

Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Association

Promoting community involvement and communication



Marta Reese Flanagan

Update
6 June 2024

Town Meeting Spring 2024

As often happens there were/are two town meetings this spring: the regular town meeting that was held on May 20, and a special town meeting coming up on June 17. This special meeting will be at 6:00 pm at the Wellfleet Elementary School, in-person only. There are two issues on the agenda: 1) a proposition 2½ override to allow purchase of the Gestalt Conference Center at 1035 Cemetery Road in South Wellfleet for needed office space and 2) the possible use of the old firehouse on Rt 6 just past the light at Marconi by the Wellfleet Food Pantry. The space is now used for storage by the Public Works Department. This latter issue may come off the meeting if the Pantry committee can work out a better site; the Town is opposed to this use of the firehouse. The Wellfleet Community Forum is sponsoring a preview of the meeting that will be Zoom/hybrid on June 10, at the Adult Community Center at 7 pm. The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89654317300?pwd=vHFe1w3OkAVAEy0bRhDFNsJAonyjgu.1> Meeting ID: 896 5431 7300
Passcode: 092639.

The regular meeting on May 20 featured no overrides so proved less contentious on town issues than in previous years. You can watch the video at <https://reflect-townofwellfleet.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/3322?site=1>. Most of the time was spent on three citizen-initiated petitions: a call for a ceasefire in Gaza (to be transmitted to the President and our representatives in Congress), support for Medicare for All in Massachusetts, and a home rule petition that would allow the town to regulate pesticide use (that requires approval by the state legislature).

All three passed with much lively, and respectful, debate. While

some pointed out that Wellfleet does not have a foreign policy, others said the town had taken a stand on other political issues like the Vietnam War or becoming a nuclear-free zone. Not surprisingly, there was especially moving testimony from several self-identified Jewish members of the community on both sides of the issue, but in the end the request for a ceasefire was approved. The support for Medicare for All passed relatively quickly. The longest debate was on the proposal for restricting the use of pesticides, but it was agreed upon in the end and will be sent to the state legislature.

Most of the rest of the meeting focused on financial issues/budgets. These items passed quickly by large majorities, except for a small group of dissenters who voted no (generally without explaining why) on these matters. One of the biggest concerns was the continued high cost of our legal services and the need to fix the HVAC system in the firehouse built only 14 years ago. Town Administrator Tom Guerino gave a polite response to the legal bills (town government is more complicated), but never mentioned the number of times Selectboard members quibbled over issues or fought with the previous town administrator in ways that required turning to lawyers, or the small number of citizens whose requests required legal rulings. When queried, Public Works director Jay Norton said the HVAC has never worked properly. Alas, when asked privately, Norton told us the town never sued the contractor years ago when the problems first appeared.

All in all, as town moderator Dan Silverman explains at the beginning of every meeting, it was a good display of small-town democracy in action.

You can always attend or watch the Selectboard meetings, and other town committees, in person or on Zoom. Check the town's website for dates and the Wellfleet Media page for recordings of past meetings.

Town meeting itself is an in-person event and seasonal residents are asked (by town charter for all non-voters) to sit in the very uncomfortable bleachers in the elementary school gym. WSRA will be working to see if we can at least get to a separate section on the gym floor in real chairs since all voting is now by holding up voting cards, not usually voice. With the use of cards, this kind of separate seating is antiquated.



Upcoming WSRA meetings:

Wednesday, July 17th at 7:00 pm: Protecting Wellfleet Water Quality Everywhere This will be a hybrid meeting, in-person at the Adult Community Center and by Zoom at a link that we will send out closer to the meeting date. The focus will be on what we can do on our own property and groundwater issues in general. Officials from the town's conservation commission and health board will be present. How we protect our drinking water, septic systems, rivers, ponds, streams, bay and ocean are critical to our future. Requirements for changes are in the works and we all have to prepare now for that.

Thursday, August 15th, at 7A:00 pm: Our annual State of the Town meeting with the town officials. This is your best chance to have your concerns addressed and to hear from the town government what is being planned for the future. Details and Zoom links to follow.



Housing:

The *Boston Globe* ran a story on June 3rd on median housing prices across the state. The highest price hikes were on the Cape where the change up was "more than 60 percent over five years." Wellfleet, alas, came in for the dubious honor along with Barnstable and Dennis of a jump of about "70 percent from 2018-2023." WSRA has a board member on the committees that are planning for the affordable housing at Lawrence Hill and Maurice's. If you ever doubted the need, just look at the house prices.

Still pending:

The Old Wharf neighbors are still in court with the owners of the "contractor's yard" at the corner of Route 6 and Old Wharf Road. As of a month ago, they are waiting on the Land Court to a set a conference for a trial date. Right now, it is pretty quiet in the yard but abutting neighbors are still very concerned.

The Herring River Project:

A traffic light and one-way temporary bridge is now up next to old bridge/dike where Chequessett Neck Road crosses the river as the

Herring River Restoration Project moves ahead. Construction of the permanent bridge has started. Vegetation in some of the acreage is also being removed. For more updates on what is happening, see <https://herringriver.org>.



