waldo is open to any ideas and thoughts seasonal residents have on how to work on town issues. He can be reached at town hall at 508-349-0300 or by [email](#).

## Fourth of July Parade winners

Once again, [Sonflowers](#), the gardening/landscaping center on Route 6, won the WSRA Grand Prize Award for best float in the annual parade. WSRA are happy to honor their hard work.



*photo by Susan Reverby*

## WSRA Summer Programs

If you missed our two summer programs on the “state of the town” or on the housing crisis, or you loved them so much you want to watch them again, you can access the recording of the state of the town meeting may be viewed [here](#), and the housing meeting may be viewed [here](#). The town's [youtube](#) channel also has videos of most of their committee/board meetings if you missed them in person.

## Old Wharf problem Continues

GFM, the company that owns the large corner lot at Old Wharf Road and Route 6, continues to be at odds with the neighbors and the town. Abutters have been complaining about the dust and vibrations that knock dishes off their shelves, and the necessity to close their windows against the flying sand and noise. The issue of the permits is in land court, but the town's cease and desist order is being ignored. As of now there is hope there may be an injunction, and more work at the site seems to have stopped. If the town is going to have rules for permits of various kinds, it does matter that they are enforced.

## New Bike Path Extension: Enjoy



*photo by Phyllis Bretholtz*

Note that where the path goes after this extension is still under consideration by the state.

### **Favorite Things to Do in Wellfleet**

We'd love to hear from you at [info@wnrta.org](mailto:info@wnrta.org) about your favorite things to do in Wellfleet during the summer and the rest of the year. Here's a starter: yoga on the beach. Lifelong yogi and Wellfleetian Della Spring runs a yoga on the beach program at Mayo Beach in July and August. All the modest fees go to supporting an orphanage in India. There is nothing like looking at the world upside down in downward dog where the beach grass becomes the sky, and the sky the ground. Then there are shellfish people waving at you from boats, trucks or in person. And each time the tides dictate how much room there is on the beach, and what you can see or not see. Not to be missed.

### **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](#)



*Photo by Trudy O'Connell*

You may also mail your payment to:

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

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