

Attending: Herb Gstalder, Laura Hewitt, Tom Slack, John Duane

Excused: Jake Puffer

Guests: Kathleen Bacon, John Riehl, Steve Blanchard

Call to order 4:05

Ponds Management Plan update (Gstalder, Hewitt)

- Since the last meeting we have received the current pond nutrient data set from Sophia Fox of the Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS). This set of data complements the surface data that we had previously received from the CCNS and gives us a full set of data from the Fall of 2022.
- The CCNS also provided several dense scientific articles on the ponds. Laura and Herb have spent time studying the data and articles and have prepared a list of questions for Sophia who has just returned from her annual mandated furlough.
- Laura and Herb have now identified all the categories of data they need and have most of the data. There are a few data points still needed, such as historical values for the nutrients and pond surface values to match the 2022 data. They are close to starting to draft the plan.
- Herb reported that he had recently learned that Dyer Pond is not considered a Great Pond by the state, although it is considered a Great Pond by Wellfleet. Steve Blanchard, said he had looked into this as a member of the Open Space Committee. The Town would need to survey Dyer Pond and hold a public hearing to change the state designation. NRAB members agreed that regardless of its classification, Dyer Pond should continue to be included in the Pond Management Plan. At John Riehl's suggestion, Herb and Laura will talk to Suzanne Thomas and Hillary Lemos about the implications of Dyer Pond being designated a Great Pond by Wellfleet vs by the state.

Harbor Plan – future of survey update (Duane)

- John Duane reported that the Town Purchasing Agent, Rebecca Roughley, believes the NRAB should hire a consultant to determine what information we should be looking to collect in an updated Harbor Survey and the cost of doing it. We would then bring this to the ATM for a vote. John cited Brad Chase of the Division of Marine Fisheries as someone who could fill this role as he has done a harbor survey for another town.

- John D has not heard back from the Town Counsel on the ability of the NRAB raise outside funds. Friends of the Herring River turned down our request for funds. SPAT is still considering assistance in sponsoring.
- In response to a question from the NRAB, Kathleen Bacon said that the free cash has not yet been certified.
- John Riehl said that he had read a very disturbing article about changes in the Phytoplankton in ocean water near Portland Maine. John had contacted people who could test water from Wellfleet Harbor for similar changes. John hoped this would be brought up at the February 5th SPAT meeting.

Open Space Committee update (Slack)

- Tom reported that CPC funds can now be used for activities other than purchasing land, for example the clearing of invasive species.
- The Five-Year Plan for Open Space is going forward. A survey of residents on their opinions of open space activities needs to be done. Once the five-year plan is completed and submitted, the committee can apply for state grants.

Shellfish update – (Duane)

Wellfleet is looking at requiring grant holders to have commercial shell-fishing permits, and subdividing two deep-water grants into four half-acre grants.

Other

In a brief discussion of other potential activities, John Duane suggested the possibility of bringing school groups from suburban Boston for day outings on the marshes of Wellfleet. He said such a trip had an immense effect on him as a school boy. In general the Board agreed that we need to complete the Harbor Survey and Ponds Management Plan before considering any new projects.

Structure of NRAB leadership

Discussion with conclusion that Hewitt will continue as acting Chair for three more months with Gstalder as secretary

Minutes - Approval of draft minutes (with one minor change) from 12/19/22, approved 4-0.

Adjourned 4:45PM