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PLAN

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HARPSWELL

The Town of Harpswell, which was incorporated in 1758, lies in the northeast part of Casco Bay, bounded on the north by the Town of Brunswick and otherwise isolated from the rest of Cumberland County by the waters of the Bay. Near the western border of the town lies the long peninsula of Harpswell Neck, originally called Merriconeag. Easterly, across Harpswell Sound, are the town's three major islands, linked by bridges; Great (Sebascodegan), Island, Orr's, and Bailey Islands. Over forty smaller islands also lie within the borders of the town. This unique geography has been a dominant feature in the historical development of Harpswell.

From the earliest settlement, the town, lacking cross-roads or a planned center, has not had a central village develop as have many other New England towns. Instead, individual fishing and farming communities have emerged in scattered locations on the Neck and the Islands. The traditional focus for the resident is, and has always been, his neighborhood, his village, or his island.

Harpswell was most famous for her boat and shipbuilding industry which flourished at its height around the time of the Civil War. The greatest visual legacy is the many houses built at this period which, like those clustered in the village of West Harpswell, keep alive the skills of the men who built them.

This thriving business in the community did not overwhelm the town. Harpswell remained a fishing and farming community primarily, and the population rose slowly to its 19th century peak of 1,799 residents in 1870. Other small

of Harpswell's continuing summer tourist business.

Most of the hotels and boarding houses burned down, were torn down, or converted to private residences before 1950, victims of the new mobile society which patronized the tourist cabins or moved about in campers after the two World Wars. Clusters of summer cottages remain on the Harpswell landscape today, many now being converted to year round use. An abrupt drop in population after the first World War continued through the Depression. It was not until the late 1940s that Harpswell began a period of accelerated growth. In 1920, the population was a little less (1,242) than in 1820 (1,253). By 1960, the count was up to 2,032, and the recent census in 1980 shows more than triple the 1920 population with a count of 3,610.

Underlying the recent rapid growth factors for Harpswell, better roads, more job opportunities, consolidated schools, the in-migration of retired persons, is the growth in the use of the automobile since World War II. The freedom of movement in and out of town, plus a relative lack of zoning, has spread Harpswell's population across the landscape in houses and mobile homes on small lots along the major roads, in subdivisions as former farms and woodlots have been developed, and most noticeably, with more and more building in the coastal zone. The density of population per square mile has risen from 53 in 1840 to 147 in 1980.

Harpswell, nevertheless, still retains much of its historic character. In addition to the village clusters and individual old houses from various periods of the town's development, Harpswell still has in many areas the open space, the farm and wood land, the vistas of the sea, which are so important

to the visual integrity of the Town.

An inventory of these historic buildings, sites, and areas in Harpswell is currently underway. Data collected in this inventory will provide information for possible nomination of further buildings and historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places, and create a resource for the community for future planning. Harpswell now has several listings on the Register: The Town House and Kellogg Church in Harpswell Center, the Elijah Kellogg house, The Bailey Island cobwork bridge, Admiral Peary's house on Eagle Island, and most recently, the Merrucoonegan Farm in North Harpswell.

Certainly it is a time to reflect on the changes that easy transportation has brought to Harpswell. We are no longer the self sufficient town of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. The building of the Ewin Narrows bridge has opened the Town to itself and should provide, at last, a chance for the residents of the Neck and the Islands to know each other and their common problems, and to work together for the future in retaining the historic character of the Town of Harpswell.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. The Planning Board should encourage new residential and Commercial development that blends into Harpswell's special landscape in order to retain the character of the Town.

II Various methods may be used to recognize and foster the understanding needed to preserve Harpswell's unique historic qualities.

a) Listing on the National Register serves to identify important historic buildings and areas. While a great honor, it offers little protection. Far better protection can be realized effectively at the local level.