Overwash and Mosquitos

On more than one occasion earlier this year the homes on Bound Brook Island became inaccessible because of serious flooding on Old County and Bound Brook Roads. The water was overwash from Duck Harbor, where a major storm a few years ago wiped out some of the

protective dunes. The town's Department of Public Works has since raised the relevant portion of Old County Road so Bound Brook Island will remain accessible after future storms. The DPW's updates on the situation are available: <https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/duck-harbor-updates> with links to helpful maps at the bottom of the page This overwash has nothing to do with the Herring River project but comes from strong storms and the dune collapse. The area around Duck Harbor and Bound Brook still looks surreal while every effort is being made to bring it back to life. Whether this kind of flooding brings another awful summer of mosquitos remains to be seen or felt!

Wellfleet Cultural District

There is a lot going on in Wellfleet already as the town kicks into high summer gear. For information on what is happening where, check out the website of the Wellfleet Cultural District, <https://wellfleetculturaldistrict.org>. You can scroll down to the bottom of the home page to get on their email list.



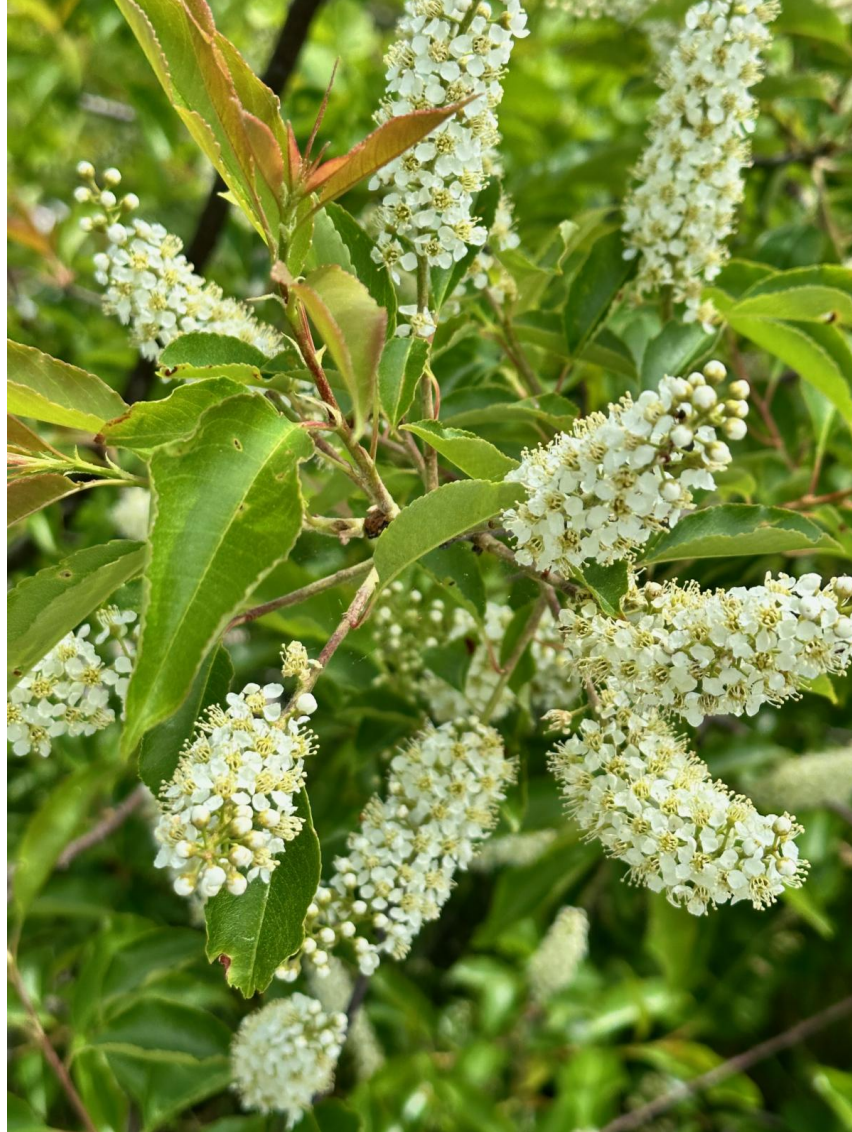
Beach Stickers

This year there are separate transfer station and beach stickers. New stickers for residents are required after June 30th. You can stand in line at the sticker office at the pier or apply on line, see <https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/beaches>.



WSRA Website

We are in the final stages of improving our website and getting you information in real time on when your yearly dues come up. We should have this by the summer.



Join us!

Dues and Individual donations are WSRA's only sources of funding. If you haven't already paid your 2024 membership dues, please go to <http://wnrta.org/join/>

Wellfleet Seasonal Residents Assoc. (WSRA) | PO Box 1323 | Wellfleet, MA 02667 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!