

Ogunquit Residents Alliance: Minutes of February 23, 2017 Meeting

1) ORA Updates

- a) Members: With more than 200 members now, new members are being added via our new web site. Please ask your neighbors to join.
- b) Logo: We have a logo thanks to a friend's gratis work.
- c) Email: Gmail was not able to handle our frequency of mailings, so we had to upgrade to a new system and chose Constant Contact for \$20 per month. Our open rate on emails is between 65-80%, and over 50% are viewed on mobile devices.
- d) Facebook: An Official ORA Facebook page was created at facebook.com/ogunquitresidents Sadly, there is a fake Facebook page which portends to be ORA, but features derogatory remarks about people, false positions from ORA and snide comments about the elderly in town, for example. No one is taking responsibility for this. ORA strives to be positive and professional so you will immediately know if you go to the wrong page.
- e) Treasurers Report: Is on the web site. Dues for this year will be collected in April. We want to thank three members for their very generous donations to ORA totaling \$650.

2) Town Happenings

- a) Budget process: The Budget Review Committee and Select Board have held a few meetings, which are of course open to the public, but there has been no opportunity for public input. ORA requested that a session for input prior to the Boards taking their vote on the items be held, and this is scheduled for Tuesday before the SB meeting.
- b) Comprehensive Plan: The town has extended the time to fill out your survey until March 14.
- c) Mid-Year Report: The Charter states that the Select Board should issue a written mid-year report which summarizes the activities and issues currently before them in February of every year. This has been acknowledged during public input, but not published yet.
- d) New Town Manager: The Charter lays out the process for selecting a new town manager in detail. The first step is for the Select Board to appoint the Search Committee which is composed of 5-7 residents within 30 days.

3) ORA 2016-2017 Priorities Update

a) Cost of Tourism:

Fred Lynk, Captain of the ORA Finance Team gave a PowerPoint presentation about the group's conclusions regarding the "Cost of Tourism."(C.O.T.) The team developed a model which they used to determine the C.O.T. It attributes the difference in spending levels between winter months and other months to tourism, and apportions a percent of each capital improvement project to tourism. According to that model, the C.O.T. is currently \$1.6

million annually and is more than offset by parking lot revenue which was \$1.9 million in the FY 2015-16. The ORA Finance Team will use the model they developed to track the C.O.T. going forward. This model results in more conservative tourist costs than one used in the past that estimated a portion of every department and expense.

The Team is also working with Patty Hymanson, our state representative who has sponsored legislation (LR993) that would return 5% of the sales tax revenue remitted to the State back to a municipality. If enacted that would mean \$500,000 a year to Ogunquit to be used for property tax relief.

b) Senior Living:

ORA established a Senior Living team as one of the top five priority areas and Jacqui Grant was the captain. The team has spun off from ORA as it has many members and is now led by Barbara Ferraro. The Select Board will decide on Tuesday whether to make this a Town Committee.

c) Rentals:

The Planning Board's Short Term Rental Work Shop will be on March 13. They will consider if any changes to the existing Rental Ordinance are needed. If so, 2 to 3 workshops, and input from Ogunquit's Town Planner, would be required. It would take time to craft changes and there would have to be 2 public hearings. With additional Select Board Review and a 3rd public hearing, and with the level of study that would be required, the Planning Board feels that any proposed ordinance changes would not be ready for the June ballot.

ORA's Short Term Rental Committee will submit sample registrations forms and rental contracts for Planning Board consideration. We will also recommend for the 2017 season, Good Neighbor Guidelines, to address some neighborhood concerns. We would ask that Rental Owners provide contact information to neighbors and that they and their renters be considerate of the following: how the property presents from the street; noise; parking; recreational fires; rubbish removal; pets; rental signs; and enforcement and fines. These Guidelines will be available to all interested parties and be provided to rental owners for their review and discussion with their renters. We feel that addressing these day to day concerns would be a helpful first step.

If the Planning Board decides to rewrite the Ordinance, we will ask that an Ogunquit Short term Rental Committee be formed and that we be included as members. ORA's goal would be to represent the interests of all members of the community in an equitable way.

