

Wellfleet Non-resident Taxpayers' Association

Promoting community involvement and communication

Summer 2019 eLetter

**Reminder: if you haven't already paid your 2019 dues,
please do so [on-line](#) or by mail**

The wettest April ever was followed by recording-breaking heat in July and not only in New England. According to the World Meteorological Organization, July 2019 was the single hottest month in recorded history. As usual, temperatures on the Cape were five to ten degrees cooler than in Boston but still uncomfortable. With central AC systems going in all over town, many of us struggled to remember when it was hard to find a window unit—even a fan--in a Wellfleet house. Wellfleet largely escaped the tornadoes that touched down in Harwich and Yarmouth on July 23rd. The beaches were still crowded—oceanside parking lots were full by 9:15 on July 4th—and the water temperature was in the 70s but swimmers were few and far between. *The Boston Globe* regaled its readers with regular articles about unrented houses and wary beach goers in Wellfleet. Not the best of times.



LeCount Hollow

Letter from WNRTA President Susan Reverby

Friends,

While the apparent weakness of the rental market and the unnerving shark sightings seem to dominate much of the discussion in Wellfleet this summer, there are numerous other issues that need and deserve attention. If we are going to maintain the character of the town we love and the resources that sustain it,

there are issues that affect us all whether we are full-time or part-time residents, renters, or visitors passing through. For example,

1. Water quality As our July 17 program on "[Wellfleet's Waters](#)" made clear, the town's wastewater problems will not solve themselves. Despite the development of alternative technologies, even the best individual systems do not treat sewage thoroughly. The town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Planning Committee is trying to be proactive and identify alternatives to the construction of a large, traditional wastewater treatment system, but it may be in our future. The primary issue is an excess of nutrients—phosphorus in fresh water and nitrogen in saltwater. None of us wants to have to buy drinking water at the grocery store or watch the harbor become too polluted to sustain a healthy shellfish industry.

2. Traffic Many of us live in fear that we or a loved one will come to harm on Route 6. An extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail and a new traffic pattern at the main turnoff to town have both raised safety concerns. Similarly, the lack of sidewalks in much of the downtown means that many of us drive when we would rather walk. And there are no speed signs in town either!

3. Parking The Parking Taskforce continues to meet monthly. Several changes have been implemented and others are under consideration. In a survey the Taskforce conducted, many residents expressed frustration about having to wait for a parking spot at one of the ocean beaches in August.

4. Housing As we discussed at our meeting on July 24, housing remains a serious challenge, especially for young families and for seniors. Various programs provide subsidies to new homeowners but, given the price of Wellfleet real estate, there is not enough money to help more than a handful of families. This is also tied, of course, to the precarious nature of jobs on the Outer Cape. There are ways for all of us to help and we will put the links to these up shortly on our website.

5. Rental Market The residential tax exemption adopted in 2018 increased the tax burden on non-residents. The short-term tax passed by the state legislature affects everyone. It is unclear whether it is the new taxes, the publicity surrounding the fatal shark attack, the availability of more properties through VRBO and AirBnB, or a combination of all three that have caused properties to be empty at the height of the season.

These are some things to consider when we meet with members of the Selectboard on August 17th. I hope to see you there. As always, you can share your concerns with us by emailing info@wnrta.org or posting them on the Wellfleet Nonresident Taxpayers Association [Facebook](#) page.

Best,

Susan

Last 2019 Summer Program

"State of the Town" with members of the Selectboard

Thursday, August 17, 2019

7:30 – 9:00 pm

Council on Aging

Shark Situation

The increase in shark activity near the

Cape has been a national news story this summer. For example, [US News and World Report](#) reported on August 2 that “150 white shark sightings have been recorded off the coast of Massachusetts this summer, the majority of them in the waters near Cape Cod.”



And this was before the peak in shark that occurs in August, September, and October when the water is as warm as it gets. This season researchers are not merely focusing on the number of Great Whites off Cape Cod but are trying to develop a more detailed picture of the hunting and feeding habits of these apex predators. “If we can understand the nature of how [feeding] happens, we can try to prevent people being confused for prey items,” Greg Skomal, senior fisheries scientist with the state Division of Marine Fisheries, told the *Boston Globe*.

Cynthia Wigren, the CEO of the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, said in a statement, “It is critical to get a better idea of hunting and feeding behavior. If sharks are feeding at certain times of the day or stages of the tide, for example, we can use that information to identify periods when the risk of interactions between sharks and recreational water may be highest.”

This year researchers are expanding their work beyond the ocean into Cape Cod Bay where last summer there were frequent reports of sharks snagging fish caught by passengers on charter boats. “We don’t believe it’s a separate population,” Greg Skomal said. “We just want to look at the connectivity between the Bay and the Outer Cape.”

