

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

Town News

Election Results

- **Total votes cast:** 539 (about 38% of registered voters)
- **Unopposed Select Board** candidates win: Blanks (357), Michael Collins (356), Rick Dolliver (323), Write-ins (42)
- Peter Kahn and Peter Griswold return to the **Budget Review Committee**
- Heather Sittig and Helen Horn return to **School and Sewer Boards**
- Ordinances on **Tiny Homes and Accessory Dwelling Units** failed
- **'Municipal Campus'** passed (327 to 183)
- All **budget warrant articles** passed

Select Board News

- **NOTE CHANGE OF SCHEDULE:** Meetings will change to **Tuesdays at 9am** starting July 11th

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Quote from the Select Board

'Municipal Campus' Article #59

"The \$11,935,000 is what we're going to put on the ballot so the Town voters will have a choice. We'll spend up to that and none higher....If we have to cut corners... that's how you work. You spend to where you've been allocated." March 17, 2023 at 1:55

What more do we need from our Budget Review Committee?

In years past, the BRC recommendations for each budget article were clearly noted on the June Warrant and held great weight with the voters.

In fact, their [ByLaws](#) (Section V) state that, "whenever the Budget Review Committee is in disagreement with the Select Board on any Article recommendations, the Committee has the responsibility to recommend to the Select Board an alternative dollar amount to vote on per Article."

Instead, because of discussions held during the Charter Review process and accompanied by ambiguous language in the adopted [Charter](#) (503.5), the BRC is now limited to responding **only** to the budget proposed by the Town Manager and approved by the Select Board.

By limiting the autonomy of the BRC, their expertise has now been ignored as they are no longer able to craft and publish their own budget recommendations on the ballot. Instead, they have been absorbed into an agenda not their own.

The value of the BRC is to provide checks and balances on financial matters after listening to and questioning each Town Department and Committee. In response to the proposals submitted by the Town Manager, their Committee is meant to deliver a **Budget Review** containing alternative dollar amounts if appropriate.

What is the purpose of having a BRC if their proposals and recommendations aren't welcome by the Town Manager and Select Board?

Faces and Places

Adams Island

Looking at an old photo of “Adams Island” (previously ‘Cove Island’), it is immediately recognizable today. Sitting off the eastern point of the little fishing village in a cove, the approximate 3-acre piece of rocky and thought-to-be-useless land was surrounded by the Atlantic except to the west by the Josias River. The land was only reachable at low tide.

Fisherman George Albert Adams (1820-1891) was determined to build a new canal in the river basin to keep their boats safe and to build their [fishing shacks](#). There were no deeds recorded for any of these lots. Squatters’ rights appeared to be in play: “If one had undisputed possession of something for over 20 years, one had a reconning of title.”



Original Adams house built 1850

The property reportedly remained in the Adams family until 1902-1903. George Sr. probably passed Adams Island to his son George Jr. (1853-1923), one of 7 children, upon his death in 1891. There is an actual recorded deed dated April 21, 1884 selling the parcel of land with the buildings from George to his brother John for \$500. The property remained in his possession until a claim was brought against the premises by four individuals. Defended by John’s brother Benjamin, his guardian, by reason of John’s insanity, the decree by the Supreme Judicial Court found in John’s favor on February 18, 1901.



Adams house after Easter Field’s renovations

After that, the painter Hamilton Easter Field, who had fallen in love with Ogunquit during previous trips, is said to have purchased Adams Island *circa* 1902. There is no recorded deed showing this. Easter Field began remodeling the house which he called “Island House” with an iconic porch and numerous outbuildings where he and his protégé, Robert Laurent, lived until his death in 1922. Laurent inherited all of his lands and many buildings and Art School in the Cove.

York County Registry deeds follow the passing of Adams Island from Robert Laurent's heirs to developers in the 1970's for 7 properties. The Island House remains to the present, remodeled as Island House Inn and then updated. This was all made possible when, in 1937, the road at the beginning of the fish shacks was widened to both sides and joined with Adams Island, now just an extension of the Cove. However, the unanswered question remains after many hours of research and discussion by members of the Ogunquit History Group: “Who actually sold Adams Island to Hamilton Easter Field?” *Do you know?*

CONGRATULATIONS

June 30th is the time when many Ogunquit Town Committee members complete their three year terms, and decide whether to reapply or step down. The latter is true for **two Committee members of distinction**.

Mike Horn has participated on volunteer Committee Boards and Commissions over many years of service. He was honored when he resigned from Conservation, and currently will be leaving his long held position on the Town's Board of Appeals.

Kay Moore has not only been a hard working member of the Ogunquit Parks and Recreation Committee, she has also singularly spearheaded the recreational development plans for the six acre Agamenticus Field owned by the Town.

Highlighting Extraordinary Volunteers

Thank you!

For some, being a member of a Town Committee doesn't just mean attending a monthly meeting, and the volunteers who help with research, labor and events aren't always recognized.

This month, give a big appreciation to the Performing Arts Committee for their ongoing dedication to sponsoring fabulous musical events, movies and kites!



Natural Resources

What is a Conservation Commission's Mandate?

