

Minutes for the Ogunquit Conservation Commission, August 20, 2015

Present: Bill Baker, Doug Mayer, Bill Lee

Excused Absences: Glenn Deletsky, Pam Sawyer, Kristin Rinaldi

1. Pesticide pickup – The Maine Board of Pesticide Control will have a pick up site in Portland sometime in October. Or, pesticides can be given to either John Fusco or Chris Perry at the Transfer Station.

Tom Fortier couldn't make it after all though he sent some info:

2. The MDOT will begin again starting 9-8 – they hope to complete both bridges in October.

3. He hopes to move on replacing the drainage pipe in the lower lot this fall.

4. Tom has had some guys improving and replacing the Riverside fencing for the past two weeks and reports good progress.

5. Beach clean up? Though the beach seems mostly clean now, thanks to the beach patrols and life guards, Doug suggested and we decided to put off a decision to have a beach clean up till our September meeting.

6. We have a grant from the Maine Coastal Communities Grant that will allow Laura from FP to complete a digital survey of the septic systems in the Ogunquit River watershed and have this info for us.

7. We have a new website, built by Dennis Crow – take a look – Ogunquitconservation.org – he has done a fantastic job – we even have blogs – currently I am writing these twice a week. If anyone wants to write a few, please do and send me it or them to put on the website.

8. I saw the DOT rep and he assured me that the berms/filters both Pam and Glenn questioned were only temporary and that the new berms/filters would be higher and better.

9. We spent a lot of time discussing the move on the part of some dog owners to have dogs on the beach during the spring, summer and fall. Barbara Daily wants to have a series of 'workshops' on this – the first may be the week after next and will be just for gathering topics. I will keep you posted.

Doug pointed out that the present ordinance represents a compromise made a few years ago; moreover, he said that the dog park built on town land though with volunteer help and contributions, was part of this compromise to allow a place for dogs during the spring, summer and fall.

Bill Lee presented a wealth of material from US Fish and Wildlife, including a definition of 'harassment of an endangered species'; indeed, if piping plovers just see a dog – a predator – this can lead to a dramatic change in their behavior including a change in their egg/chick production – that would constitute 'harassment' – and that comes with hefty fines.

Bill also pointed out the wealth of scientific research citing dog poop as a huge factor in the bacterial contamination of the beach sand and the unique topography of Ogunquit beach with its very narrow beach stand at high tide.

Furthermore, the Conservation Commission was charged by the voters to maintain the health and cleanliness of the beach; research now shows that one single dog 'event' is equal to some 6,940 gull 'events.'

Laura Zietske from Audubon who sees beaches from here to Georgetown, stated at the Board meeting last Tuesday, that it was a pleasure to come to Ogunquit Beach since it was so clean and she would let her 3-year olds play on our beach but not on many others in Maine because of the dog 'events.'

The ConCom has already been involved in a compromise with dog owners and I see that it might be difficult to break the trust placed in us by the voters.

This is not whether we like or dislike dogs – all of us have had dogs at one time or another – but about maintaining the trust placed in us by the voters.

Bill