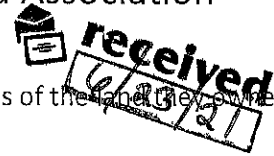


A Bit of History and Notes from Waldron's Bottom Road Association



- **1968** – The Tisbury Pond Club began giving The Trustees of Reservations portions of the land they owned, now called Long Point Wildlife, over the next nine years.
- **1972** - Ben Bolt purchased land known as Vineyard Meadow Farms Trust (included Waldron's Bottom, Charles Neck Way, and Vineyard Meadow Farms). Over the years he sold lots but also retained ownership in the road. He granted easements to lot owners to reach their property.
- **1975** - The Town of West Tisbury established a south shore beach with a beach parking lot in an agreement between the Town, the Trustees, and the Tisbury Pond Club (currently Long Point Beach). Access to the beach road is not clear.
- **1979** – Bolts grant easement down WBR to the "Inhabitants of the Town of West Tisbury".
- **1982** – Bolts grant "a perpetual right and easement to travel by foot and vehicle from the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, southerly through land of the grantors over the existing ways, known as Waldron's Bottom Road, also known as the Scrubby Neck Rd., to the property of The Trustees of Reservations, known as Long Point Wildlife Refuge."
- **1987** – February 27 – The Waldron's Bottom Road Association organized.
 - February 2 – Members of Waldron's Bottom Rd. met with Board of Selectman. The Selectmen stated that the Town would be willing to make a contribution to the upkeep of the road and the money would come out of the Parks and Recreation Committee budget. A family member representing a property owner on WBR shared he was a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee and knew that \$3000 was placed in the Town budget. He also suggested that an article for an additional sum of money, up to \$10,000, be placed on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. It seemed the Town had not spent any money on the road for the past 2 to 3 years and the condition was so bad it would take a larger sum to bring it up to par.
 - A letter to owners dated June 22 states, "At the West Tisbury town meeting last month, money was appropriated specifically to improve the condition of our road. The Trustees of Reservations at Long Point has agreed to cooperate with us in our efforts to maintain the road."
- **1989**
 - Letter from the TTOR (Chris Kennedy) dated June 22, 1989 to the Secretary of the Waldron's Bottom Rd. Assoc. states:
 - "The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) has recently concluded negotiations with the Town of West Tisbury on an agreement which will allow the Town and TTOR to jointly share the former "Town" parking lot located on the eastern side of Long Point Wildlife Refuge. Both Town residents as well as TTOR members and guests will access the lot over Waldron's Bottom Road and Scrubby Neck Road onto Hughe's Thumb Road. TTOR resisted efforts to increase the size of the lot, in part, due to the concerns expressed by the Waldron's Bottom Road Association. TTOR did not want to increase parking capacities which would have resulted in increased access over Waldron's Bottom Road. The full explanation for this is outlined in the attached letter which we recently sent to our Island members." (Unfortunately, there is no attached letter in the files).
- **1990**
 - September 1 minutes of WBRA – Town is stopping payment for Road Association. Suggest Trustees to take over money town is not paying. There was also discussion about the Trustees paying for road insurance and an alternate access to beach. Trustees paid \$1500 (half of what the Town paid).
 - Martha's Vineyard Commission passes "Special Way" request for extended area of Scrubby Neck Rd/Watcha Path (in our area).
- **1991**
 - Scrubby Neck Rd/Watcha Path designated a "Special Way" by the Town of West Tisbury
 - Special Way designation – To protect historic places, to retain these ways open primarily for uses such as walking and horseback riding, but not developed as a primary vehicular route except for access where no alternative access exists.

