

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY
FROM THE OGUNQUIT RESIDENTS ALLIANCE

Town News

Resident Questions

Ever wonder why the Town isn't reimbursed for expenses at the Chamber of Commerce Events? Why the taxpayers are supporting police, fire, public works and facilities work time, frequently on weekends and possibly with overtime pay? Or why there's free Town parking for the 3 day Ogunquitfest in October when parking revenue is such a budget issue?

Tune in to the March 4th Select Board meeting where the Chair announced he will address **Town costs incurred by the Chamber of Commerce events** approved for the 2025 season.

Fee Updates

First **Resident parking pass** has returned to free (2nd remains \$40)

General Increases:

- \$1/hour and \$5/day increases in parking lots
- Maine Beach and Lower Lot \$8/hour; \$45/day in summer
- Pay as You Go bags increased \$.50/per lot

New Fees:

- Upper Lot and 10 spaces outside Footbridge now metered

Fees Remaining the Same despite size or volume of business:

- Liquor license \$225 annual (that's the cost of 15 cocktails)
- Business license \$200



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- Land Controversy: Ocean Avenue
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A Reminder

Preamble to the [Town Charter](#)

“We, the people of the Town of Ogunquit, realizing our responsibilities inherent in the adoption of this Charter, commit ourselves to upholding our democratic principles and institutions and our common community values which underpin this document.”

What's Happened to the Zoning Board of Appeals?



This previously active quasi-legal Town Board hasn't met since December 2023.

HINT: Maybe because all Planning Board applications are unanimously approved?!

Citizen Petition to Preserve the Dunaway Funds

- A Citizen's Petition from 158 voters was submitted to the Town Clerk on February 3rd and certified the following day
- The Petition is **in opposition** to the raiding of \$1.5 million from the original \$2.3 million earmarked for the Dunaway renovation with the remaining funds (\$800,000) to be used for only minimal improvements
- According to the February 21st York County Coastal Star ([see article](#)), “the town's attorney is currently reviewing the petition and should have an opinion on it before the Ogunquit Select Board meets next on **Tuesday, March 4th.**” See Full Story [February Breeze](#) pages 1-2

What the Petition Says:

Shall the Town vote to designate and segregate \$2,300,000 from the proceeds of the bond(s) issued for the Municipal Campus Project (Town Warrant Article 59, June 2023, approved by voters) to be used **exclusively** for renovation of the Dunaway Community Center?

Faces & Places

Town Land Controversies: Use & Ownership Part II

Ocean Avenue (Norseman Lane) Legacy

Previous to 1887, there was no access to the beach in Ogunquit other than by row boat. Eventually, the State Legislature allowed the Town to erect the first bridge near its current location from Bridge Street (now Beach Street) over the river. This brought an influx of tourists to the Town.

After saving his land from being taken by eminent domain by the Beach District, Walter Perkins began paying taxes on 4 small lots near the new access to the beach where several buildings, including a pavilion, were built for public enjoyment.

Perkins Pavilion circa 1889 →



All the deeds and maps dating from 1925, document the precise measurements of the property allowed to remain with Walter Perkins after the Ogunquit Beach District purchased all other land from the Ogunquit River to the Atlantic Ocean. This was later deeded to the inhabitants of the Ogunquit Village Corporation in 1973.

The plans laid out the distance from a marker on the corner of the bridge as 298 feet with an additional 65 feet across his first property until reaching "Ocean Avenue" (now Norseman Lane) for a total of 358 feet. The width of "Ocean Avenue", which allowed access from "Bridge Street" (now Beach Street) between Perkins' properties as an alternate access to the beach, was 3 rods in width = 49.5 feet.



Condition of the access path after storms



Read the details on how the dunes were saved from further development by the Ogunquit Beach District [August 2021 Breeze](#) (page 2)

The east side of the dividing line between Town property and Perkins property was established in the courts in 1941. The west side became an issue as the properties began changing hands between the 1950's to 1970's. Claims were made that abutters owned 10 more feet of the land (the number of feet from the beginning of the bridge to the edge of Ocean Street went from 358' to 368').

