

Sippewissett Association
Annual Meeting Minutes – June 27, 2009 (approved 06/26/10)

The annual meeting was held at the Cape Codder Club House. It was called to order at 10:02 A.M. by Pres. Katie Abrams. There were approximately 49 people in attendance including Board members.

Committee Reports

Review of SA 2008 Annual Meeting Minutes - Susan Cohan

Copies of the minutes were reviewed by attendees.

A motion was made to accept the minutes as provided. Seconded. VOTED.

Treasurer's Report – Michael Eder

Michael reviewed his report which included overall summaries for 2006-2008, expenses by category for calendar 2008 and fiscal 2009 as well as an Account balance history from 1/1/2000 to 06/27/2009 and an expense distribution pie chart.

For fiscal 2008 the starting balance was 7230.83, the ending balance was 7147.81.

It was moved, seconded and VOTED to accept the Treasurer's report.

Membership Report – Barbara Eck

There are currently 152 households as members. Kathy Taylor has identified new Sippewissett residents and sent out 'New Member' packets; Kathy was thanked for her efforts to inform new members of the Sippewissett Association.

Barbara spoke about natural attrition and the need for outreach to maintain membership levels. She recommended implementing a major outreach project every few years. She will be relocating next month; she was thanked for her service.

Bob Busby has agreed to take over the membership committee chairmanship mid-July.

Election of Sippewissett Association Board and Officers - Barbara Eck

Barbara introduced the proposed slate to the attendees.

The first vote was to accept the slate of board of directors and officers nominees minus the Treasurer position and its associated Board slot. Acceptance was moved, seconded and VOTED.

Barbara then requested that someone from the membership volunteer to serve on the Board and as Treasurer; Karl Audenaerde did so. The second vote was to accept Karl as a member of the Board for three years and as Treasurer for one year. Acceptance was moved, seconded and VOTED.

Socials Report – Peter Waasdorp

Community socials were held in both summer 2008 and winter 2009. The winter social included two speakers. Attendees enjoyed both socials. This summer's social will be held, as usual, in August. The date will be set shortly.

SippOwisset Homeowners Update - Arthur Gaines

Arthur provided a synopsis of the issues surrounding the SippOwisset Pond Reservation parcel and then a history and status of the complex legal process that has occurred over a number of years to protect it.

The underlying problem is that a private individual has been trying to take a community asset and convert it into a private asset; the proposed development threatens both coastal access and the Pond Reservation wetlands area. The Committee of SippOwissett Homeowners (COSH) has been fighting this plan on several fronts at both the local and state levels.

COSH wants to put on its 'best fight' now to reach a resolution over the next year. The fight can only continue as long as there is community support and funding for it.

Since 1990 Joseph Sweeney has proposed three plans to ConCom to convert the Pond Reservation into a private buildable lot and to build on it, the most recent introduced in 2005. All Sweeney's plans have been denied by the Con Com. Unfortunately, due to a technicality (postmarked date of denial was deemed one day late) the latest denial was vacated by the Superior Court. The state DEP issued a Superceding Order of Conditions (SOC) which allowed Sweeney to proceed. COSH has appealed the DEP SOC.

Sweeney's proposed project has many deficiencies inconsistent with state and federal law. COSH has hired professional experts to support its DEP appeal. COSH has succeeded in reversing Sweeney's erroneous revised delineation of the flood zone hazard boundaries and has forced Sweeney to relocate the footprint of the proposed development to protect coastal banks on the pond parcel. A final issue being adjudicated in the DEP appeal is the inadequacy of the septic system. As part of a pending settlement in the DEP case, Sweeney has agreed to upgrade the septic system with a denitrifying unit to more adequately protect the Gunning Point Pond and wetland from wastewater pollution.

Another COSH action has been a Land Court suit that focuses on preservation of the pond parcel as community open space and of unrestricted access to the beach and trails. COSH has recently hired a new attorney for the Land Court suit. If it should be deemed necessary to reach a resolution by compromise COSH will contact its main supporters prior to any settlement.

Sam Trotz thanked Arthur, Bob Busby, Carl Bowin, Hartley Hoskins, and Maureen Conte and others for driving this challenge. Over 100 have made contributions to the effort. COSH will be actively seeking additional funds for the upcoming efforts.

Website Update – Susan Cohan

Sue reminded attendees that we have a website at sippewissett.org where members can find information about upcoming events, news, newsletters and ongoing activities. She requested that comments or suggestions be sent to info@sippewissett.org.

Bike Path Update – Maggie Collins

Maggie displayed a map of the new bike path. Public access is available at the north end of the bridge on Palmer Ave. and also at the old 'temporary library' on Palmer Ave. There are wonderful previously inaccessible views of the marsh from the bike path. Abutters are concerned about noise so please encourage users of the path to minimize the noise level. The 'Grand Opening' of the Bike Path will be next Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at the old 'temporary library'.

Maggie also made the group aware of the 'Distinctive Voices' series being held this summer at the National Academy of Arts and Sciences campus in Quissett.

