2021 Annual Report

To the Board of Selectmen:

As we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, we yearn for meeting together in person while our zoom skills have vastly improved.

In 2021 two long serving ( long suffering ) members retired. Tara Whiting joined the Commission in 2001 and Binnie Ravitch in 2007. Tara took a turn chairing the Commission and Binnie took on the additional responsibility of serving as the Commission’s appointee to the West Tisbury Advisory Board. To fill the void, Angela Luckey and Donna Paulnock moved up to full member status leaving two associate member seats open. If you are interested, please contact the office for more information. At the very end of 2020, John Brannen resigned from the Commission and will move to New York ( part time) to spend more time with family. John served as Vice Chair and the Commission’s appointee to the Community Preservation Committee. Fred Barron agreed to join the Commission in January 2022. We will miss all three of these voices at the table and look forward to working with Fred.

Individual members continued their roles as appointees to other committees. Peter Rodegast continues to serve as the Commission’s appointee to the West Tisbury Land Bank Advisory Board and Angela Luckey will take a turn as the Commission’s appointee to the Community Preservation Committee. Donna Paulnock serves on the Climate Change Committee and the Mill Brook Watershed Management Committee.

In our work to administer the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town’s local wetlands Bylaw, the following determinations of jurisdiction and permits (called Orders of Condition) were issued for projects in or near inland wetlands and coastal resource areas.

**Administrative Reviews**

Map 3 Lot 17 (Septic upgrade)

**Determinations:**

Map 7 Lot 170 (Beach stairs/ landscaping)

Map 35 Lot 6.6 (Conversion of decks to living space)

Tisbury Great Pond/ Parrot Feather removal

**Orders of Conditions**

Map 3 Lots 4, 6 & 7/ SE79-422 (Well)

Map 3 Lot 9.13/SE79-423(Addition)

Map 3 Lot 68/SE 420 (Accessory apartment)

Map 7 Lot 12/SE79-421( Septic upgrade)

Map 7 Lot 69/WTCC2021-0( Driveway)

Map 7 Lot 130, 130.1 & 130.2/SE79-423 (Driveway)

Map 7 Lot 162/ SE79-424 (House demolition and reconstruction)

Map 23 Lot 3.1/SE79-419 (pool and landscaping)

Map 23 Lot 3.1 and 3.2/SE79-425(invasive species removal)

Map 38 Lot 2/ WTCC 2021-02 (House, guest house, garage and pool)

Map 39 Lot 9/SE79-428 (house renovations)

Map 43 Lot 1/SE79-427 (House renovations, guest house and pool)

**Amended Orders of Conditions:** None

**Enforcement Orders:**

Map 31 Lot 48/ Doane-Eppel

**Extension Permits**:

James Pond/SE79-364 (channel maintenance)

Map 23 Lot 3.1/SE79-385(landscaping & utility work)

**Certificates of Compliance**

Map 7 Lot 12 /SE79-421 (septic system upgrade)

Map 6 Lot 7/WT 2016-01 (driveway)

**Water Withdrawal Bylaw Permits**

Map 25 Lot 5/839 State Road/ Morning Glory Farm

The second mission of a conservation commission spelled out in the enabling legislation for conservation commissions in Massachusetts is the development and protection of natural resources and the projects that protect the watershed resources of the town. Towards the end of the year, the board began to explore ways to expand this role that includes managing Town owned conservation land and participating in the review of Conservation Restrictions between landowners and conservation groups.

**Ongoing projects:**

**Map 3 Lot 91/Lambert’s Cove Beach path monitoring**: Thanks to Reid Silva and the staff of Vineyard Land Surveying & Engineering for continuing to monitor the elevation of the dune over which the path to Lambert’s Cove Beach crosses.

**James Pond:** The board continued to work with Johnny Hoy, the Herring Warden, and the Division of Marine Fisheries, to monitor a project to improve a herring run at James Pond. Whit, want to say something about the Buzzard Bay stuff? ) The MVC continues its work on monitoring water quality in James Pond.