The name of Ocean Avenue was also changed to Norseman Lane without approval. Other legal opinion is that the "mistakenly" named property is owned by the Town with the abutting property allowed a right to pass over the land. There is no title granting this right, nor the right to control its use, to the abutter.

In need of consistent maintenance and major repair from ongoing storm erosion, this street (with asphalt, sand and gravel) should again be legally affirmed as owned by the Town. The path provides an important evacuation route and alternate access to the main beach when congested or there is a need to clear the beach. As the path abuts both the dunes and the estuary, contamination from stormwater runoff from vehicular traffic, hotel and restaurant structures and plowing of snow and gravel into the water must be controlled. There is no legal argument about public access around the hotel to and from the beach and there is no legal standing to argue otherwise as, in all probability, the Town voted to accept the land from the Ogunquit Beach District on July 12, 1973.

continued on next page

Faces & Places

Ocean Avenue Legacy *continued*

What Needs To Be Done:

- The exact width of Ocean Avenue should be established
- The path should be returned to gravel with native bushes and plantings restored
- Drainage from the hotel property, including roof, patio, stairs, and parking area needs to be fixed to manage stormwater run off
- Erosion and sedimentation control needs to be established (possibly through DEP) including stopping hotel guests using the embankment to send kayaks into the river thereby destroying the embankment
- Access belongs to the Town and should not be impeded by the hotel
- Staff and guests need to stop treating Ocean Avenue as their personal ashtray and garbage area
- The street needs to be named by the Town, not the hotel. This issue has been raised several times by residents with no plan put into action



Condition of the street looking from the dunes/estuary toward the beach parking lot

The ownership of this valuable property must be re-determined and that owner be made responsible for its care.

The Marginal Way Committee Presents:
CENTENNIAL TALKS
Celebrating the Marginal Way 1925-2025
SAVE THE DATES
Five presentations in June - experts share their research and insights into the forces that shaped the path we know today.

Hats Off to the Marginal Way Committee!

The mission of the Committee is “to restore and protect the natural habitat of native plants and wildlife along the walkway and preserve the integrity of the rocky ledges that are a stunningly beautiful example of the geological formations that created the Maine coast.”

They and their amazing groups of volunteers work to replace invasive plants with native ones, provide talks on gardening, survey trees, assess and plan repairs, count visits, pick up garbage, study the geology, and produce a newsletter that you can sign up for at: ognativeplants@gmail.com

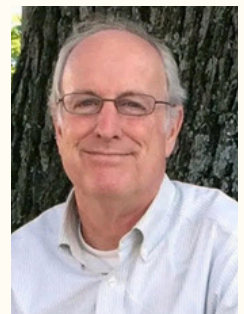
You are Invited to attend a variety of events they’ve scheduled to commemorate the anniversary of this historic path that they’ve been quietly and relentlessly protecting and preserving for so many years

Talks are Free and Everyone is Welcome

- How the path got on the National Register of Historic Places (June 5th)
- What effect sea level rise might have on the path (June 12th)
- What stories the rocks tell us (June 18th)
- What to learn about migratory birds (June 23rd)

At these locations: Historical Society of Wells and Ogunquit, Dunaway Community Center, Ogunquit Playhouse and the Barn Gallery

And noted author and wildlife ecologist Doug Tallamy on June 23rd



Natural Resources

From the very 1st edition of the **Breeze** in December 2020, we have addressed Town environmental issues on the Natural Resources Page (usually page 3). In fact, 62.5% of the Natural Resources articles (30 of 48) have been specifically written about topics such as erosion, water quality and testing, and direction for our leaders:

- The watershed and water quality strategies
- Low impact development and use of pervious surfaces
- Pesticide ordinance
- Enforcement of the septic ordinance
- What the Planning Board isn't doing
- Dunes, erosion and conservation
- How Ogunquit 'leaders' ignore the problem
- Environmental protection
- Water testing
- Taking trees for granted
- Bacteria and Fecal Contamination
- Marsh migration
- Coastal readiness and adaptation
- Projects/Funding
- Indigenous Sustainability