Baywatchers Update – Maureen Conte

Baywatchers is a program run by the Coalition for Buzzards Bay (CBB). The Sippewissett Association has been involved since 2000 doing water monitoring for Little Sippewissett Marsh, Gunning Point Pond and Flume Pond. Visit the CBB website for data showing the relative health of these and other bodies of water around Buzzards Bay. Data from Gunning Point Pond was recently used by COSH in the DEP case to show that the pond is already suffering from excessive nutrient inputs.

F.A.C.E.S. (Falmouth Associations Concerned with Estuaries and Salt Ponds) is an association of associations concerned with improving water quality and reversing decline of Falmouth coastal waters. They developed the Falmouth Friendly Lawn program to educate homeowners about pollution from lawn fertilizers and are trying to get the program re-funded. They support school science fair awards for projects studying pollution issues. Septic systems are the biggest problem impacting coastal water quality. F.A.C.E.S. is currently heavily involved in the development of a town-wide wastewater plan and other activism to build support for funding and construction of town-wide wastewater treatment facilities.

Coalition for Buzzards Bay (CBB) is the major non-profit organization formed to protect Buzzards Bay and its watershed. In addition to the Baywatchers program, the CBB is involved in watershed protection efforts, education and policy advocacy at the State and local levels. CBB has been a major advocate of requiring escorted oil barges to reduce risks of oil spills as happened several years ago. This year the State finally won the fight to require tug escorts for oil barges passing through the Bay. The CBB has recently worked to limit nutrient pollution from proposed redevelopment of the Makepeace cranberry bogs in Wareham. An anonymous donor has offered a Membership Challenge - if CBB can increase its membership by 50% the group will receive \$500,000 from this donor. Sippewissett Association members need to join CBB to help meet the challenge!

Aquaculture Project – Peter Waasdorp

See our Summer Newsletter for a good summary of current aquaculture proposals. Three sites are under consideration off Sippewissett. The approval process is somewhat complex - the first Notice of Intent is published but continuances are not. Arthur, Peter and Michael will be monitoring the process and representing the interests of the Sippewissett Association.

Open Discussion of Sippewissett Issues

A long-time resident living near Woodneck Beach expressed a concern that the health of the marsh has been in decline and that the coliform pollution is caused by people. Arthur responded that studies of the marsh are nearing completion. Coastal geologist John Ramsey's report on tidal flushing of the marsh was recently released and a second report dealing with nutrient loading is due out soon. Betsy Gladfelter and Courtney Bird of the ConCom are working on this part of the report. A suggestion was made that the reports should be added to our website when available.

Guest Speaker: Leonard Johnson, President, 300 Committee – “Preserving Land is Personal”

Connections are built between people and natural places. Falmouth has many 'special places'. Individuals had the foresight to preserve a number of these places.

The 300 Committee (T3C), organized in 1985 during Falmouth's 300th anniversary year, has itself bought and preserved 400 acres. T3C is an agent for the town and has helped it preserve over 2200 acres. It has coordinated Falmouth's Land Bank spending. It raised \$8 million in a capital campaign, and then partnered with the town to purchase the Falmouth Country Club and Peterson Farm. They will be closing Monday on a Sandwich Rd. parcel which will have handicapped access down to a pond.

Leonard addressed the impact of the real estate downturn. Current appraisals are significantly down from 3 or 4 years ago which can make negotiations with owners who haven't accepted this awkward.

T3C keeps a 'wish list' of parcels selected using an objective ranking system. Webster's Woods which has been under consideration for affordable housing is comparably ranked to Beebe Woods and Peterson Farm – i.e., highly desirable for preservation. T3C has supported use of a nearby alternate parcel that is better suited for affordable housing. Regardless of the final outcome, there is likely to be continued pressure for more affordable housing in Woods Hole.

Leonard described the benefit to the donor of placing a Conservation Restriction (also called an easement) on their property. The owner gives up development rights but benefits from a large income tax deduction and reduces their real estate tax bill.

The T3C website has maps of the conservation land around town. Click on a red dot to find trail maps and a history of the parcel. Get on the T3C email list to be notified about nature walks, bird walks and tours. Current membership is approximately 1200.

T3C is currently working to protect the Coonamessett River area.

Status of Flume Pond – T3C has gotten a conservation restriction which will be held by CBB. This is current practice among land trusts so that properties will be doubly protected by two conservation restrictions in case of trouble with one of the Land Trusts. A 'neighborhood trail' is planned that will take you into the back side of the pond.

T3C is also working on several 'linkage' parcels in the Sippewissett/Quissett area.

Adjournment

Additional departing Board members Michael Eder and Kathy Taylor were thanked for their service. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 A.M.

Submitted by:

Susan Cohan, Secretary
Sippewissett Association

Board and Officers elected 2009:

Officers – (1 year term)

President – Peter Waasdorp, Vice President – Margaret Goud Collins,
Treasurer - Karl Audenaerde Secretary – Susan Cohan

3 year term on the Board: Year elected

Katherine Abrams (re-election)	2009
Maureen Conte (re-election)	2009
Arthur Gaines (re-election)	2009
Nancy McDonald (new)	2009
Karl Audenaerde (new)	2009

Continuing on the Board are: Year elected

Susan Cohan	2007
Margaret Goud Collins	2007
Barbara Eck	2007
Deborah Gove	2008
Carolyn Powers	2008
Peter Waasdorp	2008