



**MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024**  
**OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE FREEHOLDERS AND COMMONALTY**  
**OF THE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON**

Present: Francis J. Bock, Clerk  
Bill Taylor, Deputy Clerk  
Jim Grimes, Deputy Clerk  
John Aldred  
Patrice Dalton  
Ben Dollinger  
Celia Josephson

Absent: David Cataletto  
Tim Garneau

Present: Alyson Follenius, Trustee Secretary  
Arlene Tesar, Trustee Secretary  
Chris Carillo, Counsel  
Tom Flight, Town Council Member and liaison to the Trustees

**The Clerk opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:30 p.m.**

**The Clerk requested roll call.** All Trustees were present at roll call except David Cataletto and Tim Garneau who were not in attendance.

**The Clerk transitioned to the Public Comment:** There was no one present for public comment.

**The Clerk transitioned to New Business:** There was no new business.

**The Clerk transitioned to Old Business:** There was no old business to discuss.

**The Clerk transitioned to Committee Reports:**

**Three Mile Harbor:**

The Board received a request from First Coastal on behalf of Landfall Property Owner's Association to remove the existing bluff staircase and install a new staircase in a new location. John Aldred shared an image of the plans on screen and provided a summary of the project plans and rationale. The current staircase exists in an area of bluff which is washed out and the existing staircase has experienced significant damage. The existing structure

also lands fairly far out onto the beach and is secured by heavy cement piers. The entire structure will be removed and a new staircase will be constructed to the west. The path leading to the staircase will also be moved to the West. Aldred explained that all of the nearby roadways pitch toward the current staircase and is causing the washout. The new location will still have the staircase begin at a higher peak. The majority of the staircase will tuck in parallel to the bluff and land closer to the toe of the bluff. Jim Grimes questioned whether Aldred felt this could be voted upon then or if the board should wait for other agencies to weigh in. Aldred clarified that the Trustee approval is essentially for where the staircase lands on the beach. Ben Dollinger made a motion to approve the permit request. Jim Grimes seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**PEP:**

Patrice Dalton and John Aldred updated the board regarding the Peconic Estuary Partnership meeting. Dalton shared the first presentation provided was a retrospective study of eel grass surveys conducted between 2009-2019. Eel grass was inventoried in seven locations in the Peconic. Variables studied included water temperature, hard structures and nitrogen levels. The data sets were then consolidated into one place. The data can then be searched and used by a variety of organizations. This work is a masters student's project and is partially funded by PEP. The project should be complete at the end of April.

The second part of the PEP meeting was a presentation by Dr. Nicole Maher discussing how salt marshes cannot thrive without a solid and integrated root system. Dalton summarized Dr. Maher's hypothesis that the peat in the marshes is causing water retention around the root systems rather than proper drainage of the water off the marsh. This was likely from human intervention on the marsh from harvesting the salt grasses and sea level rise. Jim Grimes added the practice of salt hay harvesting had continued for several hundred years. Additionally, Grimes acknowledged the creation of the ditches in the marsh by humans has likely contributed to the mosquito larvae problem the marsh is facing. There was further discussion/speculation around historical activity on the marshes including grazing of cattle. Grimes mentioned a practice in Nova Scotia around 300 years ago where dykes were installed with one way valves so that when the tide came in the valves would close and the water would flush out with the outgoing tide. Eventually, this practice allowed the soil composition to change so that hay and then field crops could be grown. John Aldred added that the mosquito breeding areas are behind obvious dykes on the Accabonac marsh suggesting that type of work may have been done there as well. Dr. Maher is proposing the creation of a plan to drain the areas of the marsh which retain water. The proposal is seeking funding from various sources. The current proposal seeks to take a soft approach to hand dig runnels versus using heavy machinery. Another possibility would be to add sediment to the marsh, though this would be unlikely in Accabonac as it would require a situation where dredging was occurring, and the marsh would benefit from the dredge spoil. Aldred mentioned that Tom Iwanejko, of Suffolk County Vector, has used this method in Seatuck. The marsh would be flooded with dredge spoil to raise the elevation of the marsh. Bill Taylor mentioned this could be done if dredging occurred near the launch ramp in Accabonac. Grimes asked if there has been any follow-up research from Seatuck because if this process has worked elsewhere, the information could be used to do a pilot program in Accabonac. Bill Taylor suggested using the data from the soil composition analysis being performed on the soils near the boat launch in Accabonac and using the material to add to the marsh. Nicole Maher has a proposal into NOAA and the EPA for funding for her project. The hope is that the funding will come through for Accabonac. The Board will follow up with Iwanejko regarding the Seatuck project.

Jim Grimes asked the Board to circle back to New Business as Tom Flight was in the Audience. Flight acknowledged that he was present as the liaison to the Trustee Board from the Town Board. Celia Josephson asked a question of Flight pertaining to a topic which was raised at the Energy and Sustainability Committee meeting. There was a general discussion regarding what the committee is currently working on.

Jim Grimes added there are pump out boat supplies needed for the upcoming season. Grimes would like to add some additional supplies to the proposed list and will speak with the senior pump out boat captain. The current

total for supplies totals approximately \$1,400. Francis Bock questioned whether Grimes wanted to increase the approval amount to \$2,000.

The conversation shifted and Jim Grimes updated the board regarding the status of Georgica Pond. The cut is still open. Bistran's is still working to clear the sand off of the beach and should be finished in the next 7-10 days.

Francis Bock would like to add to the Pump Out boat expenditures. Bock would like to purchase a power washer for the purposes of cleaning the pump out boat and Trustee truck. Bock felt it would be a good tool to have on hand as the Trustees continue to participate in local community parades. John Aldred made a motion to approve \$2,500 to purchase pump out boat supplies. Ben Dollinger seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Ben Dollinger shared with the board that the parade supplies arrived, and he believes more candy is needed. Dollinger asked for an additional \$150 to get another bag of candy.

**The clerk transitioned to Administrative:**

**Payment of bills:** There were no bills to be paid.

**Financials:** There were no financials to review.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the meeting of February 12, 2024 were available for review. John Aldred made a motion to accept the minutes. Celia Josephson seconded the minutes and it was unanimously approved.

The Board received a notice from the ZBA of a hearing for a proposal from property owners on Atlantic Ave adjacent to the Trustee Road. John Aldred initiated a discussion regarding a prior proposed request from the prior homeowners to take access from the Trustee Road. The prior homeowners abandoned the project and Aldred questioned whether that tentative approval would follow the property. Jim Grimes asked Chris Carillo to clarify. Carillo clarified that that approval was voided when the project was abandoned. The board discussed sending a notice to the new homeowner to notify that that approval did not exist in perpetuity. Additionally, Aldred brought up the matter that the applicants did not properly notify the Trustees. Carillo advised the Trustees that they may provide an objection at the beginning of the hearing stating such. The conversation continued with Carillo asking for clarification as to how the board received notice of this new project. The conversation continued to update the new board members on the former application. Carillo also provided a reminder that while the Trustees do not have jurisdiction over projects not on Trustee property but as adjacent property owners, the Trustees have authority to comment on applications. Carillo also suggested that moving forward the language of the ZBA permit application could clearly state that neighboring property owners, including governmental agencies such as the Trustees must be notified.

Ben Dollinger made motion to close the meeting. Celia Josephson seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**The meeting closed at 7:31 p.m.**