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**Marine and Fresh Water Quality Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 24 2023 (Nauset Room and via Zoom)**

**Attendees:** Judith Bruce, Mary Griffin, Ed Hafner, Carolyn Kennedy, Richard Levy, Valerie May Robert Mullin and Judy Scanlon (Chair)

**Regrets:** None

**Other:** Michael Herman, SB; Mefford Runyon, SB; Kimberly Newman, Town Manager

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order.**

The Chair called the meeting open at 10:01 AM.

The chair thanked Carol Etzold for her seven years of service to the Committee. She will stay involved in the water quality testing program.

The chair thanked Michael Herman for his service to the Committee as Select Board Liaison, and introduced Mef Runyon, our new Select Board liaison.

**2. Introduction of New Town Manager, Kimberly Newman (introduction will be made by Michael Herman, Select Board Chair).**

Michael Herman introduced the new Town Manager, Kimberly Newman. All of the Committee members introduced themselves. Kimberly gave a brief summary of her background in community management and a vision of how she plans to interact with Town Committees. The Committee Chair offered to have Kimberly and George Meservey participate in an upcoming water quality sampling in August.

**Action**

1. The Committee Chair to invite Kimberly and George Meservey participate in an upcoming estuary water quality sampling in August or September.

**3. 2023 Season Freshwater Lake and Pond WQ Sampling, and Summer Estuary WQ Monitoring Update (Carolyn Kennedy, Judith Bruce, and Chair). (NOTE: This will be a recurring agenda item during the active water quality monitoring time periods).**

**Freshwater Ponds:**

Judith reported that she has a conflict with sampling with August 23<sup>rd</sup> and we will probably have to sample on two days instead of one. There are currently 15 ponds being sampled and depending on conditions at the site, a site may be skipped. Kettle Pond may be dropped due to the challenging water sampling conditions and access, and it has been several years since we last sampled. The Chair recommended

doing a spot check anyway. Ed Hafner may be able to help with sampling in August. August 21<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> are the best dates for all; the Chair will check with SMAST to see if these are acceptable dates for receiving the samples.

**Estuary:**

There are 26 stations being monitored. Volunteers (we have approximately 50 volunteers) have completed 2 rounds so far, and 100% stations have been sampled. We use 113 bottles in each sampling. There are two more samplings to go. Rich mentioned the Water Quality Lab in reference to the sampling efforts; Mef reported that Ron Collins is looking at uses for the annex building.

The Chair reported that Dr. Duncanson and others from other towns have recently retired and will no longer be participating.

From the recent testing, we know that Arey's Pond, Little Town Cove, Meetinghouse Pond and Mill Pond all have very low (2 mg/L) dissolved oxygen readings. Many others were at the 5mg/L level.

For the second time, the volunteer samplers are hitting the bottom at one site. Carolyn will connect with them.

**Action**

1. Chair to connect with Ron Collins about our Committee's use of the Annex Building for water quality sampling activities.

**4. Town Estuary and Freshwater Ponds Data Summary Updates and Citizen/User Friendly Data Presentation-Update (Rich Levy and Chair). Additional Public Education Efforts/Ideas Related to Water Quality May Also Be Discussed.**

The Chair reported that she and Rich Levy met with George Meservey on July 14<sup>th</sup> to update him on the Committee's discussion last month regarding a citizen-friendly website for displaying water quality information on our ponds and lakes. George would like the Committee to spell out of desires for the site and he suggested working directly with Ed Eichner. The Chair reported that Ed will put together a scope of work. George noted that at this point the Committee should not worry about the capability of the Town website to support our needs. Rich reported that he has reached out to the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the Buzzards Bay Coalition to learn more about their sites. With respect to the source of funding for the project, the Chair suggested that Meff connect with George Meservey.

There was a brief discussion of the quality assurance plans which are in place for the estuary and freshwater pond sampling processes.

**5. Wastewater Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) -MFWQ Committee Representative Report (Judith Bruce WMAC Rep). Note: There will first be a vote to re-designate Judith Bruce as our WMAC Representative.**

Judith Bruce was reappointed to the WMAC by the Select Board. She provided a summary of ongoing plans looking at PRBs as a mitigation strategy in specific areas not served by the sewerage.

There are no TMDLs for Rock Harbor or Nauset Estuary. However, we know that reductions will have to be made in Rock Harbor and this will need to be done in conjunction with Eastham. There is now a signed MOU between Orleans and Eastham to better determine removals. It is possible that our downtown sewerage may provide enough nitrogen reduction to meet all requirements. Once specified, then we have five years to implement needed removal strategies. Water use is being used to determine the nitrogen input sources and levels, and the EyeOnWater app is really helping.

