

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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



Town News

November Election results:

- **948 voters** cast ballots in Ogunquit (73% of registered voters)
- Citizen Petition for ordinance change for **senior housing** wins 531 to 404
- Citizen Petition for design costs for **police** in the Dunaway fails 424 to 506 representing a difference of **46% versus 54%**
- All **funding** warrant articles handily passed

Contribute now to support the Annual [Ogunquit Library Fund](#)

The History of the Town Meeting (part II)

Now that we know that Town Meeting has existed since the mid 1600's, it would be interesting to learn how the operation of Town Meeting changed to accommodate the increasing population of the settlements.

Although it's difficult to find records of those meetings, we do know that the citizens were always able to gather to discuss town issues openly. At least 3 selectmen, a clerk and a treasurer managed town business and, by 1715, a moderator was required to conduct discussions and oversee voting.

In 1865, transparency issues were finally dealt with when the Maine Legislature enacted an early version of today's "right-to-know" law requiring the selectmen, treasurer and anyone involved in town finances to produce and make available written or printed reports of all financial transactions for review by any legal voter before the annual Town Meeting. A \$50 fine was levied for each refusal to allow access. The law was amended in 1939 to require copies and inspections 3 days before the annual meeting with the \$50 fine still in effect.

Following years of wrangling over repeated rejections by Wells voters of Ogunquit warrants at Town Meetings, Ogunquit townsmen began to formulate a plan to split from Wells in order to take control of their village. After many failed attempts, Ogunquit finally separated from Wells in 1913 when a bill submitted to the Maine Legislature for the establishment of The Ogunquit Village Corporation within the town of Wells was approved along with its charter.

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Walter "Gerry" Runte wins our District #146

To many generous individuals, to members of The Forest community, and to For Love of Food & Drink Restaurant in Moody who donate to the **ORA Food Taxi**



Welcome

to Year 3 of the Breeze!
Town News you might not read elsewhere

Places and Faces

Agamenticus Field

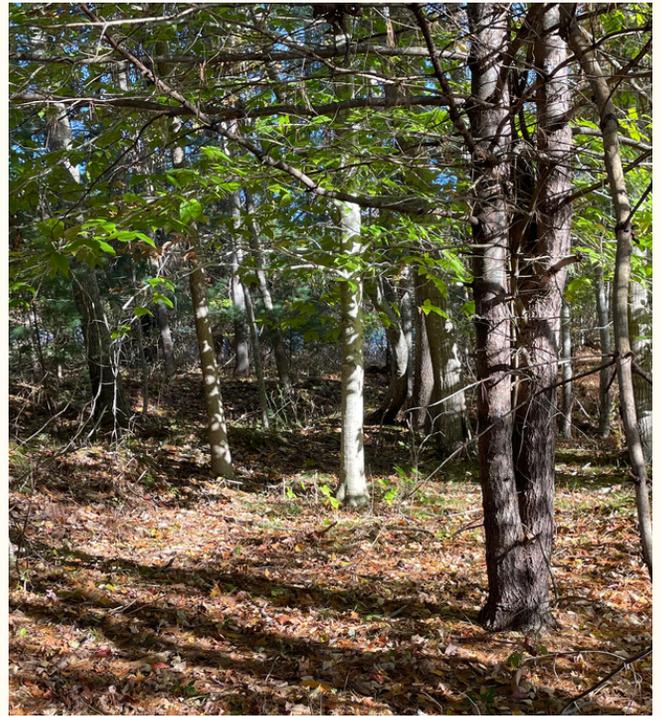
Back in the 18th and early 19th centuries, Ogunquit, then part of Wells, boasted lots of land up to hundreds of acres owned by families named Jacobs, Littlefield, Perkins, Staples, Wilson, and others. These large lots were heavily forested lands, open fields, and farms. Many of these land owners also owned land in York. One such lot was Agamenticus Field.