Harpwell should now consider voting to set up a Historical Preservation Commission, representing the different sections of the town, to work with the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the new Harpswell Historical Society, and those neighborhood groups and individuals who would be interested in the creation of an ordinance allowing the establishment of local historic districts.

b) Government and non-profit agencies now have the ability to purchase or accept easements on historic property in order to control future alterations to the structure or total demolition. Such arrangements may be made directly between individual property owners and the organizations involved. This method should be explored further by the Historical Preservation Commission,

3600

TOWN OF

HARPSWELL

POPULATION

U.S. CENSUSES, 1790-1980

3000

2000

1000

3000

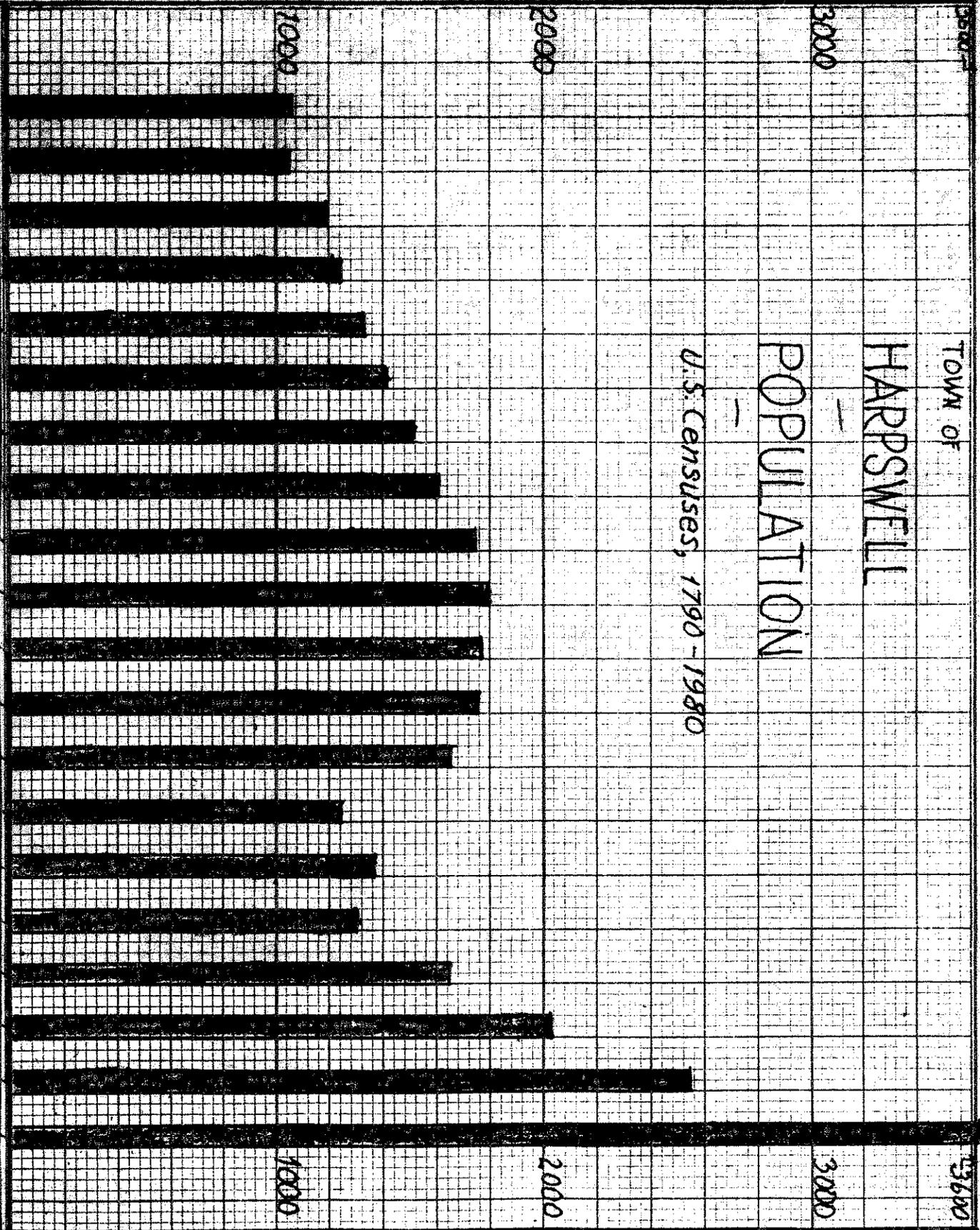
2000

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1790 - 1071
 1800 - 1089
 1810 - 1196
 1820 - 1253
 1830 - 1322
 1840 - 1448
 1850 - 1524
 1860 - 1603
 1870 - 1749
 1880 - 1786
 1890 - 1766
 1900 - 1750
 1910 - 1650
 1920 - 1242
 1930 - 1364
 1940 - 1305
 1950 - 1644
 1960 - 2092
 1970 - 2552
 1980 - 3610