Several years ago, the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy developed a crowd sourcing app, “Sharktivity,” to raise awareness of, reduce encounters with, and promote research into the white sharks off our coast. The Conservancy makes clear that the “app is not an early detection system. The only way to completely rule out a close encounter with a shark is to stay on shore.” What you can do, once you [download](#) it, is:

- view a map of where sharks have been sighted and/or detected
- receive "push notifications" of confirmed sightings at public beaches
- upload photographs and reports of your own shark sightings

News Briefs:



Fourth of July

WNRTA continued its longstanding

tradition of awarding the trophy to the winner of the Best Float in the Fourth of July parade—Mac’s Seafood.

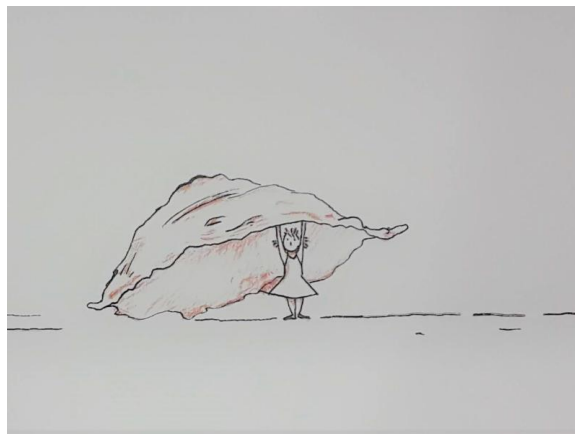


Affordable Housing

Local housing advocates have scheduled a celebration on Monday, August 19th at 5:30 in Preservation Hall to mark a milestone in their efforts to increase Wellfleet’s inventory of affordable housing which, at 1.9%, is the lowest of any Cape Cod town. With support from the Wellfleet Housing Authority and the Town of Wellfleet’s Community Preservation Act, Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod plans to begin constructing four affordable single-family homes on 2.83 acres of town-owned land on Old Kings Highway between Long Pond and Gross Hill Roads. Two of the houses will have three bedrooms and two will have two. Each will have its own well and septic system, a full basement, and a front porch. Another milestone was reached in April when Town Meeting approved \$75,000 for an Affordable Housing specialist and voted to transfer a 9.2-acre parcel of town-owned land to the Wellfleet Housing Authority to construct affordable housing near the elementary school. Late breaking development: On August 9, the new Outer Cape newspaper, the [Provincetown Independent](#), reported that on August 6, for the third time in five years, abutters filed suit in Barnstable Superior Court to stop the project.

Oyster Greeting Card

This spring WNRTA joined with the Nauset Regional High School Art Department to hold a competition for the design of a Wellfleet greeting card using an oyster. More than 30 students participated, and the winner was senior Charlotte Launoy. The first run of 300 cards has been distributed; they are available in stores from Provincetown to Orleans. In Wellfleet, cards are for sale at the Wellfleet Marketplace and the Frying Pan. All profits will go to the Nauset High School Art Department.



Video

The town recently hired Mia Baumgarten as its first Media Operations Manager. She records meetings of town boards and committees, the Wellfleet Forum, and WNRTA programs, an

especially valuable service for non-residents. The videos are accessible by clicking on the Video on Demand button on the left side of the town website. WNRTA programs can be found under the "[Wellfleet Community Forum](#)" tab. Wellfleet is the only town on the Cape not to tape the meetings of its Planning Board, which has several times voted unanimously against it. At its August 27th meeting, the BOS will discuss implementing a policy drafted by the Wellfleet Cable Advisory Committee that would require all regulatory and policy making meetings to be filmed and made available to the public.

Facebook

WNRTA now has a [Facebook](#) page for those of you FB users. Feel free to post photographs, ideas, opinions, etc. there.

A reminder that Town Administrator Dan Hoort sends out a monthly report. If you would like to receive it, you can sign up [here](#). Past months are posted under News and Announcement on the T.A.'s [page](#).

WNRTA 2020 Summer Programs

Some of our members have said they would prefer it if we held our summer programs on Sunday evenings rather than on the Thursday or (occasionally Wednesday) evenings on which they have customarily been scheduled. We would like to hear from you if you would favor this (or another) change. We would also welcome suggestions for topics you would like to see us cover. Please send your thoughts to us at info@wnrta.org. THANKS.

Dues and donations, please

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

To renew by credit card or paypal:

- * [For Individual Memberships \(\\$25 dues\)](#)
- * [For Family Memberships \(\\$35 dues\)](#)
- * [To give a donation](#)

New members, [join on-line](#) or download the [WNRTA membership form](#) and mail it with your payment to:

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

THANK YOU!

If you would like more than one member of your household to receive email from WNRTA, please send their names and email addresses (along with yours) to

info@wnrta.org.