Meff asked about Rock Harbor since they are served by private wells. Eastham wants more updated nutrient contribution information since all homes from the rotary and going north around Town Cove now have metered public water. The original SMAST calculation was an area estimate of water use, and may have been overstated.

The Chair asked if Cedar Pond is still contributing to nutrients since implementation of the management plan and salinity was lowered. Judith thought it would be difficult to know the current degree of attenuation. The Chair thought Ed Eichner could determine this.

**Action:**

1. Motion to reappoint Judith as the MFWQC Committee representative to the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee: Motioned by Carolyn, seconded by Ed. Vote: 7-0-0

**6. APCC Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program, and OPC Sarah's Pond Oxygenation Project (Ed Hafner, Judith Bruce).**

APCC – Ed reported that Orleans water bodies are all good. No potential for concerns yet. Crystal Lake had to be retested last month. Barnstable and Hyannis currently have issues.

Judith reported on Sarah's Pond. There is currently two meters of visibility due to the aeration project. Ken Wagoner has analyzed all algae samples through June; cyanobacteria counts are very low probably due to reductions in available phosphorous. The system automation (e.g., off and on) and remote sensing are working seamlessly.

**7. Pilgrim Lake Herring Run-NRCS Grant Application Update (if available). Thank You Letter to the Palumbo's (for letting herring count volunteers access their property).**

The Chair reported that the NRCS grant application and proposed herring run renovation is still on track. They will likely begin the design this fall.

Rich wrote a thank you letter to the home owners adjacent to the herring run and Judy reviewed it. Next step is to bring to Select Board office.

Ed recommended the Committee read "The Alewives Tale," a book on river herring lifecycle and runs written by Barbara Brennessel.

## 8. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes- June 26, 2023.

After a brief discussion of proposed changes in the minutes by the Chair, there was a motion to approve the draft minutes with all of the suggested edits. Motioned by Ed, seconded by Carolyn. Approved 7-0-0

## 9. Consider/Add Topics for Future Agendas- Pesticide Reduction Home Rule Petition Article, Baker Pond Management Plan, Meet with Brad Chase, MA DMF (regarding best management options for Pilgrim Lake herring fry).

**Pesticide Reduction Home Rule Petition Article.** The Chair suggested that we add a discussion of the pesticide reduction final draft. She reported that Orleans does not monitor for pesticides in drinking water; and some have very short lifetimes and do not persist in the environment. Ed asked if we can get some advice from SMAST or other experts on the impact of pesticides in Orleans. Judith mentioned that APCC and Xerces Society has information. Mary feels this home rule process is very rushed and this is not the top of mind of citizens in the summer. Pesticides are heavily regulated at the Federal and State level and there a lot of very complex issues.

### Actions

1. The Chair suggested that Judith make the recommendation to WWAC to ask the new Town Manager meet with Brewster on the Baker Pond Management Plan.
2. The Chair is continuing to encourage Brad Chase to attend a future Committee meeting. (The Chair has previously sent an email request to him).

## 10. Announcements

**Cape Cod Chronical article.** There was a brief discussion of the article entitled "*Scientist Warns Friends of Pleasant Bay of 'Global Warming In Your Backyard'*" on 19 July 2023 written by Bronwen Walsh on changes in seagrass in Pleasant Bay. The article documents presentations made at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Pleasant Bay by two local scientists. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's Matthew Long warned attendees of what could happen to Pleasant Bay and similar Cape Cod ecosystems based on observations on the fate of Waquoit Bay, bordered by Falmouth and Mashpee. Holly Plaisted, a National Park Service biologist, gave an overview of the trends and technical developments that Pleasant Bay is using to keep eelgrass healthy. <https://capecodchronicle.com/en/5829/brewster/10668/Scientist-Warns-Friends-Of-Pleasant-Bay-Of->

**River Herring Network Meeting.** The Chair will be coordinating an October Meeting of the River Herring Network and would like to hold the meeting here in Orleans. She will obtain Town Manager approval for a meeting. Committee members made recommendations for a possible venue for the meeting such as the Orleans Historical Society, Orleans Police Station, Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, the Yacht Club.

**Committee Organization.** The Chair will put Committee reorganization on the agenda for next month.

Mary brought up the report entitled *Climate change appears to be changing the color of oceans* by David Abel in today's Boston Globe. The article documents significant changes in the ocean color changes (becoming greener) which are probably due to changes in the marine food chain such as phytoplankton

**11. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**12. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn at 11:37 AM. Carolyn motioned to adjourn, then Ed seconded. Approved 7-0-0.

**Future MFWQC Meeting Dates: YR 2023- 8/28, 9/25, 10/23, 11/27, 12/18.**

Minutes approved as amended by the Committee on 08/28/2023 – Vote 7-0-0

*RJP*  
*08/30/23*