↑
 YEAR: POPN. ↑



HARPSWELL'S POPULATION

GROWTH: Harpswell had 3,610 residents on April 1, 1980, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's preliminary release. This represents a 41% increase since 1970, the largest increase in any decade of the present century in both absolute numbers and percentage. As shown on the following chart covering the censuses from 1790 to the present, the current period of growth began after 1940, following a period of 60 years during which there was a net loss. The recent accelerating growth calls urgently for planning if uncontrolled development is not to lead to deterioration of the quality of life here.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION: On the basis of incomplete data, it can be estimated that roughly three fifths of Harpswell residents live in the Eastern division of the Town: 1,100 on Great Island, 600 on Orr's and 400 on Bailey Island...a total of 2100. Harpswell Neck residents numbered some 1500. Between the censuses of 1970 and 1980 the Neck showed an increase of about 70 percent, while the Islands and Cundy's Harbor increased by about 25%.

YEAR ROUND AND SUMMER POPULATION: There is no official count of the people who come to Harpswell during the summer, as the Census records only those persons living here on April 1. On the basis of numbers of year round and seasonal housing units, it can be conjectured that currently there may be about twice as many people here in summer as in winter. ~~Exi~~ Ten years ago, the ratio may have been two and 2/3 to one. Evidently Harpswell is becoming to an increasing extent a year round community. Common observation supports this inference from Census data; many new year round houses have been built and many summer dwellings winterized. Commuters working in other towns and retired persons have become more numerous.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Background and Direction

Leaders in many areas of society are advising their constituency to, "Get a piece of the Earth", for many reasons such as security, food production, investment, etc. With Harpswells thirty-nine percent population increase in the past decade it appears many people have heeded that advice. Most of these new residents have been middle-upper income level, creating what one resident appropriately dubbed "Economic Zoning". We must endeavor to provide housing opportunity for all income levels, while at the same time retaining our natural beauty and scenic areas which drew these new settlers originally to our town.

Further population growth and housing demand is a certainty. Let us plan responsibly and now to avoid a downtown Harpswell which resembles certain beach towns south of ourselves.

Housing development in Harpswell has with few exceptions, been single family scattered lot. Even in approved sub-divisions, development has been sporadic. Changing family sizes, high-energy costs, and high land prices all indicate that in the future more multi-family housing and smaller, more energy-efficient single family housing will become the norm. Such trends may, in fact, be favorable forces which will help preserve our towns character and rural areas.

Issues

In our committee work, our public meetings, our survey questions, and numerous discussions several areas of concern have evolved.

A. Enforcement

The most consistently expressed concern was the subject of enforcement of not only any new ordinances which might be enacted, but specifically of those already in place. Non-compliance with the plumbing codes in the area of sewage disposal was an often verbalized concern.

B. Low and moderate income housing

The need of an area, or the allowance by appeal in certain areas, of low and moderate income housing is a concern of many. Everyone seems to concede there is a need and a real market for low and moderate income housing, but many maintain an adverse attitude toward such housing.

C. Minimum lot requirements and building standards

Many people have expressed dismay at the lack of any minimum building standards in the town. Another question to be addressed is whether the minimum lot requirements should be extended to cover all construction not just that in subdivisions.

D. Cluster housing

Many people have expressed concern that the town has no ordinance or policy to encourage or discourage different types of housing development. It is the feeling of the residential committee that a policy encouraging cluster housing would be beneficial in preserving open space and maintaining the town's character. Lack of a definite procedure and policy concerning condominium development was an area specifically mentioned.

Recommendations

1.

Establishment of a committee to study enforcement procedures and whether or not there is need for a full time codes enforcement officer. This committee to make a public report and hold public meetings if they are considered necessary.

Town Government

Town Officers

The Town of Harpswell is governed by a three-member Board of Selectmen who are elected annually at Town Meeting for one-year terms. The Selectmen also act as assessors, codes enforcement officers, and overseers of the poor. A regular town meeting is held each March when voters of the town meet to act on town business, hear reports of town committees, and elect town officials. Special town meetings may be scheduled by the Selectmen as they are needed at other times during the year. For Maine towns with populations comparable to Harpswell's, the Selectman-Town Meeting form of government is customary.

