

**New Shoreham Town Council Meeting  
with Senator Sosnowski and Representative Walsh  
Town Hall, Old Town Road  
Friday, March 26, 2010  
2:15 p.m.**

**Present:** First Warden Kimberley H. Gaffett, Second Warden Raymond J. Torrey, Council members Richard P. Martin, Peter B. Baute and Kenneth C. Lacoste. Also present were Town Manager Nancy Dodge, Representative Donna Walsh and for the recording of minutes, Deputy Town Clerk Millicent McGinnes.

First Warden Gaffett called the meeting to order at 2:25 p.m.

Ms. Gaffett explained that Senator Sosnowski could not be present today, as she was ill.

Discussion ensued regarding the overflow of Georgian Swamp off Corn Neck Road and the undermining of Corn Neck Road at the outlet. Ms. Dodge noted that Town Engineer Jim Geremia will put together a packet of information regarding the Corn Neck Road undermining to present to the RI DOT as a state road capital project. Representative Walsh will follow up with the director of the DOT.

Ms. Gaffett questioned the status of proposed legislation regarding Interstate Navigation passenger fuel charge. The legislation would increase the cap on the fuel charge, which is passed through to passengers, from \$3.00 per gallon to \$5.00 per gallon. Rep. Walsh stated that when the legislation was in front of committee, the members found the increase to be too high and suggested a \$4.00 cap. She noted they were waiting on a memo from the DPUC regarding the bill. Ms. Gaffett noted that the fuel charge is tied directly to fuel costs and is a direct pass through to customers.

Ms. Gaffett questioned the status of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter payment of State Aid – Motor Vehicle Taxes in Lieu, which the Governor said he wanted to cut. Ms. Walsh stated that the Legislature has not yet acted on a supplemental budget and the aid may or may not be included in the budget. She noted that she is frustrated with the State's budget process. Ms. Gaffett stated that she wanted to go on the record asking Rep. Walsh to oppose any State cuts to Town aid and to continue to be opposed to cuts next year. She noted that the Town has included \$90,000 of State aid in next year's budget.

Dr. Baute questioned what the State was doing about the overgenerous pensions given to employees. Rep. Walsh responded that there was no change to the pension situation.

Discussion moved to Department of Environmental Management:

- Ms. Gaffett stated that the DEM has had deep cuts in personnel which are affecting the state's environmental health.
- The Deer Task Force is working with the DEM to come up with a proposal to limit the Block Island deer herd. Members of DEM will be coming out to discuss this further in April. It was noted that the Task Force is looking for CDC grant money to track the correlation between the reduction of the deer herd and the incidence of Lyme disease. Rep. Walsh stated that she has spoken the Director of the Department of Health Dr. Gifford and he is willing to come to Block Island to discuss Lyme disease.

From the audience, Tax Collector Linda Powers asked Representative Walsh to oppose bill H7276 re: involving RIHMFC early on in the tax sale process. She explained that the bill, as currently written, is burdensome to the tax collector's office. Rep. Walsh suggested Ms. Powers send a letter or go testify when the bill is heard.

Dr. Baute explained that the law limiting on the ability to raise property taxes is difficult for some communities and asked if there was any talk of lifting the limitation. Ms. Walsh said there was no talk of a change to that law. It was noted that the other side of that law, which is supposed to provide a school funding formula, if implemented as currently suggested, will not help with the funding problem.

Mr. Lacoste reminded Ms. Walsh that Block Island contributes a lot to the State, both through revenue and through conservation and aesthetics.

Mr. Lacoste reiterated the Town Council's opposition to the bill regarding binding arbitration for teacher contracts, stating the importance of keeping local control over the Town's budget.

Representative Walsh states that Keith Stokes of the Economic Development Corporation will be coming to Block Island.

The Council thanked Representative Walsh for meeting with them.

With no further business Mr. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lacoste and carried unanimously.

Millicent McGinnes  
Deputy Town Clerk

Submitted: April 1, 2010  
Approved: April 5, 2010