

THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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

Town News

Presidential Primary voting March 5th on the **ground floor** Dunaway

Watch Town website for **openings** of Marginal Way and Footbridges

Town Financial News

- **Municipal campus project:** Construction management awarded to Landry-French from Scarborough; \$12,500 pre-construction services and **2.9% of the cost** to complete the building

What's With All the Overtime Pay?

- **Fire Department** over budget by an estimated **\$100K** due to overtime while replacing three employees
- **Police Department** spending almost **\$150K** in overtime (almost 2,500 hours)

Watch for Budget Increases on March 7th meeting

See **Town 2024-2025 fiscal budget:** go directly to this website [link](#)

Citizen Petition

Was the Select Board downplaying the importance of the 370 voter signatures on the Petition by implying that those who signed didn't understand what they were signing? **Why were outcomes cited that really wouldn't apply?**

Select Board quotes from the February 5, 2024 meeting

5:15 "...people that signed the petition told me what was stated to them... the reasons or rationalization that was stated to them at the post office...it's not really as I believe, the truth"

8:53 "all it will add is confusion" 9:13 "it will take voter's rights away"

16:30 "I think it's unlikely it will pass...it's my first amendment right to say this so don't roll your eyes... I'm pretty sure they weren't apprised of what they were signing..."

Why would the Select Board disregard #13 **ADVOCACY** of their Code of Ethics in order to discourage voters to adopt the Citizen Petition?

"...When presenting **personal opinions and positions**, members shall explicitly state that these opinions and positions do not represent their body or the Town of Ogunquit and they **shall not allow any inference** that they do."

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Insurance Update

Changes to the **Flood Plain Map** that may affect your flood insurance: the Land Use office will send a letter to property owners if there is any change as a result of the map re-drawing

February 20th Select Board Decisions on Town Fees

Announced in the meeting packet, the Chair allowed only **seconds** for responses before the Public Hearings were closed

- April to October there will be paid parking at the **Main Beach and Lower Lot until 2 AM** and an **Overnight** parking fee (9 PM-6 AM) (Beach closes at 11 PM)
- **Jacob's Lot** will now be 2 hour paid parking 8 AM - 2 AM with no allotted **resident spaces**
- There will be **no more vehicle window stickers:** It is unclear how residents will be identified
- There will be a **processing fee** for all resident payments unless online

Does the new fee schedule for reimbursement for Police and Fire costs apply to **Chamber of Commerce events?**

Natural Resources

The Ogunquit River Watershed

Part III: Grants

(continued from January & February issues)

Phase IV (2021-2023)

This final implementation Phase for the 2013 watershed plan update has been reviewed by the Ogunquit Watershed Steering Committee.

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

- Installing one stormwater catch basin retrofit at the Main Beach parking lot (CB#1). To be completed by April 2024
- Implementing one roadway buffer enhancement at the Jothams and Valleybrook Road stream crossings via culvert where the roads cross the Leavitt Stream. To be completed April 2024
- Continued targeted public outreach regarding proper pet waste disposal and septic system maintenance in hotspot neighborhoods by press release, door-to-door education, and three public events
- Providing targeted Water Quality Results Monitoring: Assess BMP (Best Management Practice) effectiveness
- Estimate NPS (Non Source Point) pollutant load reductions

Successes

- A septic system database with all known parcels within the watershed (2016)
- A sampling of smoke tests in three sewer lines/storm drains
- Collaboration between the watershed towns (York, Wells, South Berwick) was increased
- Improved outreach through door-to-door education on pet waste and septic system maintenance (two brochures)
- Pet waste signs and catch basin stenciling
- Main Beach catch basin retro fits installed to help reduce polluted run off
- Consistent and thorough data collection of bacteria levels
- Multiple public presentations

What did all the Grants Cost?*

319 Grant Expenditures (Final Reports)

Federal funds (EPA)

• 2016	\$92,050	Total spent 2016-2023 \$221,380
• 2018	\$69,340	
• 2021	\$59,990	

Coastal Community Grant (NOAA)

• 2016	\$105,599	Total spent \$105,599
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Town of Ogunquit (Funded through Taxes and In-Kind Services)

• 2016	\$72,730	2016-2023 Total allocated \$160,007 Total spent \$257,390
• 2018	\$46,658	
• 2021	\$40,619	

2024 Funding

• EPA	\$61,990	Total allocated \$105,487
• Town	\$43,497	

*Expenditures included: Project Management, Low Impact Development, Steering Committee, Residential BMP's, Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination, Outreach, and Petty Cash Reimbursement.



Challenges

- Septic system database not monitored until 2022
- No additional smoke tests of identified hot spots
- Collaboration with other communities has waned
- Turnover of Conservation Commission, Town Management and DPW, and inconsistent volunteer base
- Contact with seasonal residents limited
- School science department for stenciling never scheduled
- Stenciling faded
- Covid-19 impact
- Lack of maintenance of catch basin retro fits until recently
- Rain gardens in lower lot and Dunaway not maintained

New Watershed Plan coming in 2024



Faces and Places

The Interesting History of the High Rock Hotel

If you were sitting on a bench in front of the Ogunquit pharmacy enjoying your Ben and Jerry's ice cream cone, you might have wondered why the large tree-covered hilly lot across the street in the middle of the congested Town center didn't have a building on it.