Starting in 2020, bacteria levels according to weekly testing by Maine Healthy Beaches rose to unsafe levels. By 2022, the EPA declared Riverside Beach as "impaired," with Little Beach being monitored. The testing, however, is just the "canary in the coal mine" because it represents the greater problems of **both uncontrolled stormwater and development, and failure to update land use codes and lack of enforcement.**



The four parts of the 319 Grants funded by the DEP for the Watershed Based Plan from 2014- 2024 have been outlined. A comprehensive review of where Ogunquit was at, relative to the Plan, was presented with specific strategies for the Watershed in a two hour Workshop by Planning Board member Elaine Cooper in the fall of 2021. Also Town Committees and Healthy Rivers Ogunquit have been intermittently active addressing some of these strategies long ignored and underfunded.

On February 4th, a Summary of the new 10 Year [Watershed-Based Plan](#) was presented to the Select Board. ([See Plan](#) pages 419-533). The Action Items recommended were **very familiar**, yet far more detailed and directed. This Plan makes us eligible to apply for future 319 grants.

- Inspect sewer lateral pipes; update septic database and enforce ordinance; enforce Zoning
- Update and develop new land ordinances especially along shoreland
- Add catch basins and develop a storm water management plan
- Deploy erosion control measures along the estuary
- Retrofit and clean filters in beach parking lots
- Conserve land and manage new development
- Form a Town Watershed Committee and Expand public education
- Apply for grants (if available) and evaluate programs



The Question is:

When is a long overdue serious Commitment by Town Government going to happen?

- **Enforce** the Ordinances that exist
- **Instruct** the Land Use Office to inform the public monthly on **Inspections**
- **Direct** the Planning Board to immediately work on updating and strengthening Land Ordinances
- Give financial **support and leverage** to volunteer efforts and advocate for public support
- Make the Environment a **TOWN PRIORITY**

Local News, Events and Resources

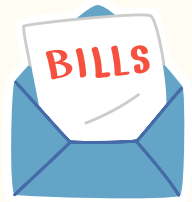


Fun Fact [Check it Out](#)

The shipyard crew took a moment to celebrate the installation of the “whiskey” plank, the last plank installed on the hull, for their refit of the Pride of Baltimore at Thunderbolt Marine in Georgia.

The new planks are white oak & were harvested & milled by Dara Forestry & Maritime Timber in Berwick in coordination with Great Works Regional Land Trust. The trust worked with Dara Forestry to identify appropriate trees for harvest in accordance with their commitment to sustainable, low-impact forestry.

Want to Know about charges on Your CMP Bill? [Learn More about How To Read it](#) York Eco Homes



Dead Birds on the Beach

What You Might Want to Know

Starting on February 11th, geese, red-tailed hawks, a great horned owl, and many ducks have been found dead of known and presumably infected with Avian flu and found on Ogunquit beach. State officials are urging residents to take precautions to limit the spread of bird flu, such as reducing contact between domestic pets and wild birds. Call the State 207 287 6000 or local Town office to report.

From a Reader:

“For those who might be interested, a fairly uncommon bird for coastal Maine is wintering over just north of main beach bridge, a single Snow Goose is hanging out with a small group of Canadian geese...”



[Native Bird Stroll](#)

March 18th

10am

at the Wildlife Center sponsored by York Public Library and Climate Action



Charity Art Show
March 8-16

[Are You Up for A Dip?](#)

Support the Kids and their Families at Rett's Roost



Please continue to send us your comments and questions. Your confidentiality will be respected. Responses will be screened for relevance and civility. Thank you.

ogunquitbreeze@gmail.com

Sign up via email or check out our [website](#)

[Great Works Land Trust Spring Auction](#)



Kick off Party
Beach Plum Farm
March 2nd from 1-4 PM

Bidding March 2nd at 8am to March 8th at 8PM

Watch for Items!