Owned by the Ramsdell family of York beginning at least in the mid 1800's (ownership may even trace back to Nathaniel Ramsdell in 1712), the lot in question was one of a tract of fields on the south side of the highway (now Agamenticus Rd. in Ogunquit and Clay Hill Rd. in York) leading from Ogunquit to Ground Nut Hill. After more than four generations of Ramsdell ownership, Agamenticus Field was purchased by Moses Perkins in 1899 when it included twenty acres. Parts of this land were sold over time, reducing what we know as the field to its current 8.2 acres. "The land was bounded by the southerly side of the highway, by land of the heirs of A.D. Jacobs, by the Josias River, by land of Lyman Staples and particularly known as the 'Lower Field'."

When Moses Samuel Perkins passed in 1931, all of his property transferred to his wife Annie M. Perkins. Before her husband's death, Annie was running the Ogunquit Café for over a decade in the Perkins Block (Shore Rd.) that he constructed in 1907. We now know this corner building of the block as The Front Porch. Before her death in 1948, Annie conveyed "this certain parcel of land without buildings thereon, situated in the Town of York, to the Ogunquit Village Corporation. These premises were part of the same Frances E. Ramsdell conveyed to Moses S. Perkins, deceased, late of the Town of Wells, by Warranty Deed dated April 15, 1899." The deed from Annie was registered in the York County Registry of Deeds, April 28, 1948.



Field bordered by Josias River



Wooded area on Field grounds

Moses Perkins was also owner of adjacent land to the east of the field. When he sold this land to Iva O. Young of York in 1920, the deed stated: "It is hereby understood that I reserve to myself and my heirs rights to the dump in the Southerly corner of said described lot." For this reason, many people remember the dump as being on Agamenticus Field. In reality, the official dump for Ogunquit was located further west off Agamenticus Rd. in York on land sold to the Ogunquit Village Corporation for \$1000.00 on July 14, 1926 by John W. Jacobs and Reginald F. Jacobs, father and son, both of Wells. (Reginald was chief of the Ogunquit Volunteer Fire Department from 1921-1947 and also owned an automobile garage where the Cumberland Farms is located on Rt. 1).

At a Special Town Meeting on May 17, 1962, Article 3 asked: "If the Corporation will vote to authorize the Overseers to convey to the Town of York, our present dump site situated on Agamenticus Road, in the Town of York, as part payment for land to be purchased from the Town of York, the same being land conveyed to the Ogunquit Village Corporation by John W. Jacobs and Reginald F. Jacobs..." Article 18, from the Annual Town Meeting in 1962 asked: "To see what sum of money the Corporation will appropriate for the care of the Dump off Agamenticus Rd. and for such other dump as may be available should the Ogunquit Dump be closed at any time." The dump moved to 9B in Wells after the conveyance was completed.

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Agamenticus Field

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Over the past 40 years, the use of **Agamenticus Park**, as it is now known, has gone from a “complete recreation area that we can all utilize and be proud of,” to one that many residents and visitors do not know exists. Grants and Town contributions for recreation facilities received from the State Land and Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1973 and 1978 were used for land clearing, parking area, tennis courts and playgrounds. Wooden baseball bleachers from 1972 League games and playgrounds are now gone, and summer programs are no longer viable. Pickle ball courts replaced the the basketball courts in 2017. Players for both tennis and pickle ball now seek funds annually to maintain courts on the their shared space.



Our **Parks and Recreation Committee** has made the revitalization of Agamenticus Park their mission. They are currently working with the firm Oak Point to develop a new plan, based on a recent survey of residents, on how to best utilize this gem of both open and wooded space which abuts the Josias River. More information on this plan and again looking to the LWCF for funding will be reported on in future articles of the *Breeze*.



Did You Know?

