



BAYWATCH

Volume 15 Issue 2

JUNE 2012

CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY CPWB

FALMOUTH'S FIRST YEAR ADDRESSING WASTEWATER PLANNING

By Matthew C. Patrick

repmattp@cape.com

June 2, 2012

It has been a year since Falmouth's last Town Meeting when town meeting members entered into a compact with our citizens to address a formidable set of wastewater issues in the most cost effective manner possible. I along with a small group of citizens filed an amendment to the Town's spending article that would split in half the one million dollars the town planned to spend on more sewer engineering. The article would direct half of the one million to be spent to demonstrate the potential for eco-toilets. After a few negotiations behind the scenes the town's committee decided they could live with the amendment and they supported it. Virginia Valiela, chair of the wastewater committee, made a brief statement of support and I gave a speech and answered a few questions. Then the amendment was adopted unanimously. The sewer enthusiasts and my small group who promoted alternatives then banded together to get the funding article passed in a town wide referendum. We were successful garnering more votes than anything else on the ballot.

Falmouth had learned a tough lesson. People could not afford the cost of conventional sewers. They were shocked by the numbers that were being thrown around. They wanted to know about alternatives that could save money and remove nitrogen from our groundwater in an environmentally beneficial manner. When I first brought up the possibility of alternatives there was a lot of open ridicule of the idea but then reality set in. People just could not afford \$40,000 or \$60,000 betterments on top of user and connection fees.

In the past year the Board of Selectmen has created a new committee, the Water Quality Management Committee (**WQMC**). Its charge is to make recommendations to the Selectmen regarding the demonstration projects envisioned in the article but also on all aspects of water impacting the Town. I was appointed to it. The new committee would evaluate alternatives to conventional sewers such as permeable reactive barriers, inlet widening, oyster farming and eco-toilets. It's been a long slog ever since educating ourselves, planning and then writing requests for proposals and memorandums of agreement with endless numbers of revisions.

As early as 1985, as chair of the Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay, I learned about the harmful effects of too much nitrogen on our coastal estuaries. As recently as the 1960s Waquoit Bay supported roughly 50 families with the shellfish harvests of soft shell clams, oyster, quahogs and scallops according to a state Division of Marine Fisheries Study. Waquoit Bay was, at that time, one of the most prolific nurseries for fin- and shellfish on the east coast. And that's exactly what an estuary is – a nursery where fin- and shellfish can hatch and grow in a protective area where fresh water meets salt water. Eel grass beds were plentiful at this time. Even in the 1980s there was plenty of eel grass but now it is mostly gone which is a bad sign if you're a fish or scallop...or a shell fisherman. As the chair of CPWB, I promoted sewerage, knowing it would be expensive but not knowing that there were low cost alternatives that are more environmentally beneficial than big pipe sewers. Later, I learned about eco-toilets.

How far have we come in a year? The **WQMC** is about issue several RFP's to find consultants that will put these ideas into actual demonstration projects. DEP is working with another committee to determine how eco-toilets can be certified for nitrogen removal to meet TMDL's or total maximum daily loads of nitrogen as determined by the Massachusetts Estuaries Project, the sort of prescription for nitrogen removal as determined by complicated computer modeling. More surprisingly, town meeting rejected an article sponsored by the Community Preservation Committee to spend \$400,000 to connect an affordable housing project to the existing sewers. Town meeting members wanted to know why the CPC had not considered demonstrating eco-toilets. This was a spontaneous development with which I had nothing to do, contrary what some people may think. This not only showed me that the events of a year ago were still fresh in minds of Town Meeting Members but that they were willing to put those lessons learned into action.

A year from now we should have actual figures of the nitrogen removal capacity of eco-toilets. Actually we know that they will capture the body's nitrogen in the residuals but we don't know how much nitrogen is in gray water – the water from sinks, baths and showers. Therein lies the question of how effective they are and if they can be used in an estuary recharge area with a TMDL of zero. We will also have a general idea of how much it will cost to install eco-toilets and whether people are willing to have them in their homes.

