

# THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

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



## Friends of the Select Board

In Ogunquit there has always been a group of volunteers who generously give their time and talents to a variety of committees and commissions. Having no ulterior motive or need for personal aggrandizement, they devote countless hours to this endeavor. In the past, politics played little or no part in who was assigned to these committees which were often composed of people with vastly different backgrounds and opinions.

Despite this disparity, they willingly shared their thoughts with their fellow members resulting in decisions consisting of an amalgam of ideas that met with everyone's overall approval. The more varied the thinking, the more successful the solution.

**This is no longer the case.** Politics have destroyed the democratic process of committee assignments and the only requirement necessary for you to be considered is that you be seen as a "FRIEND OF THE SELECT BOARD" (FOTSB). They appear to have pre-formed opinions before any interviews have taken place, and those candidates believed to be in sync with the Select Board's views are appointed. By not informing the public of committee resignations, they're able to recruit "preferred" candidates to fill vacant seats before others interested can apply.

Recycling candidates for various board assignments while overlooking new or other applicants has become a blatant and embarrassing abuse of their power. They will unabashedly assign one FOTSB to TWO seats on two different committees on the same night and ignore others who have also applied.

**This is not what democracy looks like.** Pay attention to Select Board meetings. Watch for more on this topic in the *Breeze*.

*"Strength lies in differences, not in similarities"* -Stephen Covey

## CONTENTS:

- FOTSB
- Town Election
- Our Ambassadors
- Fundraising for Conservation Land
- Indigenous People & Sustainability
- Watershed Workshop
- Warrant Articles and State Ballots
- Revaluation Explained

**Celebrate  
Indigenous People's Day  
October 11th  
Read on page 3**

- **Code Enforcement Officer** Scott Heyland leaves his position mid October
- See [increased Covid](#) in Oct 4th wastewater

## Election Info

- Absentee ballots available until October 28th
- Town & State Election Tuesday, November 2nd. Polls open at the Dunaway 8AM-8PM. Don't forget to wear your mask.
- Unopposed candidate Carol Aaron is running for Select Board; write-ins allowed
- Peter Kahn and Sol Wachtel are running for a single seat on the Budget Review Committee

**More on Warrant articles and State  
Referendum on pages 4 & 5**

# Faces & Places

## Thank You...Our Ambassadors

With the ebbing of summer, we see the relaxing of our twenty three ambassadors who have been working to make everyone's time in the sun and surf as great as possible. These men and women who usher us into the 6 town parking lots also dispense directions, advice, recommendations, help and favors of all kind.

We can thank the leadership duo of Ray Hamlin, a CPA by profession, and Gene McSweeney, an electrical engineer, for their tireless guidance of the staff comprised of 2 retired school principals, 2 retired police detectives, a dentist, a nurse, 2 postal workers, 3 teachers, an engineer and a couple of artists among other free-lancers in their daily task of engaging with the public who come, hopefully in time, to fill one of the 1,150 beach parking spaces.

When asked about memorable incidents during the summer, co-chief Ray said that "the adventure of learning to ride the scooter was the most terrifying experience of his life"! He didn't mention the task of everyone learning the new metering or the no cash system, the urgent dispatch calls to police or fire department for illnesses or accidents that can occur among thousands of visitors, or responding to any emergencies that may flare up; all these multitudes of services when dealing with the public seem to be performed by this impressive crew as second nature.

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Diana Kelly on duty at the Main Beach



Ray in the office he shares with Gene and the other Visitor Services Staff in the Dunaway

After a summer of work and debriefing, friendships are forged, next year's plans perfected, and returning staff considered. The test of this close knit team is the loyalty of Polly Baston, 90 years old now as she's finally retired from the parking lots, but with a fan club she collected as an employee for 25 years. When last seen, she was chatting at the Beach Parking Booth causing a backup. Thank you all, our Ambassadors!

## Urgent Appeal: Kirkpatrick Woods

Great Works Regional Land Trust has the opportunity to conserve 22 acres abutting the Payeur Preserve in Ogunquit. This land donation from the Kirkpatrick Family requires \$40,000 to be raised by October 15th. Recreation trails will be extended to create a larger protected network within a short distance from Town

[Donate Here](#)

# Traditional Indigenous Sustainability Practices

Sustainability may be defined as “an ability or capacity of something to be maintained or to sustain itself...taking what is needed to live now, without jeopardizing the potential for people in the future to meet their needs.”