If it were 1892, there would be no curiosity about that land because an impressive building had just been constructed there called the High Rock Hotel. A three story Victorian structure with white clapboard siding and a wrap-around porch, it sat close to the road and the trolley tracks, and was fronted by a stone wall with a large elm tree on the south side of the building.

Built by Joseph Henry Littlefield (1856-1919) and his wife Ellen (Ellie) Francis Perkins Littlefield (1854-1938), it was one of the larger hotels built in the period before the bridge to the beach was constructed in 1897, which ultimately led to an influx of tourists.

"Well located on a hill overlooking the village, beach, ocean and river...the High Rock has enjoyed thus far a patronage not excelled by any other house in the vicinity and its guests have always been among the very best class."

1908 Ogunquit Breeze

One notable patron was Boston portrait painter Frederick Porter Vinton (1846-1911) who stayed in a studio at the hotel for a number of summers in the late 1890's doing paintings of the beach and the Marginal Way.



Portrait of Frederick Porter Vinton by John Singer Sargent

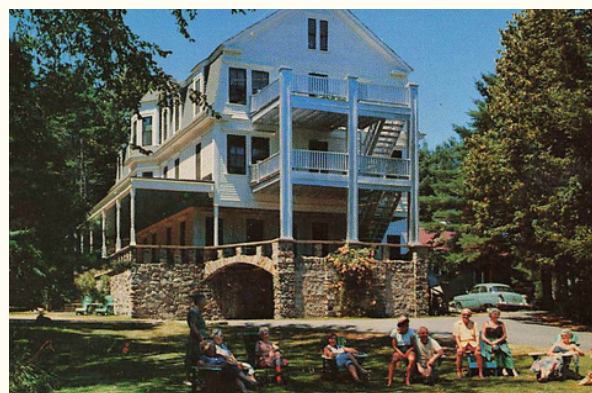


Beach Scene, Frederick Porter Vinton, 1898



Hotel around 1907

About 1910, the Littlefields decided to relocate the Hotel more than 300 feet up the hill behind its original location and off of Berwick Road down a road now called High Rock Lane. A call went out throughout southern Maine asking farmers to bring their oxen to Ogunquit. After lifting the building from its foundation, teams of oxen moved it slowly along and up on the new site where it was put on a new foundation that was turned 90 degrees from its original position. The gable end of the building now faced the ocean on which a new stone portico and porches were added.



Color postcard of the Hotel by Edward D. Hipple

"Old Joe," as Littlefield was known, owned properties in Perkins Cove as well as a corner store on Main Street (Cornerstone today) which was moved across the street to make room for a filling station around 1915.

Eventually a second story was added to that store which provided a residence for the future proprietors of the High Rock: Joe and Ellie's daughter-in-law, Mary Amanda Guptill Littlefield (1902-1985) and their son J. Phillip (1886-1954) (Rose Cove Cafe today).

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The High Rock Hotel, cont'd

Assuming management of the place when Ellie and Joe retired, in 1942, J. Phillip sold his share of the property over to Lucius Williams who became Amanda's partner in the business until his death. Roby Littlefield (1888-1988), Amanda's brother-in-law, stepped in to help her run High Rock after William's death but, after a few years, left to run his farm (Beach Plum Farm) and tend to other business responsibilities leaving Amanda as the sole proprietor.



Road up to the High Rock Hotel in 1950

According to reports, Amanda did an excellent job on her own running an efficient and tidy hotel while meeting the highest of standards. Known for her dry wit, when loudly asked by a prospective guest. If the rooms were fumigated she replied, "Yes, they were fumigated before you arrived and will be fumigated again after you leave!"

"On Tuesday, October 25, 1977 the High Rock Hotel stood majestically on the high hill overlooking the village square where it had stood for over 80 years. On Thursday, October 27, nothing was left but a vacant lot, even the attractive rock foundation was gone."
February 1978 Ogunquit Breeze

If you look on the right side of the Rose Cove Cafe through the woods, you can still see the road climbing the hill up to where the High Rock Hotel used to be and what Amanda must have used everyday going to work there.



Have you noticed the changes in Select Board and other Town meetings?

Are these changes democratic?

- Minutes taken at meetings (or transcribed later) usually contain, **at minimum**, the date, time, place, attendance, approval of minutes from prior meetings, motions made, votes and actions taken
- Historically, Town minutes would also contain questions asked and summaries of discussions including from the public. The minutes would reflect the **context** for the answers given and the decisions made
- Minutes have now become **skeletal** and, in order to find out what transpired at the meeting, you have to listen to the recording. In order to do this, you need to have the time and easily use the Town website
- Recordings of meetings that are not transcribed must be retained for five years. **Are we assured this will occur?** [Maine Municipal Association](#)
- With Select Board meetings now on a Tuesday at 9 am (or changing on short notice) and meeting documents (packets) getting more onerous to read (the packet for February 5th required **686 pages** to be downloaded), **one might ask....**

Are we supposed to just give up on being informed?

Why not hire Summer Students?

- High School students to update septic monitoring records, storm drain stenciling, and identifying seasonal rentals that aren't registered with the Town
- University students who are studying Environmental Studies to do water testing and watershed education
- Graduate students who are researching estuary life

A **Win-Win** for providing summer jobs at minimal cost and relieving Town staff during the busy summer season!

It's the 41st Maine Maple Sunday Weekend

March 23rd and 24th

[Check out venues](#)



Find out about about [insulation rebates](#) and [House Energy Audits](#) through Efficiency Maine

