

**Sippewissett Association**  
**Annual Meeting Minutes – June 28, 2008 – Approved 06/27/2009**

The annual meeting was held at the Cape Codder Club House. It was called to order at 10:09 A.M. by Pres. Katie Abrams who welcomed attendees. There were 38 people in attendance including Board members.

Katie spoke about Sippewissett Association's (SA) activity this year related to a proposal to rescind the right of appeal of DEP Wetlands decisions by any 10 citizens. She also provided an update on the status of the Palmer Ave. bridge project; it will be 'delayed'. There is currently no estimate of the delay length.

Katie stated that the Committee of SippOwisset Homeowners is not a committee of the Sippewissett Association. This clarification was prompted by the placement of Arthur Gaines' 'SippOwisset Homeowners' report under 'Committee Reports' on the published agenda.

**Committee Reports**

**Review of SA 2007 Annual Meeting Minutes - Susan Cohan**

Copies of the minutes were available for all attendees. Maggie Goud Collins asked that wording in the 'Phragmites Action in Sippewissett Place' section be changed to 'homeowners who were requesting approval'. Peter Waasdorp moved to accept the corrected minutes. Seconded and VOTED.

**Membership Report – Barbara Eck**

There are currently 147 memberships, 5 of which are complimentary, given to organizations to which SA contributes. Six members did not renew last year and will be dropped if they do not renew for a second time. This nets 136 paid memberships last year. The year previous we had 133. The highest number was 151 in 2002. We all need to actively recruit new members. The membership letter went out 2 weeks ago; 76 renewals have already been received.

**Treasurer's Report – Michael Eder**

Copies of the Treasurer's report were available for all attendees. The starting balance for the fiscal year was approximately \$10,518. Inflow so far this year is about \$157 (note: 2008 dues are just beginning to come in), outflows have been about \$3333. Current balance is approximately \$7,343.

Contributions for fiscal year 2007 were made to: Committee of SippOwisset Homeowners, Coalition for Buzzards Bay, the 300 Committee, APCC, F.A.C.E.S., Salt Pond Bird Sanctuaries.

**SA Social Activities – Peter Waasdorp**

Peter Waasdorp spoke about the past winter's successful Social at the West Falmouth Library and reminded attendees of the upcoming Summer Social on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to be held at the Robbenaars.

**SippOwisset Homeowners - Arthur Gaines**

The SippOwisset sub-division was created in 1897 and included 193 lots and associated roads. It was laid out with the goal of providing access to and views of the waterfront, to enhance value of the lots. The 'Reservation Lot' included 6.8 acres and was considered by the town to be undevelopable and taxed accordingly. The current owner of the Lot, Joseph Sweeney, has been trying for many years to convert it into a buildable lot for a 5 bedroom house, the impact of which would be loss of water view to certain owners and loss of deeded beach rights to all SippOwisset owners. While the SippOwisset owners are fighting this specific battle, attempting to develop land which is believed to be protected against such development is a problem that clearly can recur elsewhere; there are many similar planned developments around Falmouth.

Arthur updated attendees about the status of the ongoing reviews and appeals. He indicated there are five thrusts to the SippOwisset Homeowners' attempt to resolve the problem.

- They have approached Sweeney several times over the years indicating an interest in purchasing the Reservation Lot
- They received a Conservation Commission decision against the proposed construction based on the town's conservation by-laws. However, the decision was invalidated by the Barnstable County Superior Court due to lack of timeliness.

- They are appealing a superseding order issued by the DEP following the Con Com decision. The town has joined this appeal and for the first time the Committee of SippOwisset Homeowners will retain counsel; all previous action has been pursued by the committee, itself.
- A Land Court complaint was initiated against Sweeney based on violation of deeded rights, adverse possession, and rights by estoppel. There is optimism on this front due to a recent decision concerning a Martha's Vineyard development that the intent of the original developer had to be respected.
- They are arguing that the FEMA lines used for the proposed project are wrong, that current FEMA lines place the proposed construction in the middle of a flood zone.

The Committee of SippOwisset Homeowners will continue their fight as long as the community continues its financial support. As a general guideline, Arthur suggested a second pledge of \$1,500 for those who had previously pledged \$1,500.

There was a short discussion on how to value the Reservation Lot should the community be able to purchase it.

Katie thanked Arthur and the other Committee members for their perseverance.

### **Current Sippewissett Issues**

#### **Phragmites - Nancy McDonald, SA Member**

Nancy is a resident of Sippewissett Place and became involved in the Phragmites issue when Dick Payne was working with that community. She pointed out that Phragmites is toxic to native plants and will actually kill them. It changes chemistry of the water and the flora and fauna of a marsh. The originally proposed treatment method was the cut-and-drip method, then the plants had to be carried away; this was labor intensive and expensive. They learned of a new method in use on Martha's Vineyard which involves mowing with a low-impact mower, treating with herbicide, and then re-mowing. Mowing must be repeated over three summers followed by monitoring of the area. A study has shown that original species return within 5 years. The cost is \$5500 per acre which is substantially less than the original method. Sippewissett Place plans to treat 2 ¾ acres. They have filed a Notice of Intent with the Con Com and hope to start treatment soon. If they are successful they hope other neighborhoods will follow their lead.