Our local government is financed largely by the general property tax. The property tax rises only as fast as the demand for services rises from year to year. The tax rate is computed each year on the expenditures authorized at town meeting and the SAD 75 budget meeting. The Selectmen, acting in their capacity as assessors, are responsible for making periodic on-site inspections of every parcel of land in the town. In 1980, every one of the 4000-odd parcels was visited and inspected by the assessors. At this writing, property in Harpswell is assessed at 75% of its fair market value.

In addition to electing the Selectmen, voters also elect the Town Treasurer, Town Clerk, and two Tax Collectors, all of whom have one-year terms, and the Road Commissioner, who has a three-year term. Harpswell elects five representatives to the Board of SAD 75, who serve staggered three-year terms.

Town officers who are appointed by the Selectmen or are hired with their approval are the Deputy Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters (Western Division), Recycling Plant Operator and his assistants, Canine Control Officer, Shellfish Warden, Constables, Health Officer, Director of Civil Defense, Plumbing Inspectors, and Tree Warden. Selectmen are also responsible for appointing members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Law Enforcement Commission, Shellfish Committee, and Health Committee.

Recommendations

1. Selectmen's terms, now one-year, should be changed to three-year rotating terms, insuring that some experienced Selectmen are always on the Board.
2. Tax collection should become a full-time job at a single location. The job could continue to be shared by two people.
3. A part-time Welfare Officer should be hired to work with Selectmen.

4. The Selectmen should appoint a committee to define and write out the responsibilities and duties of town officers and committees.

Town Offices

Since the 1850's, town business has been conducted at the town office in the Town Building at Harpswell Center. The building's location puts it at quite a distance for many residents. The office itself is reached by a narrow flight of stairs, making it inaccessible to many handicapped and elderly citizens, and the building has no plumbing. Furthermore, the small space available makes for cramped public meetings. Various town officers conduct their business in their homes, which are widely spread, throughout the town, a situation taken for granted in past years but one which can result in confusion for newcomers and a considerable expenditure of time and gasoline for all residents.

Therefore, it is recommended that the question of constructing a new town building should be reopened. In 1976, voters defeated a proposal to build a town office building with an auditorium on the Harris property, owned by the town, off the Mountain Road. Since that time, town meetings have outgrown all existing meeting halls in town. Harpswell began holding its town meetings at Mt. Ararat School in Topsham, in 1980.

The Town Government sub-committee suggests the benefits of a centrally-located building with adequate office space and meeting rooms, as well as space for storing historic and current town records. It discussed the possibility of the need in the future for a central dispatching area and space for police, fire, and ambulance equipment. The report points to the advantages of regular daily town office hours and a location near the Recycling Center on land already owned by the town. At this writing, the town building sinking fund totalled around \$59,000 in Certificates of Deposit.

Recommendations

1. A Town Building committee should be appointed by the Selectmen to make plans for a town office building to present to the town at a designated time. Feelings of the townspeople should be determined at a public meeting or with a questionnaire before

the Committee begins to draw up specific plans.

Town Ordinances

Most of the town ordinances now in effect have been adopted over the past 15 years as the result of new state laws and a growing sense in town of the pressure of residential and commercial development. Harpswell's most comprehensive ordinances are the Shoreline Zoning Ordinance, passed in June, 1974, regulating building and commercial activity within 250' of the shore, and the Subdivision Ordinance, also passed in June, 1974, regulating residential development when a piece of property is divided into three or more lots to be offered for sale.

The Shellfish Ordinance, adopted in December, 1978, controls the harvesting of clams and mussels, and provides for hiring a Shellfish Warden to enforce the Ordinance.

Other ordinances relate to Flood Control, Dutch Elm Disease Control, Overnight Parking, the Planning Board, Plumbing Inspection, Signs, Amusements, and Separation of Solid Waste. It is generally felt that it is difficult to enforce our ordinances adequately at present. The Selectmen are responsible for most codes enforcement in the town, but it is not reasonable to expect that they can ensure that there is total compliance.

Recommendations

1. Any new ordinance should be well-written, with a clear definition of who is responsible for its enforcement and what price-tag enforcement will carry.

Penalties for non-compliance should be clearly spelled out.

Whenever possible, the initial responsibility for enforcement should fall to some other committee than the Board of Selectmen, who could then act as a back-up enforcement body.

2. All plumbing permits, whether for septic system repairs or for new installations, should be followed up by an on-site inspection by the Plumbing Inspector before systems are covered.

