NRAB-Harbor Management Plan 2020

**Introduction**

This is the third Harbor Management Plan (HMP), after those of 1995 and 2006.

We are encouraged by the progress in the past 25 years. We have two useful

Harbor management plans. We have the formation of the Friends of Herring River. We have 18 years of Wellfleet Harbor Conferences. Both the Wellfleet Conservation Trust and the Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary have contributed to the harbor well being. Other non-profits such as the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies and the Association to Preserve Cape Cod are active here .We have excellent work by many Town committees. The goal of this plan is to suggest ways to continue forward.

In the 1995 Harbor Management Plan, the key issue was harbor cleanliness. This was addressed in years nfollowing by a nearly universal adoption of Title V septics.

This report can be accessed on the Town of Wellfleet web-site, under NRAB:

< https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif5166/f/file/file/1995plan.pdf>.

The 2006 report also had a focus on harbor water quality, due then to excess nitrogen. A second key issue was tidal restoration of marshes that were isolated by diking, especially the Herring River and Mayo Creek estuaries. Link is:

https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif5166/f/file/file/harbor.pdf

Work on several of the issues from 1995 and 2006 is on-going. We recommend as high priorities that these projects be supported to completion:

> Nitrogen. The Comprehensive Waste Water Planning Committee is working on a plan.

> Herring River restoration. The project is in the midst of the permitting process.

> Mayo Creek restoration. A draft plan needs implementation.

> Harbor dredging. Not a priority in 2006 but became one due to cost and scheduling

Issues. A good plan is in place which needs to be fully implemented.

In addition, there are some important new initiatives which merit Town support:

> Shoreline Protection – New regulations are being drafted by the Conservation Commission

> Coastal Resiliency. An initial report for this four Town shoreline management project has been issued by the Center for Coastal Studies (ref 1).

<https://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif5166/f/news/wellfleet-truro_mvp_report.pdf>

In the longer term, a broad-based Town “Climate Change” committee is warranted. It will not be possible to separate conservation issues from shellfishing issues from health issues from shoreline structures issues. Consider, for example, Mayo Beach. From the harbor inland there are: shellfish grants, tidal flats, the beach itself, parking, Kendrick Road, private homes and Mayo Creek marshes. A broad view is needed.

1. There are four chapters in the 2020 HMP:

I Climate Change and its effect of the harbor – especially sea level rise and temperature Increase. We note that this key issue was not even mentioned

In 1995 or 2006.

ii. Survey of harbor life. This is an update of the 1975 “Curley” report. The goal is

to provide a useful basis for tracking harbor changes.

iii. Dredging. This is perhaps better known as “after-dredging”. The goal is to

find ways to minimize future dredging and to make better use of dredge “spoils”.

iv. Shellfishing. A review of steps that might be considered to enable the wild

shellfish populations in the harbor to flourish, as an environmental and commercial benefit.

Finally, we are of course aware of possible social consequences of climate change. For example increased tidal flooding of road and uplands, for example east Commercial Street, Mayo Beach and Lieutenant Island is likely. These concerns are outside the scope of this report: we note that adequate Town planning is needed to minimize damages.

Chapter 1 – Recommendations

> Emphasize and complete key on-going projects, as listed.

Action by: Selectboard, and appropriate Town committees and staff

> Create a “Climate Change Committee”, staff and citizens, to oversee and co-ordinate response to climate change and sea level rise.

Action by: Selectboard

> Energy Committee co-operation with other Towns on Cape Cod and in Massachusetts to take advantage of the pioneering green house gas reduction work done here.

Action by: Energy Committee