Committee Members: Jacquelyn Connerty, Marsha Northrop, Kristen Arnold

d) Town Character:

ORAs three workshops with the Planning Board were productive. The current rebuild of the Blue Water Inn at the beach ran into trouble because the builder ignored the ordinances and installed windows and doors not on the approved plan without notification. We felt this undermined the Planning Board's authority. When the town code enforcement notified the builder of his breach of ordinance, the builder submitted new plans which presented the changes he made. This situation has put the Historical Planning Commission and the Planning Board in a difficult situation. Many citizens spoke up in opposition to this bait and switch, but ultimately the Planning Board voted 3-1 to approve the new plans with minor changes.

I also encourage attending the OHPC (Historic Preservation) hearings. Observing the careful review of plans for historic buildings introduces you to the initial steps taken before recommendations are made to the Planning Board. Although our initial focus has been on the PB, we plan to address other issues related to town character and charm. Please feel free to join us, new ideas are always welcome!

Marsha Northrop, Team Captain

e) Governance & Communication:

One of our top priorities in March 2016 was to improve communication, transparency and trust between town leaders and the community. Some things have been done such as giving feedback to public input at Select Board meetings, Ethics Policy, and more information available on the Town web site.

While progress has been made, there is much left to do. Town records brought to the public attention via investigative reporting shows multiple irregularities in RFP/bid awards, credit card abuse, and more. The statement of no confidence in the Board chair from a majority of the Teamsters Local 340 town employees (20) added to the unease.

f) Business employee parking

This is a Town program for employees of businesses in town. An unlimited number of season passes for parking can be purchased for \$100 each. Based on Town records, this program lost about \$25,000 last year in opportunity costs for tourist parking. ORA had initially projected a much higher number and tossed around an idea of satellite parking for employees. Last year, we asked the Select Board to modify the program in order to make it revenue neutral.

g) Congestion

The Traffic /Congestion Committee addressed a missed revenue opportunity at Perkins Cove Parking Lot which closes between Nov. 1 and Memorial Day. It was pointed out that no matter what time of the year, good weather resulted in cars circling and circling around seeking a parking space because of its strong appeal.

Unlike other town lots, the Cove lot is destination in itself, with its multiple attractions, proximity to ocean and harbor, iconic footbridge, access to the Marginal Way, etc. This also means extended days for public amenities to be open and the cost of year round maintenance.

Three methods were proposed for off season revenue collection, two of which could be implemented immediately.

Helen Horn

h) Helicopter

We are in the final stages of writing a new ordinance that would repeal Title XVII (Private Use Helicopter) Ordinance and replace it with a total ban on Helicopter landing and takeoffs within the boundaries of the Town. There are exceptions for emergency landings and training. The Code Enforcement Officer has reviewed suggested changes. We believe he is in agreement with the proposed wording. The final step is for the Select Board to officially put the new wording on the June warrant. – Peter Kahn

4. ORA Survey Results:

There were 63 responses from members; none requested or included from the 11-person ORA Steering Committee

a) What do you think are the biggest issues facing the town?

57 written, unaided responses;

- (1) Select Board – 28 comments - for residents, accountability, oversight, integrity, trust, transparency
- (2) Town Manager – 9 comments
- (3) Parking/traffic – 6 comments inc. residential parking
- (4) Balance Tourists & Residents – 6 comments
- (5) Bathrooms, Beach, Code Ordinances, Lower Taxes, Beautification – 3 comments

b) What feedback do you have for ORA? 42 responses (needs further review)

- 1) Stay positive
- 2) Manage misinformation
- 3) Prioritize items for this year
- 4) Get members opinions before stating at SB meeting ... be more vocal
- 5) Active role in Comprehensive Plan, selection of Town Manager
- 6) Keep up the Good work ☺

5) Near Term Focus for ORA: June ballot

- FY 2017-2018 Operating Budget & CIP
- Warrant Articles
- Election of (2) Select Board Members, and (2) Budget Review Committee Members

a) ORA Activities

- 1) Citizens Petitions?
- 2) Analysis Document
- 3) Polling of members on topics
- 4) Communication with residents
- 5) Candidates Night(s)

END