Recycling Center

The Strawberry Creek Recycling Center, opened in the spring of 1979, has allowed the town to close down its open burning dumps. With good management and the cooperation of residents, it has been coping successfully with solid waste disposal since that time. Buyers have been found for various materials, such as glass, tin cans, and waste paper, and a modest annual income is realized from these sales.

Some problems which were not originally anticipated include the dumping of trash at the gates when the Center is closed; burner build-up as a result of large loads of wet garbage; incomplete separation of materials; and the rapid filling of the brush area as a result of land-clearing for new building.

Recommendations

1. The town should buy a second burner for most efficient use of operating time.
2. The Selectmen should consider charging a fee for truck loads of slow-burning materials.
3. Regulations relating to the Recycling Center should be printed on sheets for distribution at the Center, stores, post offices, and the Town House.

Town Landings

In Maine, unless otherwise specified in the deed, property runs to the low water mark. Originally each Harpswell farm had its own hauling-out place. Public hauling-out places were needed also, as there were no roads. The town landings were, and are, just a narrow right-of-way to and from the water, with no wharves or other facilities. After inland transportation was developed, many town landings were little used and even forgotten. The Harpswell Conservation Commission in 1970-1973 identified 14 town landings and had them surveyed. A number of other town landings are known to exist throughout the town, but further surveying was not considered feasible because of the lack of sufficient records to do an accurate job.

Today there seem to be adequate public and private facilities available to Harpswell residents for pleasure boating. While information on landing locations is available at the town office,

much

There is concern that since ~~most~~ of our shoreline is changing hands at high prices, fishermen may eventually find it impossible to keep their shorefront property. To help support marine-related industry, the town may find it wants to consider such options as restriction on the sale of shorefront property in certain areas, public ownership of selected pieces of shorefront, and the expansion of key town landings.

Recommendation

The town should be alert to the problem of diminishing access to the shore for commercial fishing and should consider such options as a town sinking fund for expanding public water access, or expansion of certain existing town landings.

Roads and Transportation

In 1978, according to the Department of Transportation, Harpswell had 31.5 miles of state-aid roads, 22.3 miles of town roads, and 53.4 miles of private roads. Traffic volume counts showed that between 1970 and 1976, volume increased 44% on Rte 24, from 2560 to 3540 vehicles a day, and 61% on Rte 123, from 1155 to 1985 vehicles a day.

At this writing, no specific road projects were considered necessary by the Road Commissioner in the coming few years beyond normal maintenance on the town roads. The one project scheduled in town at this time by the Department of Transportation is the Gurnet Bridge reconstruction.

Transportation

A survey of area public transportation needs is being taken by the Regional Planning Office in Bath. It should be kept in mind that public transportation may become necessary as fuel prices rise. The town should consider such alternatives as participating in any economically-sound program of regional transportation or in contributing to a privately-operated transportation program.

TOWN SERVICES

Most of the services available to the residents of Harpswell are provided by volunteer or regional agencies. The Town contributes to a number of these provider agencies, but it is primarily responsible only for police protection, solid waste disposal, and welfare services.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police: All of Harpswell is served by the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department. The Town has a contract with the Department which presently provides two men with full equipment including vehicles. In addition, the Department provides a third man. This means that Harpswell is patrolled 20 hours a day by at least one deputy. The men work twelve hour shifts, ten hours of which must be spent on patrol. The Department feels that because of Harpswell's increasing population, it will probably be necessary to increase this coverage to four men (five on weekends) by 1985. The Law Enforcement Committee, appointed by the Selectmen, is charged with determining Town needs and evaluating services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Law Enforcement Committee and the Sheriff's Department investigate ways to improve communication between the Department and the townspeople. More frequent and detailed reporting by the Committee and the presence of a Deputy at Town Meeting to answer questions are recommended.

Ambulance: Ambulance service is provided to the Town by three volunteer ambulance associations, one each in Cundy's Harbor, on Harpswell Neck, and Off's/Bailey. The ambulances are on call twenty four hours

a day; the service is free, the total budget for the three in 1980 was \$7,000, and the attendants receive various degrees of first aid training. Future needs are expected to be newer vehicles and more personnel.

