

Siasconset Civic Association August 8th, 2018 Annual Meeting

Board Members present: Bowman, Donato, Eldridge, Filipski, Mundy, North, Polachi, Ried, Schrauth Starrett, Walker, and Will.

Civic Association President, Martha Polachi called the August annual meeting of the association to order at 6:07 pm, introducing the Board Members present. Ms. Polachi thanked retiring Board Member Jennie Greene for her important work in realizing the new playground located on Land Bank property in Codfish Park.

President's Report

The coming year's work will include a Bylaw review. The Board is functioning well at its current strength and has determined there is no need for additional members to be nominated to the Board at present.

Treasurer's Report

C.O. North gave the report for Treasurer Gene Hilzenrath (absent), saying that while he could not answer detailed questions, he could state that, bottom line, all is good; the Civic Association is in sound fiscal condition, thanks to income from dues and donations. Dues revenue this year is running the same as in the past few years, however donations are up from last year. Expenses are about \$10,000 annually.

Appreciation of DPW and DPW Remarks

Ms. Polachi returned to the podium to speak of accomplishments, village improvements and ongoing programs directed by or monitored by the Civic Association.

She once again thanked Rob McNeil, Department of Public Works (DPW) Director, for the extraordinary work done by his team to restore the 'Sconset flagpole and Rotary. She presented Mr. McNeil with an original piece of art by Board Member Susan Ried. In accepting his award, McNeil characterized the Rotary project as a little job in terms of construction but an important one because it was "really all about community."

Ms. Polachi also gave McNeil the “winter” flag, donated by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for safe keeping.

McNeil went on to update us on things the DPW wants to do for ‘Sconset, first thanking the Silvermans and Howes for their feedback in attractively siting and enclosing the needed porta potties installed this year at the main entrance to ‘Sconset Beach. The DPW will be adding benches and barrels in that area in future. He said the ‘Sconset Clean Team will be a great help and DPW appreciates everyone’s efforts in picking up trash. DPW wants to do better vegetation management across island particularly in rendering intersections with excess vegetation safer visually.

After inviting questions, a gentleman asked about the condition of Lincoln Street. McNeil said that he surveys all public roads and maintains a pavement condition index so that the DPW can prioritize maintenance needs. He noted that Lincoln Street may be a private road but the DPW doesn’t mind being asked. Terry Groden asked about storm drain flooding and filling in and was told to go on DPW’s website to report his area of concern (the Clifton Street drains).

Civic Association Initiatives

During the season and off-season, Board Members continue to shepherd a number of programs and plans through proper channels to completion.

The Town of Nantucket Sign Committee will be asked to approve a new bulletin board that the Civic Association proposes to replace the one that used to be in the village square.

The iconic teal and cream Siasconset sign is to be refurbished and replaced soon, along with new signposts for various locations of touristic interest.

Shade is desired at the Codfish Park Playground and the Land Bank is considering options to be decided upon and installed in late spring 2019.

An enforceable speed limit of 20 mph within the village requires further study by the Town and State approval as a high density area. If approved, this would be the first on the island with the hope to add other congested areas to the list. Outside of a school zone, 25 mph is currently the lowest enforceable limit and signs entering ‘Sconset are present to indicate this restriction.

Larsen Park, property owned by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, is considered to be an area in need of sprucing up as well as in need of a water fountain. Ms. Polachi intends to meet with the new Interim Director, David Worth, to make known the Civic Association Board’s ideas for park improvement.

Lynn Filipski reported on the Civic Association-sponsored Bike Safety Day held on Wednesday July 25, 2018. For two hours, members of the Nantucket Police Department ran kids through an obstacle course and offered education concerning proper hand signals, road rules and requirements such as the wearing of properly fitting helmets. Keith Mansfield, Cassie Thompson, and Nick Ferry (2018 bike cop) showed participants how to navigate a Rotary (one that they had set up on New Street), and gave the kids an opportunity to interact with Moby, the drug sniffing dog/officer. The 'Sconset Market gave vouchers for ice cream cones to course completers, and Island Bike gave a 10% discount off helmets. The Civic Association gave out bike bells as a favor to encourage use.

