

HARPSWELL *BULLETIN*

News for Harpswell Residents & Property Owners from the Town Office – May '13

Town Web Site: www.harpswell.maine.gov

MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROVED

Voters at the 2013 Annual Town Meeting in March approved municipal appropriations of \$4,262,184, down 2.2 % from prior year appropriations. In addition, voters authorized a borrowing of up to \$220,000 for the acquisition of a public access easement on Cedar Beach Road and a portion of Robinhood Beach. Certain conditions must be met before the funds are borrowed and released to those from whom easements are obtained. Voters also approved an additional \$76,000 of funding for the construction of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) garage to house the intercept vehicle used by paramedics. The Planning Board has approved the site for the EMS garage near the lower entrance to the Recycling Center facility with construction likely to begin in early summer. Not approved at the Town Meeting, was an appropriation of \$40,000 for the removal of the water tower at Mitchell Field.

TOWN MEETING ELECTION RESULTS

Richard Daniel won election to the Board of Selectmen for a three-year term. He replaces outgoing Selectman James Henderson who served as a member of the Board for six years. Rosalind Knight was re-elected to a three-year term as Town Clerk and Jill Caldwell was newly elected to a three-year term as Tax Collector replacing Martha York who retired after working over 27 years for the Town of Harpswell in tax collection. With respect to the School Board, Linda Hall was re-elected to a three-year term.



SCHOOL BUDGET ADOPTION MEETING AND VALIDATION VOTE

The District-wide school budget adoption meeting has been set for Thursday, May 23, 6:30 p.m. at the Orion Performing Arts Center, Mt. Ararat Middle School, in Topsham. The total proposed budget approved by the Directors is \$34,721,139 with Harpswell's share slated to be \$6,882,946, up \$241,033 or 3.63% from the prior fiscal year. The budget approved at the May 23 meeting will be voted on district-wide by secret ballot on Tuesday, June 11, in what is referred to as a validation vote. Polls in Harpswell will be open from 8am to 8pm at three voting locations: Merriconeag Grange for Harpswell Neck and Mountain Road voters; Old Orr's Island Schoolhouse for Orr's-Bailey Island voters and Cundy's Harbor Community Building for Great Island voters.

MUNICIPAL REFERENDUM QUESTION ON JUNE 11, 2013

Also on June 11, 2013 there will be a municipal referendum question voted on by secret ballot which reads as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to accept gifts and grants for the Mitchell Field Bandstand special revenue account and to appropriate the same for bandstand-related programming and improvements as the Board of Selectmen deems appropriate from time to time." A public hearing on this referendum question will be held at the end of May (likely May 30). Please check the Town's website for upcoming details. In March 2010, voters authorized (1) the construction of a bandstand at Mitchell Field at no cost to the Town and (2) the Board of Selectmen to accept delivery of a bill of sale for the bandstand upon completion of construction. With the Bandstand nearing completion, a dedication ceremony is being organized for Sunday, June 16, from 2-4pm. The Bandstand organization plans to gift its remaining funds to the Town of Harpswell for bandstand related programming and improvements. The Board of Selectmen will appoint a Bandstand Committee to advise on bandstand-related matters, including the development of a summer concert series to be sponsored by the Town, at no cost to the taxpayers.



SINGLE-STREAM RECYCLING

The Board of Selectmen endorsed a conversion to Single-Stream Recycling to occur on August 1. What this means for you is **NO MORE SORTING OF RECYCLABLES**. All of your recyclable materials can be mixed together and you will be able to deposit them in one designated **RECYCLING** hopper at the facility. The facility will be able to collect all plastics from # 1 through # 7 for recycling not just # 1 and # 2 as has been past practice. We ask that the materials be loose, since plastic bags will not be accepted by the service provider. The conversion to single-stream is expected to increase recycling rates by making it easier to recycle. While additional transportation costs will occur, those costs will be offset by savings in personnel, equipment and capital building costs over time. As the August 1 date approaches, more information will be made available on Harpswell Community TV, the Town's website and at the Recycling Center.



PROTECTING WATER QUALITY: THE PROBLEM WITH LAWNS

Who knew? 1/3 of ocean acidification comes from runoff from the shore. You may be contributing to the decline in the clam harvest in Harpswell and Casco Bay.

How? Tests show that sea water is becoming more acidic, which weakens or simply dissolves the shells of small clams, oysters, and other shellfish. We also know there is a correlation between lower pH (higher acidity) and higher nitrogen. Local testing confirms that pesticides and the nutrients in fertilizers are entering our coastal waters, using up oxygen needed by marine life.¹ The result of excess nitrogen runoff is beginning to turn coves into expanses of green slime. *Nitrogen makes the grass green. It's not supposed to make the ocean green!*

When you treat your lawn, you're not just treating the lawn.

You treat the lawn. Then it rains or you turn on your sprinkler. Runoff carries excess soluble fertilizers and pesticides into the Bay. **Bad news for fish, clams, and lobsters.**

What can we do about it?

In an effort to reduce excess nitrogen from entering our waterways, citizens at the 2013 Town Meeting passed an ordinance limiting the application of fertilizer in the 250 ft. shoreland zone to a slow release, organic fertilizer, lime or compost.

You can help Harpswell fight nitrogen pollution and reduce *coastal acidification*. Join your neighbors—to build robust lawns and protect the health of your community – **naturally**.

