

# THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

## Town News

- **Budget Review Committee** Meetings for the Town fiscal year 2023-2024 begin Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 9 am. [See Schedule of meetings.](#)
- Important **Planning Board Public Hearing** on changes to a Shoreland Zoning at the Josias River. Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6PM. [Attend in person, Register for Zoom or watch on WOGT.](#) **See more about this important issue on page 4.**

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## “It is Quality Rather Than Quantity That Matters”

-Lucius Annaeus Seneca

The Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) opted for Quantity over Quality in their recent second survey. Their goal was 800 respondents and they achieved 1,103. However, with 24% of "full time residents" and 32% of "part time/seasonal residents" responding (with no mention of voting or taxpayer status), **we're left with the realization that a large number of citizens who are impacted the most by the strategies and goals of the Plan are unrepresented.** Neither is it clear how many of the remaining 44% of non-resident responders were business owners, renters, workers or tourists.

***What do you do with a pile of data when you haven't demonstrated that you have the foundation for the results to rest on?***

Before confronting the two primary concerns and priorities of the survey respondents,

- ***Maintaining the “charm” of Ogunquit, including the historical assets and***
- ***Protecting and preserving the natural and marine resources including the beach, dunes, estuary and the Marginal Way,***

it's necessary to gather all the facts related to these issues from the experts in these fields. The scores of questions contained in the survey were not tied to any policy or research. Many responses reflect the larger unanswered questions and difficult contradictions confronting a tiny town grappling with a large tourist attraction while restricted by geographical space. ***If you haven't developed the policy and research needed to create a question for a survey, how can you gain worthwhile feedback that would be helpful in forming a strategy?***

*continued* ➔

Environmental problems are often linked to capacity. ***How many tourists constitute too many tourists?*** A Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be that: ***comprehensive.*** The scholarship must be ongoing into all the issues that will be facing Ogunquit in the next 10-20 years in a complete and thorough way.

**Only after all areas of research are thoroughly explored should a new survey be created containing questions directly related to Ogunquit's unique issues and answered by verified taxpayers. This will guarantee substantive answers that will contribute to the final document.**

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get anywhere else



# Places and Faces

## Ogunquit's Lobsta Ambassador

Since walking into the Ogunquit Heritage Museum and seeing the video of lobstering in Ogunquit playing, we have wanted to meet the 'poster boy' starring in the story of the working harbor at the Cove; now we can introduce him to you.

This 'ole salt' is Eric Brazer. At 75 years of age, his passion after 53 years on the water continues to be lobstering. Born and raised in Ogunquit, and still living steps from where he grew up on the edge of the ocean, he arrives at his boat ("The Three E's" named after his kids...Eric, Emily and Eileen) at 6:30 A.M. for a new day of hauling his traps.



After being sent off to prestigious boarding schools, it would be fair to say that his Harvard-educated, architect father would not have foreseen that the life awaiting Eric would be on the high seas providing his serenity, his challenge, and his lifeline. As the second oldest fisherman of twelve men in the harbor, he recalls the view now from the helm of *The Three E's*, different than when he began fishing in 1969 after leaving the Navy Reserves. Not only was the Cove jumping back then, with tuna catches but also artists and models, celebrity sightings, the original fish houses and all the community Hijinx. Before losing his dad as a preteen, he was introduced to fishing with him for pleasure. But this pastime surprisingly turned into his lifelong love as his perfect occupation.

On deck with him now is a young sternman who is gathering and documenting the 1,000 hours necessary before he can apply for his lobstering license from the Maine Department of Marine Resources that is responsible for regulating the industry. This next generation lobsterman is joined by his grandfather and when this trio has hauled between 300 to 400 lbs. by two or three in the afternoon, it's time to call it a day well spent.

Seeing tourists rimming the docks these days, not artists, Eric invites them over and explains the lobsters' cycles: they are between 5 and 7 years old when they are fished; they have molted several times, each time expanding out of their shells leaving more meat. Due to the warming waters, he worries that their swim in Ogunquit is just their migration taking them from warmer southern waters on their way north looking for colder more survivable Canadian waters.



The days of yore at Perkins Cove's working harbor seem not to have changed much for Eric since his youth. And, in spite of the many pleasure boats in their moorings and the bustling tourism eager to experience the lure and the lore of lobstering, we can be certain that *The Three E's* and their Captain's friendliness, knowledge, history, and love of fishing will make him our perfect ambassador for years to come.

# Natural Resources

## Planning Board – What’s Happening?

As outlined in the Ogunquit Zoning Ordinances, several of the priorities of the Planning Board oversight are to encourage the most appropriate use of land within the Town and to conserve the value of this land, to prevent and control water pollution, and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas.