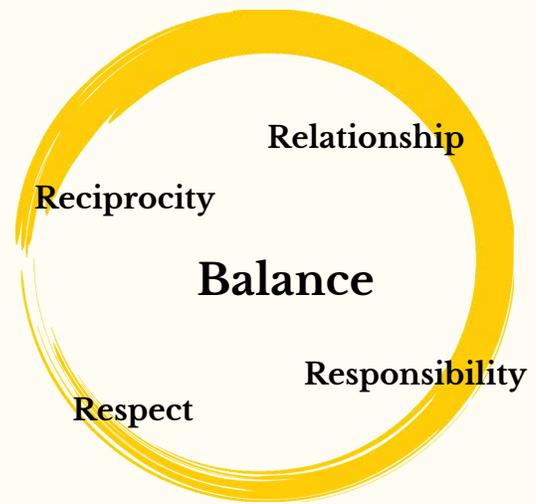
For the indigenous peoples of Ogunquit and farther, living sustainably was about living within the means of our natural systems (environment) and ensuring that our lifestyle doesn't harm other living things (society and culture).

The total ways of living are built up by the group and passed from one generation to the next. They never took more than they needed, always leaving plants or parts of plants, to grow for the next season. They knew when plants and animals were at their most abundant for good hunting so these plants and animals were not depleted. They moved with the seasons, looking ahead seven generations.

Today, indigenous people continue to find balance in their lives by following the four R's: Relationship-Responsibility-Respect-Reciprocity.

- **RELATIONSHIP:** a connection with nature and an empathy for all creatures. Whenever we step outside, we are stepping into others' homes. Nature heals and nature sustains. Be with place and all our relations.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** with relationship comes responsibility to know your surroundings and who and what lives there. Ensure that the impact of human activity does not impair their capacity to survive. Not using pesticides and herbicides and conserving water are our collective responsibility.
- **RESPECT:** never take more than you need. Always leave enough behind for the continuation of life for all creatures who call that place home. There is a huge learning curve for people who have not grown up with nature. Many places have been raped of their diversity and biology has been disrupted.

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- **RECIPROCITY:** show thanks to a place by bringing an open heart filled with gratitude. Habitat needs help with more and more development taking place. Native permaculture becomes more self-sustaining as birds and animals have native fruit, nut, seed and berry.

Get involved with local conservation organizations; teach younger people to fill the shoes of those in land trusts who are aging; plant food producing NATIVE permaculture; bring a trash bag and clean up trash; bring land back into balance.

*Excerpts from a 2021 York Land Trust Zoom meeting with members of the Ranco Family.*

## ***If you missed...***

the initial Planning Board Workshop presenting indepth information about the Ogunquit and Josias Watersheds  
go to [Watershed Workshop](#) and [Documents](#)

## ***Did you Know?***

### **The Center for Wildlife**

will take old newspaper (nothing glossy) to line critter cages. Drop off at the office at 375 Mountain Road (with a mask) and see the new facility!



# Important Warrant Articles on the Ogunquit Ballot

## Warrant Articles Pertaining to Liquor, Amusement & Entertainment Licenses



**Article 4:** Shall the Ordinance **Alcoholic Beverage Procedure** (Chapter 10) be changed from notice of the Select Board reviewing an application to **may hold a Public Hearing on the application.**

- **Yes Vote:** A public hearing on a license **may not be specifically announced**; the burden is on the citizen to notice when a license will be discussed.
- **No Vote:** Licenses for Liquor **stay on the Select Board meeting agenda** for public hearing as has historically been done.

**Article 5:** Shall the Ordinance **Amusement & Entertainment** (Chapter 14) be changed to **may hold a Public Hearing on the decision and reapplication.**

- **Yes Vote:** A public hearing on a license **may not be specifically announced**; the burden is on the citizen to notice when a license will be discussed.
- **No Vote:** Licenses for Amusement & Entertainment **stay on the Select Board meeting agenda** for public hearing as has historically been done.

## Budget Warrant Article: Assessment Update



**Article 11:** Shall the Town vote to appropriate the sum of **\$45,000** from the Unassigned Fund Balance for the purpose of **Statistical Updates for the Assessing Department?**

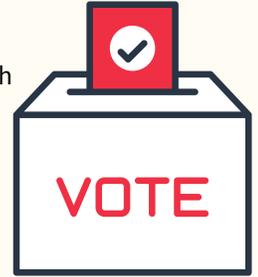
- **Yes Vote:** Appropriates funds for an updated property tax assessment on **25% of parcels**
- **No Vote:** delays an assessment update

See Next Page for Explanation



## State Referendum Question #1

- **YES Vote supports a ban** on the construction of electric transmission lines defined as high impact in the Upper Kennebec Region. It would also require the state legislature to **approve** transmission line projects through a two-thirds majority vote.
- **NO Vote opposes a ban** and supports allowing the construction project to continue. Also, the state legislature **would not be required** to approve high-impact electric transmission line projects moving forward.