#### **Woodneck Beach Management Plan – Betsy Gladfelter, Falmouth Conservation Committee**

Betsy started with additional comments related to the Phragmites discussion. The Con Com has reviewed the importance of marsh systems and they hope that neighborhoods will undertake stewardship of their marshes. With regard to Little Sippewissett Marsh, one facet of the ongoing studies is determination of how storm water is managed. This information should help identify which areas will be susceptible to Phragmites repollination.

Concerning the Woodneck Beach Management Plan, Betsy reviewed several studies that are underway or yet to be done to collect data for analysis prior to making recommendations for the Plan. Associated studies include:

- Field work on where sediment comes from and how it flows. This is scheduled to be done at the end of the summer.
- A study of nutrient flow through the system. Last summer she, Arthur and several students did a 72 hour study as baseline. A follow-up study was done in the winter.
- A study conducted last summer of seven locations looking for coli form bacteria and input of sewage. The data was further reviewed to determine what type of bacteria, animal or human, was detected.
- An MBL group has applied for large grant to continue the above study.
- A scientist from WHOI applied for a NSF grant for a modeling study and has been funded.

Eventual recommendations will include plans for beach nourishment and whether the dunes should be built up. Betsy hopes by late fall to hold a public meeting to solicit input concerning recommendations for the marsh.

She hopes the approach taken with Woodneck will be extendible to Chappaquoit and Old Silver.

### **Introduction and Election of Board Members - Barbara Eck**

Barbara introduced the continuing Board members, Board members standing for election or re-election, and Officers standing for re-election. (See the list at the bottom of this document.)

It was moved to accept the slate for Board of directors and Officers (1-year term). Seconded and VOTED.

**Guest Speaker: Mark Rasmussen, President of Coalition for Buzzards Bay**

In 1985 Buzzards Bay received Congressional designation as an Estuary of National Significance following which a Management Plan was developed. The group originally formed to support the Management Plan spawned the Coalition for Buzzards Bay (COBB). The COBB mission includes education and advocacy. A key function is water quality testing; regular testing is done at 100 stations. Land conservation work is also a focus, mainly on the western side where it's still 75% undeveloped. The 300 Committee and Salt Pond Sanctuaries do the primary land conservation work on the east side. COBB now has a Woods Hole office for seasonal public outreach and to allow the staff to get more involved on this side of the Bay.

**Condition of Buzzards Bay**

In the first State of the Bay report 3 yrs ago the score was 48 out of 100. Last year the score was 45 out of 100. Nitrogen pollution is driving most of the decline. From 2002-2007 scores for 70% of all stations monitored declined indicating a bay wide problem. Quissett Harbor dropped 17 points even though it's one of the healthiest spots in the Bay. Wastewater treatment plants are helping but still need work. Title V systems and fertilizers discharge nitrogen, contributing to the problem.

**Oil spill prevention**

The 2003 Bouchard oil spill drove many improvements including more communications, tug escorts, a new navigation route. The state and COBB are in litigation with the federal government and oil companies concerning the tug boat escort rules. There is an injunction against state enforcing the new rules. COBB is working on legislation to circumvent this. They're trying to get it moved to the floor of the legislature and asked attendees to sign letters encouraging its consideration.

What should neighborhoods do in the event of an oil spill? COBB is working with Quissett Harbor on the best local response before the Coast Guard arrives. Then they will be working on responses for the bay's marshes.

**Questions:**

What is the COBB position on wind farms? The Cashman proposal for Buzzards Bay is very different than Cape Wind. Narrowness of Buzzards Bay, presence of an active shipping lane, and presence of roseate tern habitat are the basis of COBB opposition to the Cashman proposal.

How much oil passes through the Bay? Two billion gallons/yr. on 450 barges. Barges are bigger, many double hulled; they have up to a 34 ft. draft passing through 36 feet of water.

Is the COBB involved with development of the state's Coastal Management Plan? They were not invited to be on the committee.

**Discussion**

Peter Waasdorp spoke about Cape Care, a plan for affordable health care in Barnstable County, single payer. They are planning for enabling legislation to be introduced in January and are looking for signatures.

Betsy Gladfelter said the Palmer Ave. Bridge has already had a small amount of repair. Katie suggests showing concern about the project to the DPW. Encourage them to complete work in less than the planned 14-16 months. Detailed plans for bridge construction are available in the town engineer's office. There is no bike path access in the current plan. Betsy thinks there is the potential for public access, via a water main easement per Hartley Hoskins.

Katie indicated that Michael Eder was available after the meeting to discuss a coastal access concern and to show a chart of the Sippowisset coastline demonstrating the concern.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 AM.

Submitted by:  
Susan Cohan, Secretary  
Sippewissett Association

**Board and Officers - Elected 2008**

**Officers - (1 year term)**

President - Katherine Abrams  
V-Pres. - Barbara Eck  
Treasurer - Michael Eder  
Secretary - Susan Cohan

**3 year term on the Board:**

Peter Waasdorp (re-election)	2008
Carolyn Powers (re-election)	2008
Deborah Gove (new)	2008

**Continuing their 3-year terms on the Board are: year elected**

Katharine Abrams	2006 (correction 9/27/2008)
Maggie Goud Collins	2007
Maureen Conte	2006
Michael Eder	2006
Arthur Gaines	2006
Kathleen Taylor	2006
Barbara Eck	2007
Susan Cohan	2007