## What are the Issues?

As reported in the [December 2020 Breeze](#), alarms were being raised louder than ever by the Conservation Commission, Sustainability Committee, Healthy Rivers Ogunquit, our water testing groups, Greater Works Regional Land Trust and others regarding the ever-growing crisis in our watersheds. The alarms related to:

- ever-increasing pollution in the estuary and at Riverside and Little Beaches
- ongoing Planning Board decisions about development in the absence of a specific plan
- continued excessive cutting of trees
- increasing stormwater runoff
- little oversight related to septic and sewer systems

Nine months later, the Planning Board finally held an initial workshop relating to where the Town was in relation to Water Testing, Development, Sewer and Septic Systems and Ordinance Coverage. This was expected to be followed by workshops on:

- Watersheds
- Stormwater Management
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control
- Building, Land Use and Conservation Planning
- Development of a Strategic Plan that would focus on Strengthened Ordinances



## What Happened Next?

### **NOTHING!**

The Planning Board ignored its mission to protect our natural resources. Instead, they have focused their attention on many workshops on outdoor lighting and tiny homes. The only other workshop that had been scheduled to discuss Stormwater Management was cancelled.

Of Note, the Sustainability Committee sponsored a workshop on Erosion and Sedimentation Control, and the Land Office held another workshop several months later on Stormwater Management, presented by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). There was **no follow-up** by the Planning Board.



12/24/22 on Beach Plum Lane 2 hours after high tide

## What Must Happen **NOW!**

- Determine whether the existing Planning Board needs to restructure its meetings to address these issues **or let other citizens** be appointed to the Board who will refocus their efforts on how best to protect our natural resources by preventing and controlling water pollution and responding to the impacts of development
- Complete a serious overhaul of and strengthen the **Ogunquit Zoning Ordinances** now
- **Act on what the recent survey respondents** are saying about their preferences regarding the future of the Town and **not wait for the Comprehensive Plan** to be completed
- **Actively protect and monitor the shoreland zones**
- Review all of the data that has been presented to the Planning Board in the workshop from 2021
- Create strategies and objectives for the Planning Board that require a **timeline, those responsible, and that are evaluated at conclusion**

# An Important Planning Board Public Hearing to Watch or Attend

An application to: Amend the Town of Ogunquit Zoning Ordinance and Official Town Zoning Map for 39 Bourne Lane, LLC demands your attention on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6PM.

## What Does This Mean?

Making this change to this single property paves the way for the creation of a new SHORELAND LIMITED RESIDENTIAL ZONE- JOSIAS RIVER (SLR2) which will affect 34 properties running from the York line to Shore Road.

## What Could Happen?

More houses will be built in the Shoreland Zone because it will enable a reduction of current lot size from 40,000 square feet to 12,500 square feet per residence, and allowing lot coverage to increase from the current 20% to 30%.

## What Happens when a Protected Shoreland Zone is made a Residential Zone?

This property has appeared twice before the Planning Board for this change where **they asked few questions** regarding when it was clear that steps to demolish and clear it had occurred with no caution or regard for the fact that the property sits on the Josias River.

- Why was there **no site visit** held by the Planning Board?
- Why was the applicant allowed to **clear cut** much of the 1.6 acres without a permit application or the use of any erosion or sedimentation measures?
- Why was there **no Stormwater Permit** by Rule (PBR) issued as more than an acre was disturbed?
- Why were the rules for clearing vegetation in the Shoreland Zone ignored and why were the trees cut **BEFORE** any application was filed and no determination of the zone change was even addressed?
- Who is the **actual owner(s) of the property** and has this been properly established?
- What if the zone amendment is not allowed, will the owner(s) then be required to **replant** the trees?

When asked why there was a rush to approve this application at their December 5, 2022 meeting, Steve Wilkos, Chair of the Planning Board, responded (recorded at 1 hour and 7 minutes):

*"My understanding is that it's a special meeting, that we were told to have it because there was a misunderstanding that we needed to have this done by the beginning of January."*

**Who told you to get it done and Why?**



How this property looked before



How is the Planning Board fulfilling its mandate to "protect and enhance our historical and environmental treasures and safeguard the visual charm of Ogunquit for future generations" ?

**How does this potential zoning change benefit the community?**

**How will more houses and fewer trees in the Shoreland affect the natural environment?**

**Make your concerns known!**



Steve Wilkos, Chair of Planning Board at their meeting December 5, 2022 at recording 1 hour and 7 minutes

How it looks now