**Wetlands Protection Bylaw Regulations:** The board has been working to create revisions to the Buffer Zone section of the bylaw regulations and a new section covering view channels. This work is ongoing.

**Blackwater Brook:** Over the summer, the Board of Health sampling of Blackwater Brook as it enters Vineyard Sound (affectionately referred to as Coca-Cola Brook in this location) tested very high for E. Coli and Enterococci bacteria. These bacteria originate in the gut of warm-blooded animals and some strains can cause illness in people exposed to contaminated water. These readings prompted the Conservation Commission to conduct two rounds of informal sampling at various locations along Blackwater Brook.

The commission believes these high levels of bacteria in large part may be the result of runoff from the farms along Blackwater Brook and from livestock accessing the brook. A letter was sent to three farms along Blackwater Brook to ask them to evaluate their farming practices with respect to livestock access to Blackwater Brook and proximity of pasture areas to wetlands adjacent to the brook.

**Tisbury Great Pond**: With money approved at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, the Commission was able to hire Solitude Lake Management Company to conduct a hand pulling removal project of an invasives species called Parrot Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*). The work was done in June and September. We would like to extend special thanks to Gregory Palermo, Margaret Curtin and Matt Pelikan for discovering this plant, Arnie Fisher and Hasty Runner for providing access to the coves from their properties, the Highway Department for hauling 75 bags of messy wet plant material to the Refuse District and the Refuse District for accepting it. Members of the community, the MCV and Great Pond Foundation will help monitor the pond for new infestations.

Tisbury Great Pond/ Water Quality monitoring: The Commission met staff from the Great Pond Foundation to discuss cyanobacteria and water quality monitoring work in Tisbury Great Pond being funded by a group of stakeholders. The MVC also continues its water quality monitoring program on Tisbury Great Pond.

**Conservation Restrictions:** There were no new conservation restrictions brought forward in 2021

**Conservation Land Management:** The Commission also conducted monitoring site visits and addressed issues on properties covered by agricultural and conservation restrictions that are held by the Town and/or third-party conservation agencies.

**Brandy Brow**: The Commission continues to monitor the condition of Brandy Brow and relies on the help of the Highway Department with mowing and fence mending. Thanks to the Garden Club for the bright display of daffodils on the hill every year.

**Map 18 Lot 1/Margaret K. Littlefield Greenlands**: The Land Bank continues to maintain the walking paths at Greenlands for the Town. In December, the board formally approved hunting in Greenlands during bow and arrow season. Hunting during shotgun and black powder seasons was also approved, but requires permission from the Board of Selectmen because of a Town bylaw prohibiting the discharge of firearms on a town owned property without the approval of Selectmen. The use of lead shot is prohibited.

**Agricultural Preservation Restrictions:** Martha’s Vineyard Agricultural Society **(**Map 25 Lot 1.1). The town under the care of this board is a co-holder of the APR with Vineyard Conservation Society. Members participated in the review and approval process for events at this property that included pandemic related events such as food distribution, high school graduation and the famers market that allowed these events to take place with adequate social distancing.

The Commission office also fielded numerous calls concerning jurisdiction over a variety of projects in the Buffer Zone and monitored the progress of ongoing construction projects.

The Commission will continue to hear applications under the Wetlands Protection Act and the West Tisbury Wetlands Protection Bylaw during regular meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month at 5:00 P.M. Hopefully, by the time you read this, meetings will again be held in the Selectmen’s meeting room on the second floor of Town Hall. Until then you can find us on Zoom.

Whit Griswold, Chair

John Brannen, Vice Chair

Geraldine Brooks, Member

Angela Luckey, Member

Donna Paulnock, Member

Peter Rodegast, Member

Michael Turnell, Member

Maria McFarland, Board Administrator