

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

Town News

Changes to the Town Charter

- Since 1985 when discussion about a Charter began in Ogunquit, there have been 5 Charter Commissions (1993, 2001, 2008, 2016 and 2022) who reviewed multiple revisions and modifications to the document
- In addition, there have been over 25 amendments since 2003 that proceeded without a need for a Commission to be formed

Watch the February 5th meeting of Select Board (9am)

Topic: Whether voters get to decide on putting Budget Review Committee recommendations back on the ballot

Why Can't This Be An Amendment?

Police move from the Dunaway to Route #1 site (tentatively) March 1st.

Perkins Cove Dredging tentatively scheduled for November 2024



Shocking Damage Done to the Ogunquit Dunes from the January Storms



“Maine’s coastline had been considered naturally resilient to storm surges... but the recent storms and their southeasterly winds **defied usual weather patterns.**”

*Portland Press Herald
January 21, 2024*

“They (communities) want repairs to piers and other infrastructure done quickly, but state officials and others want the repairs **to take future storms into account**, and that can be a longer process.”

*Penelope Overton
Portland Press Herald,
January 24, 2024*



Is riprap a good temporary or permanent solution?

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- Police Calls
- What Story Can Your House Tell?
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What is the breakdown of the **19,000 calls made to the Ogunquit Police Department in 2023?**

- Were they urgent, semi-urgent, seasonal, or seeking info?
- How many from residents? Tourists?
- Is this data being used to demonstrate staffing requirements?
- The community would benefit from a more detailed explanation of this large statistic

How much should be in the Emergency Disaster Fund? (currently at \$350K)

And how should it be applied?

Storm surges and sea level rise will overrun infrastructure if we don't take steps to mitigate their impact through “managed retreat to higher ground and adaptation measures, such as raising buildings or **installing living shorelines** to divert seas and absorb waves.” *Portland Press Herald January 21, 2024*

Damage along the river estuary
←
and Perkins Cove
→



Faces and Places

What Story Can Your House Tell?

With the recent spate of demolitions of what many consider to be “historic structures” (simply defined as pre-1930), there is increased concern regarding the preservation of older properties and the loss of “the charm of Ogunquit.”

The owners of one home on Whistling Oyster Lane in Perkins Cove are taking a different approach to their early 1900’s home, one that has been in their family since 1974. Susan and Lindsay Drisko are restoring the structure and reclaiming the history of what the family fondly calls the Brown House.

The original house was probably built circa 1906 by Joseph H. “Old Joe” Littlefield (1856-1919) and was found on a certified Sanborn map in Wells from 1906. That year, Joseph and Winfield “Winnie” Charles Littlefield (1880-1962) set a strip of land 20’ wide as a common drive way or private way between each of their lots (that still exists!). Both owned significant property around the Cove. Winnie was involved in Ogunquit Village Corporation efforts and was one of the builders of the unique Marginal Way Lighthouse, initially built in 1948; Joseph owned a corner store at Beach Street and Shore Road that was eventually moved across the street to make way for a filling station.

As the Brown House was brought to studs, there were many interesting discoveries. Painted vs. unpainted floors indicated where at least one upper addition was completed. Roofing materials included live edge wide planks, potentially milled nearby, and wainscoting panels, which started out centuries ago as a practical solution for insulation and dampness control in rooms. In this case, they were more than likely the frugal use of scavenged materials. Newspaper insulation, notes and a receipt found in the walls were dated from 1948 indicating when some of the interior changes were made.



Another interesting finding was a cardboard milk cap. Residents would walk over to Joel’s farm for a pint of fresh milk every day.

In the fall of 2023 (117 years later) as the carpenters removed the shingles from the Brown House, they found the long clapboards known for many years as the signature wood in Ogunquit home building. What made these boards even more special were the signatures scrawled across four boards on the second floor.

In 1932, cedar shingles were installed over the clapboards, hiding the signatures of Arthur Boston, Phil Littlefield (or Joseph Philip Littlefield-the signature is unclear) and Verne Perkins who signed their names on the clapboards on September 30, 1932!



Were they just friends? Working as carpenters? Or were they hoping that their names would be discovered almost 100 years later to make us think about the past?

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As often happened in those days, the shed/barn was moved from another location and converted into the new entrance, bathroom, and expanded kitchen, with a new bedroom created upstairs. Wide boards lined the side of the house.

