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Bank Building, 20 Centre Street, Middleborough, Massachusetts 02346

## MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Small Conference Room

Middleborough Town Hall

Meeting called to order at 7:06 PM.

Wardens Present: Bill Orphanos, Tom Barron, Ron Burgess, David Cavanaugh.

Absent: Brad Day, Bruce Chase.

Observers Present: None

Visitors: Louise Dery-Wells.

### Unanticipated:

1. Dave was contacted by a reporter seeking this year's numbers and why the numbers were low. It was noted that last year, most runs were low and we did not have numbers from around the state and region yet for this year. Speculation was that it was very warm water at sea led to confusion. We also came off a couple of drought summers.
2. A citizen previously reported that a herring information kiosk sign was leaning against the wall of the Town Manager's office and wondered if it could be displayed in Town Hall. Ron noted that was the original intent. He talked to the Town Manager and the sign will be displayed. Ron also gave him a quick overview of the Commission and our activities.
3. We received an email from Tricia Cassidy (ConCom agent) that MBTA wanted to remove ballast from the river when water was suitable (previously planned for last year as part of the SRPEDD Nemasket sedimentation work) and wanted our input concerning disruption of herring. Tom noted that he was on the committee with SRPEDD about this work and had no knowledge. Motion by Tom to report there would be no disruption to the fry. Second: Dave. UNANIMOUS. Tom will notify Tricia.
4. Dave noted that two wardens (Dave and Bill) and all four observers' term expire at the end of the month. There was no agenda item to recommend reappointments. Dave suggested that Bill notify the observers, and he and Bill, to contact Middleborough and

Lakeville selectmen to request reappointment, if they choose to continue. We still have one opening for a Middleborough resident warden

**New Business:**

1. Motion by Tom to accept the minutes of the August 8 meeting. Second: Ron.  
UNANIMOUS.

2. Dave reported that John Sheppard of DMF had a certain way of entering data for count estimates. Dave suggested changing our counting form to mirror John's order of data entry. Also noted that some area count groups use a more complex system of reporting weather data. Ron suggested that weather reporting should remain simple to facilitate use by non-scientist citizen volunteers. Consensus was to revamp the order of entering data on the count sheet and keep the weather data simple.

**Old Business:**

1a. Tom reported the Lake Level/Dam Management informal group met today. No significant migration of fry were seen. Boards were pulled in the dam, with bay 1-4 being wide open and only bottom boards in Bay 5 to reduce sediment migration. Dave reported seeing adult herring and fry mingling together in the Long Point Rd. culvert box. Ron reported speaking with the DPW. The bascule dam is still raised. They will consider lowering it based on rain conditions.

1b. No river work is anticipated due to high water. The top of the Wareham St. ladder, the channel to the main river and Oliver Mill ladder need weed work.

2. Dave reported ProcellaCOR would average \$8000.00 per acre for application.

Louise reported speaking with Helen Zincavage from SRPEDD about the river, the plans for sediment and plans for weed removal. Louise expressed concern that increase in the heavy 'microburst' rains, caused by climate warming, would lead to problems if the river could not handle the flow. She also heard varying information about what SRPEDD was doing. She questioned why widening and replacing the Snake River culvert was a priority instead of the river. She questioned if that would degrade Taunton's water supply due to higher nitrates in Assawompset and questioned if sampling was done. Helen told Louise that they had not discussed nitrates. Louise noted that Todd Goldman (Middleborough wastewater superintendent) was also concerned. Helen noted that Horsley Witten (SRPEDD's engineer) did not like the sediment trap design and Helen reported the current plan was to dig sediment and let the flow flush silt downstream. Tom noted that he disagrees with that plan at every sediment group meeting. Helen told Louise that funding was 'ponderous' and they only modeled a 1% event for the river. Tom noted that SRPEDD had received about one million dollars in funding. He was told that ARPA money was available, and then told there was no money available. Louise felt SRPEDD was not listening to the towns' concerns. Ron noted that his discussions with DMF were that DMF wanted all sediment removed and was given incomplete information about sedimentation. Louise also noted that Helen said she asked to meet with the Commission, but was not given an answer. Nobody from the Commission

recalled ever receiving such a request and noted that our meetings are open and posted. We would gladly put Helen and anyone from SRPEDD on the agenda if they asked. Ron felt SRPEDD was using the Army Corps of Engineers as an excuse, saying they were concerned for bank degradation. He questioned why MBTA removing boulders from the river was not a problem, but clearing sediment was. He also noted that Long Pond had quick approval and funding through SRPEDD for two weed removal projects this year.

Louise was thanked for her concern and action as a citizen.

**Communications and Bills:**

1. Tom reported paying the electric bills and had the roll up sheets for the file.

Tom made a motion to adjourn. Second: Ron. UNANIMOUS

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.