Tips:

1. Begin by treating with care - **Fertilize frugally.**
 - Before adding fertilizer in the spring, take a soil test to see what nutrients, if any, your lawn needs. *Fertilize your lawn only* if a soil test shows a need. If a need for nitrogen is indicated, look for 10-0-0 on the bag.
 - Don't apply fertilizer when heavy rain is predicted.
 - Lawns older than ten years generally don't need lawn chemicals.
 - Fertilizing at the end of the summer builds a stronger plant for next year.
 - Overseed bare spots with fescue grasses to crowd out weeds.
2. **Water wisely** and only when necessary to penetrate the soil and promote deeper root systems. Water deeply (.5 to .75 inches) in the morning, only once or twice a week.
3. **Mow high.** Cutting grass at 3 – 3 ½ inches encourages longer, stronger roots.
 - Leave clippings where they fall. They are nature's fertilizers.
4. **Keep water on your property**
 - Where possible, leave natural undergrowth and leaf litter in place to encourage absorption of water.
 - Capture stormwater runoff from roofs and lawns with rain barrels and rain gardens.
 - Create buffer strips using shrubs and trees to hold back soil and stormwater runoff.
 - Consider porous materials for driveways and walkways.

¹ Friends of Casco Bay

HIGHEST ANNUAL TIDE

Voters at the Annual Town Meeting approved changing the term “maximum high water line” to “highest annual tide (HAT)” in Harpswell’s Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. While “maximum high water line” was once commonly used in State law, it has been replaced by the term “highest annual high tide” as used in the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). HAT is considered a more descriptive way of explaining the upper limit of a tidal area than is maximum high water and changing to HAT makes the language more consistent with Federal and State law and potentially avoids inconsistent interpretation or application.

The highest annual tide typically occurs with the new moon. Highest annual tide is not the average high tide that occurs twice each day. The highest annual tide elevation can be determined by professionals; however, in lieu of hiring a professional there is a simple method for locating highest annual tide that can be performed by property owners with a few simple tools. Specific instructions for measuring HAT are available from the Code Enforcement Office or online at the Town’s website (see Code Enforcement Office).

PARTICIPATE IN THE HARPSWELL HIKING CHALLENGE ON JUNE 1 & 2

The Harpswell Hiking Challenge is on for June 1 & 2 in celebration of National Trail’s Day. Eight trails, two days and tons of fun! The home trail is the Cliff Trail (beginning in the back parking lot at the Town Office) where there will be registration sheets, Harpswell Guide books, light refreshments, water and restroom facilities. Hope to see you there!



JOIN THE HARPSWELL COMMUNITY GARDEN AT MITCHELL FIELD

Are you looking for a place to plant a garden? For a chance to build community in Harpswell? For a meaningful volunteer experience for all skill levels and ages? To learn how to grow vegetables? The Harpswell Community Garden brings together a community of gardeners, both novice and experienced. The garden, which is located at Mitchell Field off Harpswell Neck Road, offers two sizes of rental plots, a heritage orchard, and a Common Garden, where volunteers grow vegetables to donate to local people in need. Harpswell Community Garden is a Town-sponsored recreational program administered by a group comprised of two members of the Mitchell field Implementation Committee and other volunteers from the community at large.

The garden is in its beginning years, and we need your input and support! Please let us know what you want from a community garden in Harpswell by taking a short survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/C3FM8MC>. You can learn more about renting a plot or volunteering at www.harpswell.maine.gov or by contacting Cyndy Bush at 725-2660 or bushcyndy@aol.com or Jane Covey at 725-5601 or coveybrown@gmail.com or Recreation Director Gina Perow at gperow@town.harpswell.me.us

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

FEMA has informed communities in York and Cumberland County that it plans to release preliminary updated floodplain maps at the end of May. The Town has engaged Robert Gerber of Ransom Environmental to monitor this process and advise the Town with respect to the work performed by FEMA. The Town will announce receipt of the preliminary maps so that coastal property owners may review and consider whether they need to appeal the proposed floodplain designation for their property. The Town of Harpswell has adopted a Floodplain Ordinance which enables its property owners to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. This flood insurance is required only if there is a federally backed mortgage on a building in a mapped floodplain. If there is no mortgage, there is no requirement for this flood insurance.

COMMITTEE OPENINGS

The Town of Harpswell is well served by many talented volunteers on various Town Committees. Consider joining a committee to share your ideas and expertise. There are currently openings on the following Committees or Boards: Budget Advisory, Comprehensive Plan Implementation, Mitchell Field Implementation, Planning Board (associate), Bandstand, and Recycling. Mission statements are available for review online at harpswell.maine.gov under the Committee section. If interested, please submit an application form, also available online.

JULY 16 MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

The Harpswell Marine Resources Committee July meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 7pm, (location to be determined). The focus of the meeting will be on preserving access to the shore by bringing shellfish harvesters and landowners together to better understand common public access issues. The meeting will be facilitated by a Harpswell commercial shellfish harvester and instructors from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. More information regarding this upcoming meeting will be forthcoming.



LIVESTREAMING OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS

By the end of May, the Town plans to offer livestreaming of regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's Meetings. A link on the Town's website will take users of devices with an internet connection (computer, tablet, or smart phone) to a site where the meeting can be viewed in real time. Check the Town's home page at harpswell.maine.gov for more information.

MEMORIAL DAY, MONDAY, MAY 27: PARADE, 11AM, BEGINS AT LOOKOUT POINT ROAD
WREATH TOSSING CEREMONY, 10AM, EWING NARROWS BRIDGE