FIRE Fire Departments: The Town is presently served by four volunteer fire departments. During 1980, the Fire Department Planning Committee, authorized by the voters at the 1980 Town Meeting, met to discuss the current status and future needs of the Town fire protection service. As a result of the Committee's work, the departments are making changes which will improve the insurance ratings of those property owners who live within three miles of the fire departments. Furthermore, geographical areas of responsibility for each department have been inventoried and rosters of trained personnel have been drawn up, and potential sites for 'dry' hydrants are being identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS (by the Committee)

1. That the departments continue to plan together to coordinate their efforts.
2. That a system of 'dry' hydrants be studied for improving access to water supplies, especially in winter.
3. That fire departments continually reassess their facilities and operations with a view to upgrading insurance qualifications where possible.
4. That a survey of projected needs for the next ten years be made.
5. That the Town be asked to increase its support of the fire departments both for operating costs and purchase of special equipment.
6. That all town roads be marked with signs and that mile markers be installed on Route 123 and the Basin Point Road.

HEALTH

Regional health services that are available to residents of Harpswell include CHANS (Community Health and Nursing Service), Maine Public Health Nursing Service, Sea Me Bus, Meals on Wheels, Youth Development Association, Bath-Brunswick Mental Health, Jesse Albert Memorial Dental Clinic, Southern Coastal Family Planning, and the Riverview Day Care Association.

The Harpswell Health Council, whose members represent the different areas of town and the various health agencies, is appointed by the Selectmen, and is charged with determining Harpswell's health needs and available services. The Health Council is aware of the need to monitor service to the ill and elderly, in particular, the Sea Me Bus and Meals on Wheels, to ensure that these people's needs are being met.

RECREATION

The Town supports a swim program for all elementary students in the Harpswell Schools as well as a summer swim program. Baseball and youth hockey programs are also supported by the Town. Private donations sponsor Scouts, Campfire Girls, and a playground and tennis program for children and adults at Fulle Field in Harpswell Center. While it is felt that in general Harpswell's recreational needs are being adequately met at this time, and there is no need now for a Town Recreational Committee, it would be helpful if the Town officials made available a list of outdoor swim areas in town that are available to Harpswell residents.

CULTURAL

Harpswell contributes annually to the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. In return, residents of the Town are entitled to free Library service. 1,100 townspeople held library cards in 1979. There are also privately maintained libraries on Orr's Island and in Cundy's Harbor.

The Harpswell Historical Society and the Pejepscot Historical Society, which receives Town support, are custodians of the Town's historical heritage.

It seems to be the feeling that services in a town the size of Harpswell can be adequately provided through private and volunteer groups with reasonable financial support from the Town to supplement private donations. In this way, Town responsibility for these services can be kept at a manageable level.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The town of Harpswell has no distinct business area as such; businesses are spread over the town as a whole. There are areas of more concentration than others, such as Cundy's Harbor, Bailey Island, and Harpswell Center. However, since the figures show that about half of the commerce and industry in Harpswell is marine related, most of these industries are on or near the water. Of the 312 businesses in Harpswell there are approximately 150 commercial fishermen and wholesale fish buyers, with another 11 businesses that are related directly to the water. It could be said that almost all the businesses in Harpswell are related to the fact that Harpswell has 186 miles of shoreline.

Harpswell is protected from large scale industrial development by its own natural physical barriers. There are, however, no real ordinances or statutes controlling growth, large developments, or industrial expansion. The town's 186 miles of shoreline is protected only by the state shoreline zoning laws. In planning for the future of Harpswell it should be borne in mind that both the tourist and fishing industries are related directly to the water; that the individuality of the small businesses in town relates directly to the character and flavor of Harpswell; and that local access to the shore is very important.

PROPOSALS

- 1) The Planning Board should write a site plan review ordinance which considers the lack of fresh water and drainage needed by certain businesses; protects the town from tourist overload and related problems including

traffic; and, above all, preserves the character of the town as it is.

2) The Planning Board should consider identifying those areas of town which could be designated as suitable for commercial development.

Two additional short sections are not in hand yet. They are Employment Data and a breakdown of businesses by type.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

An understanding of Harpswell's natural resources is essential to planning for future development of the town. The factors to consider are: soil characteristics, topography, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and forest reserves. The following inventory and evaluation of these resources should prove of value in establishing land use policies for the town.