What Story Can Your House Tell?

Continuing from the previous page

The studio in the Brown House is reported to have been used by sculptor and medalist, Victor David Brenner who lived in the house from 1914 to 1920, and used the studio for his metalworking and Sculpture School. With the support of President Teddy Roosevelt, Victor was chosen to design the Lincoln Penny in 1908 which was minted and distributed in 1919 to honor Lincoln's 100th birthday. The current owners have a large, framed article written by the New York Times memorializing the twists and turns of what Victor had to overcome to have his penny minted. This artifact will take a prominent place in the renovated home.



Victor Brenner

Since single 2x6 boards were utilized for studs and across the 22 foot length of the first floor ceiling, there was a 4" sag from the excessive weight borne by these carrying beams. Using 2 small jacks to elevate the structure, from one click to the next, as the house creaked and screeched, the builders prepared to dive out of the room in case of collapse. Luckily, the old bones held and the room has been stabilized with a new long structural beam and turnbuckles. The studio will now remain essentially as it was originally built.



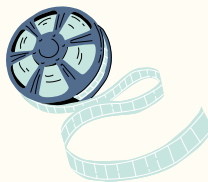
The Brown House has a long history for the Driskos and preserving it was very important to the family. In turn, the Town benefits from owners who, instead of demolition, choose to restore the rich history of Ogunquit.

Local Events



Sign up for a
Paper Art Workshop
with artist Gayle Fitzpatrick
February 8th
2:30-4:30
[Ogunquit Library](#)

See Performing Arts
[Winter Movie schedule](#)
and locations



In Case You Missed It....

2023 Review
A Year on the Marginal Way

[Watch the Presentation](#) by
Joan Griswold on Jan 8th
(1 hour)



Did You Know...

Bike helmets and lights are available from the Police. Helmets are mandatory for kids under 16.



Natural Resources

The Ogunquit River Watershed

Part II: Grants

The Ogunquit Watershed Steering Committee was formed in 2013 as the guiding body for the Ogunquit River Watershed Restoration Project. The Town of Ogunquit and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) hired FB Environmental (FBE) to provide collaboration with the Steering Committee on project management. Over the ensuing years, 2014-2023, there have been four 319 grants and a Coastal Community Grant issued to Ogunquit to address the water quality issues.

The Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program is a grant program established under the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1987 to help control nonpoint source (NPS) pollution under the federal leadership of the Environmental Protection Agency. The Coastal Community grant was awarded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Nonpoint Source Pollution refers to spread out contamination of water or air that does not originate from a single source. Rather, it is often the cumulative effect of small amounts of contaminants from a large area. This pollution generally results from storm runoff, precipitation, drainage, seepage or hydrologic changes that make tracing the pollution back to a single source difficult.

The following Sections highlight the actions taken in three Phases and a Coastal Grant

Phase I (2014-2016)

Purpose: Reduce bacteria levels in the Ogunquit River and improve the existing water quality impairment including:

- Treatment of polluted stormwater runoff (two bioretention cells at the Lower Lot parking area, and rain gardens and buffer plantings)
- Investigation of possible sewer line leaks and septic system malfunctions (smoke testing and updated septic database)
- Community engagement as to the effects of and solution for these pollutants (survey, workshops)

Coastal Community Grant (2015-2016)

Purpose: Include the other watershed communities of Wells, South Berwick, and York, as well as, regional land trusts to:

- Update existing septic and sewer databases
- Target high risk areas and “hot spots”
- Expand the water quality monitoring program
- Analyze a subset of samples for source-specific DNA markers as dominant source(s) of fecal contamination



Phase II (2018)

Purpose: To help reduce the bacteria levels in the Ogunquit River and minimize the number of beach advisories near the outlet including:

- Catch basin retrofit at the Main Beach parking lot with pollution reduction estimates calculated
- Focus on Leavitt Stream neighborhoods in regards to pet waste disposal and septic maintenance
- Catch basin stenciling
- Targeted Water quality monitoring under an EPA plan

Phase III (2018-2021) One year extension

Purpose: To reduce nonpoint source pollution inputs by:

- Conservation Commission presentations in 2020
- Additional septic inspections and a catch basin retrofit
- Targeted water quality sampling for Enterococci bacteria under different weather and flow conditions



Stay Tuned...

- Costs and Success of projects
- Phase IV and Future Plans
- Coastal Resilience Recommendations