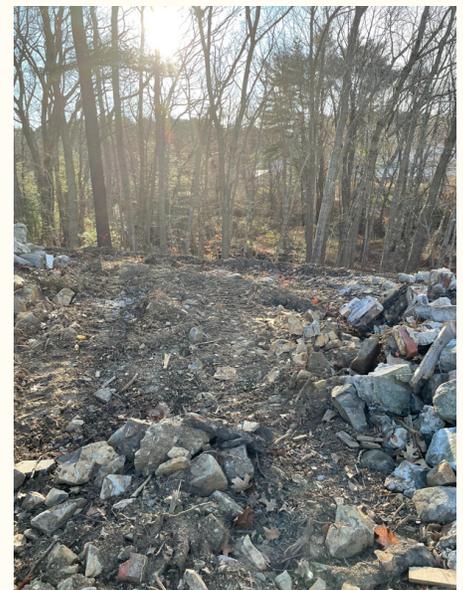
Town Ordinance 147-5 Public Property

Except as may be necessitated by construction or maintenance activities, no person shall:

B. Removal of natural resources. Including any act to dig or remove any sand, soil, rock, stones, trees, shrubs or plants, timber or other wood or materials, or any excavation by tool, equipment, blasting or other means or agency, except where authorized by the Town Manager.



Town Ordinance 225-9.15 Shoreland Zone Standards



L. Clearing or Removal of Vegetation. Gives specifications for the preservation of a buffer strip near a body of water, stream or wetland, and selective cutting of woodlands. Based on [Department of Environmental Protection guidelines 2018.](#)

History of Town Meeting

Continued from page 1

The establishment of the Village Corporation allowed Ogunquit to function on its own, supporting its own police, fire, highway and sewer departments. The taxes from Ogunquit residents were still paid to the Town of Wells and then apportioned back to them according to a tax formula contained in their new charter. The first meeting of the Corporation was held in April, 1914 with 12 articles on the warrant. The total amount appropriated by a public vote was \$2,867.00.

Tax issues continued to strain relations with Wells and when, in 1921, Wells voted to amend the Ogunquit Village Corporation's tax formula, Ogunquit taxpayers petitioned the Legislature to allow them to permanently break from Wells and form their own town. The plan was postponed indefinitely by the Legislature after 50 Wells taxpayers testified against it. Another attempt to separate into two towns failed in 1971.

Success was finally achieved when the Maine Legislature approved a 1979 referendum for Ogunquit to secede from Wells. With a favorable vote taken at The Ogunquit Village Corporation meeting of 480 in favor and 94 against, **Ogunquit had achieved home rule!**

Among the Town officials listed in the first Town Report issued in 1980 were: 5 Selectmen, 1 Town Manager who also was the Code Enforcement Officer and the Tax Collector, and 1 Clerk/Treasurer. Over the 42 years that Ogunquit has existed as a Town, there has been a constant change in the leadership. New committees have been created and some have disappeared as the Budget Review Committee did in 1992 only to return in 2002!

Town Meeting has remained the one constant in this ever changing landscape ensuring that the voters and taxpayers have a say in the process. What has changed is that an article on the June 8, 2004 Town Warrant calling for closed ballot voting at all future Town Meetings passed putting an end to open voting. Increasingly long meetings, quorum difficulties and intimidation factors led to this decision. Today it's discouraging to see that public attendance and dialogue at meetings is at the lowest point ever seen. Without active participation from citizens, the purpose of Town Meeting is lost.

"Smooth Path Or Rocky Road"

When Ogunquit separated from Wells, Pam Sansbury, a columnist for the local paper who covered the political scene, wrote a short commentary about it. Her final comments are worth noting:

"Ogunquit is a new town now, but its planning process has only just begun. The kind of community it is in 20 years, in 200 years is up to these pioneers in Ogunquit's history as a town. While it's the job of the town officials to do the work, it's the obligation of the residents to demand integrity and responsibility from those officials, both elected and appointed and to replace them if they are incapable of or negligent in their duties.

The New England style town meeting is a unique tool, a form of government that allows the maximum participation - and demands the most effort- from those qualified to be a part of its voting membership. The town meeting is like an animal that requires a lot of exercise, or it loses its well-toned muscle - and Ogunquit residents are the new keepers of the beast."