Gail Walker spoke about current membership numbers in the context of the Civic Association's effort of several years to convert to online renewal and outreach. This year the Association had 233 dues paying households before our August Annual Meeting. Following registration that number had swelled to around 250 households. Ms. Walker encouraged members to renew their membership online for the ease it offers both the Civic Association member and Civic Association volunteers, and to avoid human error and lost checks that come from traditional membership management. She also encouraged members to consider switching to a Sustaining Membership (with automatic renewal via PayPal). And finally, she asked for assistance in new member recruitment by current members, suggesting that they introduce themselves and the Civic Association to new families moving into the neighborhood.

Ms. Walker said that the Civic Association website serves several functions, as both a visitor service information portal as well as a resource to members seeking information and updates about Civic Association programs and projects. She is continuously adding resource pages on topics such as keeping 'Sconset clean, protecting 'Sconset's Dark Sky, noise restrictions, and navigating the Nantucket Town government, etc.

Concerning the Civic Association's Dark Sky initiative, Ms. Walker noted the Town joined the Dark Sky movement in 2005 when it adopted a comprehensive outdoor lighting ordinance. The Civic Association will work with National Grid and the Town to insure that the street lights in 'Sconset are Dark Sky friendly and will give members pointers on how to make their own difference, offering specifics on outdoor lighting and bulb strength, as well as when lights should be used or extinguished.

Concerning the debut of the Civic Association-sponsored "Sconset Clean Team," Ms. Walker asked for additional volunteers to join others already committed, at the main entrance to 'Sconset Beach, at 8 am Monday, August 13. The second clean-up will take place on September 17 with a meeting place and time to be posted soon.

Guest Speaker: Scott Leonard, Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket (MMAN)

Ms. Polachi introduced Scott Leonard, Director of Operations for Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket (MMAN), who had asked for an opportunity to raise awareness of his organization as it works to respond, rescue, protect and advocate for marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals.

According to Leonard, the incidences of human and seal interaction are the highest in the country here in Nantucket and there have been many necessary rescues of other marine mammals from our shores. Beach Access 32 (Low Beach by the old sewer bed) is a seal haul-out area. They swim in the choppy waters just off the beach and come ashore to rest and spawn. People walking there should be careful not to engage the wild animals on land, stay 150' away, and leash dogs when seals are present.

Leonard debunked the idea that the wild nature (seal) population is exploding, saying that it is returning to its natural level thanks to a change in the law governing marine mammal interaction, e.g. the bounty on noses being struck down. Leonard estimates that only 50% of the natural level of North Atlantic gray seals has been reached. He argued that tourists want to see seals and that we must change our behavior to insure seal safety.

The Marine Mammal Alliance Nantucket, Leonard stated, is trying to help us obey the law, stay safe and keep marine mammals safe without altering their behavior. His final takeaway: humans should never stress marine mammals and should you encounter an injured or dead animal, call NOAA Fisheries Service Stranding hotline (1-866-755-6622) or Scott Leonard and his team of trained rescuers.

Other Business and Commentary

Art Kelly asked about step-down of speed as one enters the village. Ms. Polachi said she will meet with the Police to discuss better signage and monitoring.

A lady expressed concern about children riding bikes at twilight. Ms. Polachi said we gave out lights last year at Bike Safety Day and the law stipulates that bikers must be equipped with lights if traveling at dusk. However, since Police can only enforce so much, parents and adults should do all they can to encourage adherence to the law.

Pam Murphy, having done research on hedge trimming, reported that it is best done in late spring. She encouraged homeowners to instruct their landscapers to take care of hedge trimming before summer begins.

Ms. Polachi wrapped up the meeting by giving thanks to the Casino staff for meeting hosting and setup and to the Nelsons at the 'Sconset Market for providing food,

beverages and setup for the Member BBQ. She adjourned the meeting at 7:07 pm and the Member BBQ began with additional side dishes and desserts provided by the attendees.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lathrop Will
Secretary