Maine Conservation Commission law was written in 1987 whereby the basic authority to establish a Conservation Commission was given to a municipality through Maine State Statute – [Title 30-A, MRSA, Section 3261](#). This section also spells out a Commission's statutory duties.

Founded in 2003 as part of the then newly written Ogunquit Comprehensive Plan, the Town's Conservation mission statement reads:

- “The Commission’s goal is to protect our waterways, beaches, dunes, and wetlands
- to map, index, and preserve Ogunquit’s open spaces including marshes, wetlands and wildlife habitats
- and to support a conservation land fund for acquisition, development and citizen use of public conservation areas.”

In protecting our waterways and open spaces, one of the key tasks for the Commission is to map and index these ecologically important areas, especially considering the tremendous growth that has taken place in Ogunquit in the past 20 years. All of this is necessary to assist in the control of the water pollution problems and the prevention of the damaging environmental effects of overdevelopment that continue to exist throughout our watersheds. This data needs to be reviewed and updated for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

Another vital task is to work to fund the Conservation Reserve account for the future purchase of open space. Not only the Commission, but the Budget Review Committee, the Select Board *and* the community must prioritize the conservation of the small number of remaining undeveloped properties in Ogunquit. Funds to assist in the preservation of the Old Boston Farm were only available because some monies had accumulated in the Reserve Account, and the taxpayers voted for the remainder knowing the importance of this mission.



Above are Keith Fletcher (Conservationist and manager of the project), Mark Driscoll (former land owner, Boston family) and Paul Winn who spoke so memorably in the Yes on 10 video.



As the newly created Commission delves into their plans for the next year, here's some of the action plans they may be considering:

- Recommit to the established Mission and/or update the Statement to reflect current needs
- Work with the Planning Board to update ordinances and propose changes
- Monitor development projects. Create a checklist for reviewing every property
- Organize and implement initiatives that address community environmental concerns
- Reinforce the Pesticide ordinance through continued community outreach
- Increase Dark Sky initiatives in residential areas
- Propose a plan for invasive plant eradication throughout the community, not just on the Marginal Way
- Work with students and science teachers
- Review pertinent documents on [Coastal Resilience](#), [Beginning with Habitat](#), and [Open Space Planning Resources](#)

The Commission can partner with local organizations such as Reserves and Land Trusts, and County and State agencies to find creative ways to support their Mission, apply for grants, and stimulate an increased community awareness of the environmental impacts caused through inaction.

A Matter of Ethics: Recusal

Select Board Code of Ethics: #8

"Members shall avoid a situation that might give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Where circumstances give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, the member shall not participate in the deliberation of that matter unless the member has appropriately disclosed the situation and there has been a determination by the Select Board that the member's situation is appropriate. Additionally, any member who believes that any fellow member has an actual or appearance of a conflict with any agenda item before their collective body, shall disclose that interest."

You may have noticed there were two articles on the June ballot where the vote from members of the Budget Review Committee included an abstention.

Under the same ethical code as the Select Board, one BRC member recused himself from voting on Article #36 (\$10K for the Senior Center) because he volunteers as Treasurer at the Center. While he receives no financial or other personal gain, and while he felt he could vote without bias, he decided to avoid any **appearance of conflict and recused himself from voting on this budget item.**

Another member, also from the Budget Review Committee, abstained from voting on the budget for the Marginal Way Committee (Article # 43) because his wife is the Chair of the Committee. He also would receive no personal gain from the funding, and, in fact, volunteers many hours working on the plantings along the path. However, he also **recused himself from casting a vote on ethical grounds so that there could be no mistake about his perceived bias.**

As elected community leaders, shouldn't we expect the Select Board members to uphold the high standards as set by their Code of Ethics?

Local Events

- **July 4th Fire Works** at 9:15pm. Parking lot emptied by 4PM. (Rain Date July 5th)
- July 9th **Sand Castle Building** at 8:30 am Main Beach sponsored by the Parks & Recreation Committee
- July 13th **Kids Mornings at the Museum** 10-11am at the Historical Society of Wells/Ogunquit
- Check out [Laudholm Reserve](#) Calendar
- [Historic Walking Tours](#) in Perkins Cove

Did You Know?

The Town's annual Short Term [Rental Registration Form](#) and accompanying fee (\$175, increased from \$150) were due by June 30th.



The Form includes details such as owner/manager contact information, occupancy, parking availability, sewer and water, presence of smoke & carbon monoxide detectors, etc. The rules for [weekly rental properties](#) and the information provided on the Form are vital to the Town in case of emergencies and to protect visitors.

There are about 1,380 not year-round residential units in Ogunquit. The most recent number of Short Term Rental Applications was 235 as announced by the Land Use Office. However, if you go on short term rental websites, **many more rental properties are listed in Ogunquit.**

The Fire Department has conducted ongoing inspections of registered rental properties. These not only ensure safe conditions for tourists but also provide protection for the Town and the owner.

The Registration fee has remained **minimal** given the potential income from renters. Since this discrepancy was recognized several years ago, isn't a **thorough screening of online rental websites** to include **all** properties **overdue**? This would serve to provide more revenue for the Town, and also ensure that all Short Term Rental housing is in compliance with Town rules.



Sign up at ogunquitbreeze@gmail.com