

**Siasconset Civic Association
Annual Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by President Martha Polachi at 7:05, who read the annual Necrology and asked for a moment of silence for all those known to have left the community in the past year.

Gene Hilzenrath gave the Treasurer's report and noted an increase to 242 dues paying members in 2016. He emphasized the voluntary nature of support for the Civic Association and noted that both dues and additional donations were needed to cover the Association's annual expenses.

Mark Donato presented the 2017 recipient of the Civic Association's Scholarship Award (\$2,500), Emma Hunter, and welcomed back Elizabeth Eldridge, 2016 recipient. Both young women offered their gratitude to the community and explained what the award meant to each in furthering her studies.

Martha gave an update on the repairs to the Footbridge (completed and reopened on July 21). The engineer recommended reinforcements and design alterations met with HDC approval.

Rob McNeill, new director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), will speak at the August 9, 2017 meeting of the Civic Association and give an update on the David Gray Memorial Rotary and Flagpole Project for which funds totaling \$145,000 were appropriated at the April Annual Town Meeting.

Thanks to the efforts of retired Firefighter, Nelson Eldridge, a \$30,000 grant was secured from The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to aide in the restoration and maintenance of the 'Sconset Firehouse. Bids are currently being sought for stone step repairs and exterior restoration.

Police Chief William Pittman, the evening's guest speaker, took the podium to speak about a perennial "hot topic," the issue of traffic calming and speed limit enforcement. With candid digressions about immediate community concerns such as underage drinking, and more worrisome issues of serious substance abuse and gang presence on the island, the Chief detailed efforts by the police to encourage lower speeds and establish "safety zones" on the island. Working with the DPW director, Chief Pittman intends establishment of an island plan that is enforceable. Because his plan seeks to reduce speed limits in a number of "Thickly Settled" areas below the state limit of 25 mph, the plan will require engineering studies, town meeting approval and state legislative mandate before a 20 mph "safety zone" can be enforceable. While current signage and publicity encourages 20mph speeds in much of the village, the police cannot actually enforce these admonitions. Main St. resident Samantha Fremont-Smith noted her informal survey of speeding on Main

Street. Of the 141 cars she clocked, 48% travelled at speeds greater than 25 mph. She noted that the sight of her speed gun did cause drivers to slow down when they saw her. Residents on Ocean Ave. noted continued problems with parking and access, due in large measure to lack of sufficient parking for Summer House guests. Chief Pittman noted, in response to requests for more “round the clock” police presence in the village, that budgets and other island wide concerns could not support such a request.

Bike Safety Day: Thanks to Civic Association Board Member Lynn Filipski, this program is being reinstated this summer and two sessions will take place on Wednesday July 26 at 9:15 and 10:15 on New Street (in front of the Casino). The Civic Association will donate bike lights to give to participants to encourage both attendance and safety throughout the day.

Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund: Third year Intern Austin Bentley gave an update on data studies of beach and bluff erosion, reporting that zero feet have been lost from the toe of the bluff over the past year and that no ill effects have occurred elsewhere along the shoreline. With all indications that the GeoTube Installation Project that took place four winters ago has been successful, the SBPF plans to ask for permission to extend the tubes in 2018.

Martha opened the meeting to consider general community concerns.

Linda Holland spoke about privet hedges, their invasive nature and deleterious effect on sense of neighborhood character and appreciation of the historic architecture of the village. Barbara Runde added that maintenance of said hedges can be very loud and intrusive. She asks people to request that their landscapers stop using the gas trimmers, in favor of the quieter electric versions.

Joe Arvay noted that telephone poles detract from the natural beauty of the village. He raised the possibility of creating a fund to remove poles and run wires underground.

Janet Eyre raised the question of whether plans for Fire House renovations included housing for fire fighters. She noted the state standard of a 5 minute response to a call was undermined, having no firefighters resident in ‘Sconset. Martha said she and the Deputy Chief had spoken of this, but that additional funding would be required and that request must go on the 2018 warrant.

Sandy Apgar read a letter written and signed by several Broadway, Front and Center Street neighbors asking that the developer/owner of The Hope Chest to reconsider the positioning of the sign “Sconset Store” atop his building. He noted that it confuses visitors and residents alike as well as distorts and commercializes the historic character of the streetscape. He noted that theirs was a neighborly, not legalistic, suggestion that the owner remove the sign.

Emily Maletta asked for neighbors to be considerate when parking on Broadway and other village streets. Residents have limited space for parking and cars which are unused and take up needed space should be left elsewhere.

Nic Platt reminded the community about the Emerald Ash Borer, a scourge of a pest that will kill our trees if they are not inoculated imminently. Martha said she would take this up with the DPW.

Jonathan Block noted the recent renovations to the first wireless Marconi Station, Telegraph House, 36 Main Street. *(Ed. More on the restoration project can be found on Nextdoor Siasconset.)*

Bob Felch noted that 'Sconset History Night, August 14, 2017, would feature the history of Sankaty Head Lighthouse.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lathrop Will, Secretary