However the best news is the new types of toilets that composting toilets manufacturers are using with their systems. I bet that you could sit on a new composting toilet installation and not even know it. That's how far we have come. If anyone is interested in participating in the demonstration project, please let me know. We expect there to be a combination of incentives including: \$5,000 toward the installation, a zero interest loan for the remainder and a tax credit for up to 40% of the cost of installation.

THE RAFFLE

This year CPWB will be conducting our sixteenth annual raffle. We hope members will purchase the two books of tickets we are enclosing with Baywatch. We will be glad to provide extra books to those who might like to sell them to friends. Each book of six tickets costs \$5.00.

Several of our donors have been making contributions since the origin of the raffle. This year we have received some rather special items and thank all who have made donations.

- Paul Andrews - aerial photo of Waquoit Bay
- Eastman's Sport and Tackle - DryDucks rain gear
- Mahoney's - \$25 gift certificate
- Moonakis Cafe - Breakfast for Two
- True Value Hardware - Fiskar clippers, large and small
- Waquoit Feed & Garden - bird feeder
- Bistro 36 - \$25 gift certificate
- Gail Harkness - 2 framed nautical prints
- Bosun's Marine - \$100 gift certificate
- Capewide Computer - Dell laptop
- Steve Howlett – Red Sox tickets
- Steve Howlett - either a fishing trip or cruise for three hours with up to 6 passengers aboard his 29' Blackfin Flybridge out of Bosun's Marine

CPWB'S ANNUAL MEETING

CPWB's annual meeting will be held on Friday, July 13th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Boat House at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. We have invited Eric Turkington, Chairman of Falmouth's Water Quality Management Committee, to bring us up to date on efforts to encourage the Town to investigate alternatives for solving Falmouth's problem of excess nitrogen in our estuaries. It is a matter of concern that affects us all, and it is important to learn about this subject and the possibilities to be explored. You will have already found out a great deal from the lead article by Matt Patrick, and you will have a chance to ask questions of both Eric and Matt on July 13th.

We will provide refreshments and good company for our members and guests.

WAQUOIT DAY

Celebrating All Things Waquoit

- When:** Saturday, August 25, 2012, 10 AM to 4 PM
- What:** "Waquoit Day" Celebration
- Why:** To celebrate the Village of Waquoit by promoting and encouraging community
- Where:** 10 AM- 1 PM: Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve,
76 Waquoit Highway, Waquoit
1 – 4 PM Waquoit Congregational Church, 15 Parsons Lane, Waquoit
- How:** Free event featuring music, food, demonstrations, special tours, games, photo exhibits in an old-fashioned village fair setting and spirit
- Sponsors:** CPWB, Moonakis Café, Kenyon's Market, McCormick Insurance, Atlantic Oyster Co., and more

CALENDAR Notes for 2012:

CPWB - Annual Meeting – July 13th at 6:30pm

WBNERR Block Party - August 7th

WAQUOIT DAY – August 25th

CPWB's June newsletter for 2012 is sharing with our members the research, education and staff news to keep you informed. We hope you are as excited about the material to continue your support and active participation in the coming year. Please join us at the next CPWB meeting at WBNERR.

Membership CPWB

Our membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th. Please check to see if your membership is current.

\$ 10.00 Membership \$ _____ Contribution

Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address _____

Summer Address: _____

I would like to be on the Steering Committee _____

I would like to work on the CPWB project _____

Volunteer to assist with fund raising and raffle event _____

I would like to assist with BAYWATCH Newsletter _____

Please make checks payable to CPWB, P.O. Box 3021, Waquoit, MA 02536

Your \$10.00 membership fee supports educational programs. CPWB thanks the members who give additional contributions. We are committed to providing critical support through our membership base to support WBNERR.

BAYWATCH

CITIZENS for the PROTECTION of WAQUOIT BAY (CPWB)

JUNE 2012 NEWSLETTER

Matt Patrick's Article on Wastewater Planning

The 16th Annual CPWB Raffle

The Annual Meeting

Waquoit Day - Celebrating All Things Waquoit

Calendar

Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay (CPWB)

P.O. Box 3021

Waquoit, MA 02536

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.