This controversial and high-profile ballot Question proposes to stop a major transmission line corridor already under construction by Central Maine Power since 2016.

The question reads: “Do you want to ban the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines in the upper Kennebec Region and to require the Legislature to approve all other such projects anywhere in Maine, both retroactively to 2020, and to require the Legislature, retroactively to 2014, to approve by a two-thirds vote such projects using public land?”

The question, initiated by citizens with more than 80,000 signatures collected, stems from opposition to what is known as the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC). The 145 mile long, high-voltage transmission line project would transmit around 1,200 megawatts from hydroelectric plants in Quebec, Canada to electric utilities in Maine and Massachusetts.

The ballot initiative would prohibit this construction retroactive to September 16, 2020, thus prohibiting Segment 1 of NECEC permitted to begin construction on May 13, 2021. While the majority of the project leans on existing power lines, new lines would be added from the Canadian border through the Forks in Maine where two powerful rivers, the Dead River and the Kennebec River, meet in Somerset County, Maine. Permits have been approved for the project and construction is already underway. However, the question includes a need for “retroactive” approval.

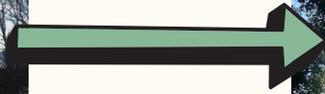
# Article 11: Revaluation



**Built circa 1870: 8 bedrooms, 5,652 sq. ft.**  
 2020-2021 taxes \$17,226 → \$3.05 per sq. ft.



**New: 7 bedrooms, 7,474 sq. ft.**  
 2021-2022 taxes \$19,745 → \$2.64 per sq. ft.



By Maine law, municipalities must revalue all properties by physical measure and listing at least once every 10 years. This was last completed in Ogunquit in 2017 [at a cost of \$170,000]. The longer a municipality goes without revaluing property, the more likely a property's assessed value (the value upon which taxes are based) will be bigger or smaller than its market value or sales price (what an individual is willing to pay for a property).

The sales ratio, assessed value divided by the sales price, is one of the important components of property assessment and a property owners' annual taxes. The State says this number needs to be between 70% and 110%. The second is called the Coefficient of Dispersion (COD). This complicated formula simply measures the equity of, or how close the median (middle) value of a property is to the sales ratio in Ogunquit. Similar properties need to be assessed in the same way. This number must be under 20. If either number falls outside the range, a new full revaluation is required. Today that would cost at least \$220,000. Currently, the numbers in Ogunquit are 80% and 17.5.

In addition, each year, an updated assessment is made relative to building permits that are issued for new homes, significant renovations or additions. These assessments are based on additional square footage of the building footprint, bedroom numbers, etc. However, in this assessment, the full value of the property is not captured as the 2017 valuation tables are used and the land value increases are not included. Two pictured examples are given here.

Given the dramatic increase in Ogunquit real estate, new and renovated houses may not be paying their fair share. A **Statistical Update**, at a cost of \$45,000, can be completed before a full revaluation is required by law or by falling outside of the required numbers. Completing this process now helps to equalize the values of all properties in town for the purpose of a fair distribution of the tax burden. Although this update could result in an adjustment to nearly all individual assessments; it does not mean that property taxes will increase.

Assessments are only the base to determine individual tax burden; the overall operating budget, which is the amount that Ogunquit must raise to operate the government and services such as schools, police etc. is what truly affects individual property taxes. Since the value of all new properties, additions, etc. have now been captured and the budget has not increased, taxes will be cut for many with the burden shifted to the new. Ask yourself whether you want a statistical update now, or be required to do a full revaluation estimated to be in the 2 year range by the Assessor's office?

Watch the February 23, 2021 [Budget Review Meeting](#) (at 1.25-1.55 mins.) for a more complete explanation and see news articles on [Portland](#) (a regrettable situation where residents are facing a 10 year revaluation) and [Biddeford](#) (working on a strategic plan to help property owners) for examples of Towns dealing with revaluation issues.



**Built circa 1914: 4 bedrooms, 1936 sq. ft.**  
 2020-2021 taxes \$5,062 → \$2.61 per sq. ft.



**New: 6 bedrooms, 4,210 sq. ft.**  
 2021-2022 taxes \$7,898 → \$1.88 per sq. ft.

