

Wellfleet National Seashore Homeowners Association
2008 Annual Meeting
July 27, 2008 Wellfleet Public Library

WNSHA President Dan Arons conducted the meeting. Lisa Brown, Griswold “Gooz” Draz, and Noa Hall Williams were nominated and elected to the Executive Committee. Dan Arons, Susanna Chivian, and Tony Sager were re-elected as President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively. Sager’s Treasurer’s report showed a bank balance of \$3,169.29 and revenues of \$300.

The new WNSHA website at wnsha.org was described by website editor Sager.

Homeowners Insurance on the Cape was discussed by Paula Aschettino of Citizens for Homeowners Insurance Reform. Insurance rates have been escalating, insurance companies have been leaving the Cape since 2003-04, and not many companies are coming back. Many homeowners have to use the Massachusetts Fair Plan. A state senate bill would make some improvements. The state Insurance Commissioner rejected a 25% rate increase for the Fair Plan on the grounds its models for category 4 and 5 hurricanes were unfounded.

What’s New in the CCNS was discussed by CCNS Superintendent George Price. In his view, the most important issue was still land protection: zoning and how the towns deal with water, septic, parking issues. The CCNS is also looking at longer-term planning along with the Cape Cod Commission, parking at the oceanside beaches, and a Provincetown to Bourne bikeway. Our park was in the top 10% of national parks in number of visitors. We also have to look at global warming and climate change issues, he said, as these will be affecting us sooner than anticipated.

Panel on Property Development and Zoning in the Seashore with Superintendent Price, Wellfleet Planning Board Chair Dennis O’Connell, attorney Ben Zehnder, and chaired by Peter Watts. It was preceded by a slide show by Jenny Mansbridge on the Blasch LLC project and by Watts’ overview of CCNS regulations and the average sizes of houses in the Seashore and the town (as measured by ‘net living area’). Price reviewed the history and pre-history of the CCNS, its zoning regulations, and its recognition in the 1970s that town zoning standards were inadequate. The Park has participated in planning and development discussions with the towns. Now the question is what to do about building permits for large projects. Chairman O’Connell said zoning is a statement of the rights of property owners, their neighbors, and the town. He reviewed the history of the ‘big house’ issue. The Board of Selectmen asked the Planning Board to prepare zoning amendments for Town Meeting. He thinks this is a town-wide issue, inside and outside the Park. The Board is considering Site Plan Review, a form of which is in effect in Eastham. How do you determine how big is ‘too big’? The current lot coverage limit of 5% doesn’t work for the smallest and the largest lots. Attorney Zehnder gave his view of the CCNS Act and town zoning. There was no conflict until recently, now with a cultural, not environmental, dispute regarding ‘trophy houses’ splitting the town. Personally he supports the Planning Board’s attempt to limit house size and also

encourages the Superintendent to revise the Park's minimum standards regulation. Zehnder and Price debated the CCNS' legal levers regarding zoning and the legality of the 1993 zoning bylaw amendment. Audience discussion covered Site Plan Review, suspension of condemnation, the Blasch project litigation, the importance of the Park to town residents, effectiveness of zoning controls on house volume, and what does 'big house' mean in a national park.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the following petition was circulated for signature by WNSHA members:

We, the undersigned Wellfleet Seashore homeowners, believing that "mansionization" presents a serious and irreparable threat to the character of the Seashore and the community, urge the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to propose Zoning Bylaw amendments which would specifically and effectively protect the character and values of the Seashore.