

# Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association

*Promoting community involvement and communication*

## *Winter 2021 eLetter*

**It's time to pay your 2021 dues -**

**please do so [online or by mail](#)**



*LeCount's/Maguire's Landing, Winter View*

Many seasonal residents came to Wellfleet last March happy to have such a beautiful place to quarantine. Now almost a year later, the Outer Cape is proving to be a difficult place to get the vaccine that promises to help to bring the pandemic to an end. The vaccine rollout has been rocky in Massachusetts, especially in Barnstable County, which has the oldest population of any county in the state and in fact is the third oldest county in the country. When Governor Baker opened up the vaccine sign-up web page on February 18 to anyone over 65 or with two listed co-morbidities, it promptly crashed. Efforts to get more physical vaccine sites on the Cape are on-going, but it has proven a challenge for eligible Cape folks. Hopefully by the summer rush this will be resolved.

### **Welcome to Wellfleet: No Concrete but No Trees**

The rotting bags of concrete and unfinished foundation that littered the lot just north of Van Rensselaer's Restaurant on Route 6 in South Wellfleet seemed like a nearly permanent reminder of a failed storage business. But after Donna DiGiovanni of Great White Realty bought the tree-covered site this winter, in 24 hours it was almost completely clear cut from the VR property line to Old Wharf Road; it looked as if a tornado had come through and uprooted the trees. The area now stands denuded of most of its trees and with large piles of sand and dirt awaiting removal. None of this work, however, was permitted, and the building department promptly fined the owner.

Great White Realty asked for a curb cut on Old Wharf Road to allow for what will become a contractors' yard for GFM Enterprises, an excavating business. Year-round and part-time neighbors, who can barely turn onto Route 6 from Old Wharf during the summer because of the traffic, objected to what they are sure would become a serious traffic

hazard. Police Chief Michael Hurley agreed, and the zoning board turned down the request. An appeal is possible. For now, the site is sadly treeless with mounds of snow covered sand remaining.



*Route 6 at the corner of Old Wharf Road*

### **Latest with the Blasch House**

One of Wellfleet's longest running dramas continues on "the Gut" at Great Island. The 5,600 square foot house at 1440 Chequessett Neck Road, referred to locally as the Blasch house, is once again facing the relentless erosion of the precarious dune it sits on. A huge pile of sand was dumped over the edge of the bluff in December. The issue now is whether or not the owners can do more work to shore up the bluff and the beach below it to protect the house. The Wellfleet Conservation Commission and the National Park Service continue to oppose construction of a revetment. While with the case is pending in Barnstable Superior Court, for the second time this year the Con Com is allowing the homeowners to add between 1,000 and 2,000 yards of sand to the bluff. At the Conservation Commission meeting on February 18, it was agreed that a new technique using coirs, or envelopes, of sand could be employed in the short term to address the damage caused by recent storms. The committee does not regard this as a viable permanent solution.

### **Another Upside of Affordable Housing**

Wellfleet's efforts to build more affordable housing are coming closer to reality, and helping to solve water issues too. This exciting project began a few years ago when the Eastham-based Community Development Partnership published a series of newspaper ads profiling a Wellfleet firefighter, an Outer Cape Health Services medical assistant and a local school teacher. The headline read: "We Can't Afford to Lose the People Who Can't Afford to Live Here."

Wellfleet came up with a creative approach to the housing crunch. At the 2017 Town Meeting, residents voted *unanimously* to lease six acres of town-owned land at 95 Lawrence Road to a developer to build up to 46 units of affordable rental housing. Most of the new housing will be behind the baseball field across from the elementary school while some will be near the intersection with Long Pond Road.

The Lawrence Road project will contribute to changes in our infrastructure that will greatly improve the central district's water system as well as decrease the amount of nitrogen flowing into Duck Creek, helping to solve some of Wellfleet's serious ongoing infrastructure problems. The town has secured a \$2.5 million state grant for development of the water system at the new development. Its installation will resolve a long-standing problem with the town's water system and bring it into compliance with state regulations. Wastewater generated by the new housing would ordinarily have added to the nitrogen flowing into Duck Creek and the harbor. However, planning for the housing prompted the town to explore alternatives. Replacing the less efficient wastewater systems currently serving the school and fire and police stations and connecting them to the advanced sewage treatment and wastewater disposal system required for the housing on Lawrence Road will reduce the nitrogen in Duck Creek.

The town invited Carl Sussman, a member of the Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association Board, to sit on the town task force drafting the request for proposals (RFP)

from developers and participate in all the meetings over the past 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years. The town will issue the RFP shortly.

## **Towards a Better Bikeway**

On February 15th, 2021, the Wellfleet Bike & Walkways Committee and the Wellfleet Community Forum co-sponsored a virtual meeting to gather public input regarding bikeway routes through Wellfleet toward Truro. Facing opposition from the town, the state has suspended its original plan to extend the Rail Trail to a parking area near P.J.'s. In the next phase, the trail will end at the state-owned Wellfleet Hollow Campground.

The Bike & Walkways Committee is preparing a systematic analysis of alternative bikeway routes through Wellfleet to assess how well various alternatives meet pre-defined goals and objectives. The Committee has researched bikeway guidelines and best practices around the state and country and even overseas. The Committee is seeking to incorporate local ideas into its recommendations. About 40 people attended the virtual forum, and many of them expressed concerns—especially about safety—and offered suggestions.

More information can be found on the committee's [website](#), along with minutes of their meetings.

## **News in Brief**

### **Solar Array: On Line at Last?**



*Solar panels on capped landfill, Photo courtesy of Wellfleet Energy and Climate Action*

If you have driven by the old landfill since the end of 2019, you will have noticed an array of 2400 solar panels. Any day now they should be connected to the power grid, producing about 140% of the energy needed annually for municipal buildings, including the police and fire stations, the DPW, and town hall. What the town doesn't need will be sold to the Nauset Regional High School. Overall, our town expects to see \$60,000 in net annual electrical savings. A dispute over title clearance should soon be resolved, allowing Eversource to schedule the interconnection, providing yet another testament to the difficulties of getting things done here quickly.



*Dredging in the Wellfleet inner harbor*

## **Dredging: One and Done--for Now**

As the *Provincetown Independent* reported on January 7<sup>th</sup>, the need of the right whales to a safe space in Cape Cod Bay won out as Wellfleet lost its bid to extend dredging the harbor beyond December 31. With 397,000 cubic tons of gunk still to remove, the barges and dredger will return on October 1, 2021. It will take two more seasons to get the job done; there is a lot of sediment yet to remove.

## **Comings and Goings**

Catch of the Day in South Wellfleet has closed but the Lobster and Chowder House, the third Cape location of Provincetown's Lobster Pot, will open in that location. Tonya Felix is opening the 349 Cafe food truck this April near the bandstand on the pier. Work continues on the weed store/pot shops that are in the bank building at the intersection of Route 6 and Main Street and another in what was the South Wellfleet General Store. Opening dates have not yet been announced.

## **Oysters, Clams and Chocolate**

SPAT (Shellfish Promotion and Tasting, Inc) is continuing its direct-to-consumers Wellfleet Shellfish Farmers Market on the pier every Saturday from 12-2. All sales are done [on line](#) ahead of the Saturday market, when consumers can stay in their cars and collect their pre-paid oysters, clams, and scallops. The market will run until early May. Please support our local shellfish growers and harvesters.



*Winter harbor at night*

## **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 join, renew or pay by credit card or paypal, use the appropriate link below:

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

New members, [join online](#) or download the [WSRA membership form](#) and mail it with 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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