According to the Midcoast Regional Planning Commission, Harpswell has a total area of 46,976 acres. This area is comprised of 12,224 acres (26%) of land, and 34,752 acres (74%) of water. The land area is further broken down as to type of use:

<u>USE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL AREA</u>
residential	2,686	22.00%
highways and roads	652	5.00%
pipeline right-of-way	54	.44%
military	118	.96%
recycling center	110	.94%
agriculture	141	1.15%
forest	7,871	64.35%
quarries	28	.23%
wildlife management	262	2.14%
undeveloped	302	2.47%

The greatest percentage of land is in woodland, comprised of many privately owned woodlots and tree farms. 22% of land is in residential use; this figure far exceeds the regional average of 6.6%. This can be explained by our geography, which, with its islands and peninsulas, gives us a shoreline of 186 miles. Consequently, Harpswell has been seen as an attractive place to summer for over a hundred years, thereby accounting for the dense concentration of summer cottages on our shorefront. It is important to note that the primary resource

Of the town is the water, including approximately 2500 acres of clam flats.

SOIL

The analysis of Harpswell's soils presented here is taken from the Soil Survey of Cumberland County, Maine, compiled by the Soil Conservation Service of the USDA. Harpswell has seven major soil series: Buxton, Hollis, Lyman, Peru, Scantic, Swanton, and Walpole. Lyman is the predominant soil series of the town. All are glacial till, which is primarily fine sandy loam, often including high amounts of gravel and/or rock, and with excessive drainage. Lyman is also shallow to bedrock with rock outcrops. It is evaluated as "very severe", which means that it has one or more limitations of such magnitude that using land with this type of soil for sewage disposal systems (filter fields and sewage lagoons) and cemeteries would require a major financial outlay. This type of soil is designated as "severe" for cottage and camping sites; this means that it is limited by a hazard difficult to overcome. The six other soil types are no better than Lyman for sewage disposal and cottage or camping sites.

FRESH WATER

Minor water sheds are located along the length of the Harpswell Neck and the three major islands (Great, Orr's, and Bailey). The capability of aquifers located in Harpswell to support present and future development is currently being surveyed by a professional geologist. The soils of the town would indicate that overdevelopment could readily result in the pollution by waste disposal of fresh water sources, as well as

contamination of coastal areas of vital marine resources.

OPEN SPACE AND TOWN OWNED PROPERTIES

Harpswell contains a very limited amount of open space available for public use. Included in this category is:

The Giant Staircase, Bailey Island, deeded to the town
 110 acres, Great Island (site of the recycling center)
 10 acres on Longreach Mountain, Great Island, deeded to the town
 Town Common, Harpswell Center (site of Town Meeting House)
 Whalebeck Picnic Area, Orr's Island, owned by the town
 Lower Goose Island, owned by the town
 Elm Island, owned by the town
 town landings
 Eagle Island
 State Park on Allen Point Road
 Stover's Point Marsh, owned by the Harpswell Garden Club
 Anne Frances Hodgkins Park, owned by the Harpswell Garden Club

CRITICAL AREAS

The Critical Areas Program of the State Planning Office has researched and registered the following areas in Harpswell:

Turnip Island- tern nesting area
 Lookout Poing- rock outcrops vital to geological study
 Barnes Island- seabird nesting area on the northern end
 Upper Goose Island- seabird nesting area
 Gosling Island- scenic beauty
 Land's End, Bailey Island- rare marine invertebrate habitat
 Stover's Point Marsh

RECOMMENDATIONS

The future of the town of Harpswell will be shaped by the decisions made for land use. If the town is to retain its characteristic beauty and naturalness, an understanding and awareness of the natural resources, their capabilities and their limitations is vital on the part of those who are responsible for all phases of future development. Therefore, it is recommended that the Conservation Commission inventory those natural resources and areas which the townspeople feel should be protected, and evaluate available natural resource and open space protection.

Conclusion

In order to be useful, a Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed annually. The review committee will need to assess the progress which has been made on the most recent recommendations, make inquiries of appropriate town committees about recommendations which still need implementing, and propose any alterations in the body of the Plan and its recommendations which seem appropriate for the coming year. These alterations should be prepared in the form of amendments to the Plan and be presented to the town at town meeting. It is suggested that a complete revision of the Comprehensive Plan be done every five years, to accomodate changes which are bound to occur.

Recommendations

1. The Selectmen should appoint a Comprehensive Plan Review Board to review the current Plan revision annually in November. This Board is to: i)check on progress toward implementing existing recommendations; ii)propose alterations in the Plan; and iii)present any amendments considered necessary at town meeting.
2. The Comprehensive Plan Review Board should revise the Plan completely in 1986.