

Siasconset Civic Association
August Annual Meeting
August 7, 2019

President Martha Polachi welcomed a quorum of members to the August Annual Meeting shortly after 6 pm.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

After observing a moment of silence for friends and family members gone during the year, Ms. Polachi reported on a number of improvements that the Department of Public Works (DPW) undertook over the winter and spring to beautify 'Sconset. She cited work in Larsen Park, at the Bus Stop and on the footbridge, and thanked Peter Brodie for the village bulletin board (located at the bus shelter) he constructed on commission. Ms. Polachi noted that her remarks highlighted what also appears in the Civic Association Spring 2019 Newsletter, available online and in print at the rear of the Casino.

Citing work she hoped could be accomplished in the near future, Ms. Polachi mentioned concerns over the traffic flow at the Rotary, anticipated wooden bin holders for trash barrels (DPW to provide), and the need for a water bottle filling station in the village to accommodate the many bicyclists and walkers who visit.

TREASURER'S REPORT

CO North presented the Treasurer's report for Gene Hilzenrath, noting availability of the financials of the Civic Association, which shows the cash balance for the year, along with income and expenses, actual for 2017 and 2018 and year-to-date for 2019. With a current cash balance of more than \$118,000, the organization can be considered fiscally secure. Membership is holding steady at about 250. On a positive note, 2019 donations to date equal the amount of dues received, and income was essentially equal to expenditures in 2019 YTD. Our cash balance is over \$118,000, and all the improvements the Civic Association has made to Larsen Park and the village this year have been paid for by the year's income without eroding our sizeable cash balance.

Mr. North, as a member of the Bylaws Committee that met over the 2018-19 winter, noted that changes the Committee was proposing would affect the Treasurer's duties and record keeping, imposing a more formal and stricter budgeting and expenditure process.

BYLAWS REVISION

Lynn Filipski introduced the work of the Bylaws Committee (also including CO North and Gail Walker, Esq), which worked over the winter to rethink, update and provide the organization with bylaws that accurately reflect the workings of the board, use concise, clear language and reflect the current laws of the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She noted that the proposed Bylaws now match State law requirements and best practices.

She further explained that under the proposed Bylaws, members would have the opportunity to elect Officers and Board members in July each year, unless there was no meeting quorum, in which case, the vote could be undertaken in August. In addition, Board member terms would be limited to two three-year terms in order to continually bring different members of the community onto the board and to keep a steady flow of new ideas before the membership.

Ms. Filipski asked for members' questions prior to a vote to approve the proposed Bylaw changes as shown in handouts. None being raised, Ms. Filipski asked for a vote from the membership to accept the proposed Bylaws as written. Robert Gabriel seconded the proposal by Ms. Filipski. The motion passed without opposition or any abstentions.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mary Will presented this year's nominations for Committee Chair Kate Stahler Starrett. Noting the excellent work done by Ms. Starrett during her tenure, Ms. Will passed on her plea that Civic Association members actively propose one another or themselves for Board service by contacting the Nominating Committee Chair.

Ms. Starrett and the Nominations Committee proposed the following slate of Officers for 2019-2020:

Martha Polachi, President
Lynn Filipski, Vice President
Gene Hilzenrath, Treasurer
Maggie Boone, Secretary

The Committee also proposed Cindy Nelson and Wendy Holding for three-year Board terms (2019-2022).

The slate presented, Ms. Will asked for members to vote their approval, which they did unanimously.

THE GREAT HEALTHY LAWN PROJECT

Lynn Filipski gave a recap of an endeavor done in conjunction with the Garden Club of America and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center that asks homeowners to stop using synthetic lawn and garden pesticides that leach into the aquifer and adversely impact children, adults, pets, and bird and wildlife. Ms. Filipski invited

use of the handouts she provided to help educate oneself and one's landscapers about best practices for maintaining a healthy lawn. Tips featured included growing the grass to four inches before cutting to three inches, allowing clover to grow, and leaving clippings in the grass to provide nutrients. Apparently, as homeowners we use 10 times more pesticides per acre than do farmers. Merrie Bouscaren raised a question about whether the Town was monitoring water quality; she was assured they do.

FIRE HOUSE RESTORATION AND FUTURE PLANNING

Fire Chief Steve Murphy returned to update the membership on the topic raised at last year's Annual Meeting, giving us a presentation on the Building Study (of the 'Sconset Fire Station) the Town had funded in 2019. Outside assessors worked with The 'Sconset Trust to do a historical study and consider what kind of building is required to support and respond to calls in the three miles around 'Sconset; there were 291 calls in 2019.

Chief Murphy said that he needs an East End facility that can be staffed and ready to respond to emergency calls during the busy times of the year. The current firehouse is not up to this requirement and is unlikely to become so with minor renovations. The Chief showed some conceptual drawings of a 'Sconset Fire Station with ambulance, tanker and engine truck bays, locker room, day room, toilets and bunk rooms, and said that square footage needs (6,200 square ft.) and costs (\$6.7 million) associated with these bare necessities made it clear this would not work in the current location. A new station of 11,000 sq. feet would cost about the same, but land would need to be secured. With many political hurdles to be met, another new station would be years in the planning and funding stages. The Chief feels that 'Sconset deserves a functional fire station.

The Chief fielded questions related to call (volunteer) firefighters ('Sconset has none presently) and said that generally, it is very difficult to recruit and retain volunteers anywhere in the country.

Phil Novack suggested housing firefighters in 'Sconset rentals and the Chief believed this was a good idea but said a firehouse would still be needed to support these employees and to meet the growing needs of the East End.

At the end of a helpful dialog with those present, the Chief noted the complexity of getting a facility that meets the needs of the employees and is attractive to and serving the needs of the community. John McCarthy asked if Loran Station property offered a possible site, and the Chief explained it did not due to access and aquifer issues. The Chief is considering optimal locations for a relocated station and ways to get site land through possible swap of existing town land.

Asked where a 'Sconset Fire Station might rank on a department and Town priority list, the Chief admitted that it was not on this year's list, but was on his 5-year plan.

Finally, the Chief gave a recap of the challenges he faced over the previous weekend when the Summer House fire was called in. Response time was 10 minutes, and only 9 personnel were available to battle a very hot blaze. Industry standards dictate at least 30 personnel should be called in for a structure fire of this magnitude. The firefighters somehow managed to contain the blaze to the floor of origin and damage was limited to the main building of the Summer House, a feat that was nothing short of miraculous. Civic Association membership gave Chief Murphy a standing ovation at the end of his remarks, and then turned the conversation to ways to support the Summer House staff displaced by the fire (which was in their living quarters) and suspension of their employment.

THANK YOU'S, NEW BUSINESS, and BBQ

Ms. Polachi opened the floor for comments after first thanking retiring Board members David Boyce and Kate Stahler Starrett for their years of service to the Civic Association. She also thanked Amy Manning who has provided pro bono landscaping of the Rotary this summer.

Concerns about traffic speed on New St. were raised. Ms. Polachi said she will request the mobile trailer from the Nantucket Police Department to alert drivers to their MPH speed.

Helmut Weymar noted that the Massachusetts DEP/MEFA will be conducting a site visit on August 11, 2019 to consider the appeal by the Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund (SBPF) of the Conservation Committee's rejection of SBPF's request to extend the geotube installation. He asked concerned citizens to help support the appeal by attending the meeting.

Ms. Polachi adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm, noting that BBQ was ready for all to enjoy, and, at Peter Krogh's suggestion, the audience rose to give her a standing ovation for her service to the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lathrop Will
Secretary