- Development cannot result in direct vehicular access to the Special Way. However, continued vehicular use may be allowed if traveled by motor vehicles prior to nomination of the Special Way provided that the continued vehicular use is of the same nature and extent as that which existed prior to the nomination of the Special Way.
 - Road shall not be greater than 12 ft. in width.
 - No fence, wall or structure can be placed withing 20 ft.
- Special WBRA meeting 9/2
 - Road Safety – “This is a continuing problem with no clear resolution”.
 - Trustee Relationship – “All are upset about the tremendous traffic generated by the Trustees beach operation. This is clearly the #1 problem of the Association.”
 - Dialogue between Chris Kennedy (TTOR) and Estelle Robinson (WBRA resident).
 - Traffic Reduction & Safety
 - Reduce traffic by eliminating daily passes.
TTOR – By charter, they must offer public access to all properties for a fee.
 - Reduce traffic by turning away cars at head of road when lot is full.
TTOR – May do so, considering getting portable phones.
Problems are getting permission to use that land and may cause inconvenience to owners passing through.
 - Go back to using old parking lot as well as beach lot.
TTOR – So far, unable to get permission to use required access road, but will keep trying.
 - Go back to 50/50 lot split between TTOR members and town residents.
TTOT – Was inefficient because town side was frequently unfilled but will consider some compromise.
- 1992
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/24 –
 - Trustees of Reservations Plans (Chris Kennedy by phone)
 - Probably will extend operating hours from 10-6 to 8-7 daily to encourage more turnover (and more traffic).
 - Next year there may be a number of changes. They expect to expand present parking by building another lot on their property. When queried about how near capacity they are currently operating, felt it was about 60%.
- 1993
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/30
 - TTOR explained some of the environmental concerns at Long Point and possible future alternatives for handling parking and transportation to the beach. For this year nothing new is planned.
 - Traffic road control: TTOR will post a person at head of the road to turn away cars when the beach is full. This has been done before with limited success and they cannot always guarantee a person will be available. Not willing to hire a full-time person.
- 1995
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 8/4
 - TTOR reported parking reconfigured to take 100 cars but will be shut off at 90 cars.
 - TTOR asked permission to erect a small “Long Point” sign at the head of the road.
Permission granted.
- 1997
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/25
 - TTOR reported a 9% increase in visitors over the last year.
- 1998

- WBRA Annual Meeting 5/30
 - TTOR taking a proactive approach to education and enjoyment of the property.
 - Provide use of canoes in Tisbury Great Pond. Participants will park at Hot Tin Roof (by airport) and transportation will be provided to the launching area.
 - They now have a website.
- 1999
 - WBRA Annual Meeting – Report of the TTOR
 - Canoe program very successful. Conducted controlled burns.
 - Hours of access from 9am – 5 pm.
- 2000
 - WBRA Annual Meeting
 - Question raised about wording of easement suggesting WBRA could charge people driving down the road.
 - TTOR
 - 1999 attendance was same as 1998.
- 2001:
 - WBRA Annual Meeting
 - Confirmed wording of easement document with another attorney and there is a strong case WBRA could require those going to the beach and TTOR to pay more for road maintenance.
- 2002
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/26
 - Open Beach until 10 pm a few days a week next summer, 2003 season, for fisherman.
 - Not clear how TTOR will allow access only to fisherman during these extended hours.
 - Informed that an extension of hours for beach access is permitted by the terms of TTOR's easement over WBR. Association to explore this matter further before making a definitive response to TTOR.
- 2003
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/26
 - Plans to extend hours at Long Point until 9 pm Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings for everyone in July and August.
- 2004
 - WBRA Annual Meeting 5/29
 - TTOR
 - Beach will continue to be operated the same way regarding hour and traffic control. It will now be open until 8 pm Friday – Sunday.
 - New walkway constructed connecting beach to winter area.
- 2005
 - WBRA Annual meeting 5/29
 - TTOR
 - For the most part, the beach will continue to be operated the same way regarding hours and traffic control.
 - Looking into creating a bike path to the beach.
- 2006
 - WBRA Annual meeting 5/24
 - TTOR
 - Operating costs are creeping up. TTOR has run a deficit for the last 3 years. They will begin to charge \$5 for auto parking basic memberships.
 - Bike path is still in the works. Looking for a low-cost way to cut a path.

Additional notes:

Following years just keep expressing concern for the traffic on the road and the safety.

All the information about increased occupancy, extended hours, and traffic reported to the Waldron's Bottom Road Association obviously affects the use of the Special Way, Scrubby Neck Rd.

Although Parking is a tangent way to look at the traffic, the MV Commission informed me that it is based on the amount of traffic there was at the time of the designation of a Special Way.

The small addition of a sign at the top of the road and the larger additions of a website along with more forms of media (texting, Facebook, etc.) obviously increased the exposure of the Beach at Long Point. This led to an increase of people knowing it existed (getting a brochure in the mail after becoming a member kept the numbers down), which led to more vehicle traffic.

It is unclear how many parking spaces were located at Long Point Beach in 1991. The Planning Board shared there is an agreement between the Town and the Trustees which seems to reside with Parks and Recreation. I have not been advised as to how many spaces there were at the time. It was "reconfigured" in 1995 to 100 spaces.

My recent count of designated parking spaces is about 140 in the main parking area. On past busy summer days, cars have been parked around the circle area where cars drop off family members. A conservative count of cars around that area is 33. There are also up to 2 Accessible parking spaces. This does not account for the second round of cars that arrive when cars depart.

Last Summer, due to the pandemic, the Trustees had to reduce the number of people on the beach. They took 65 advanced reservations for the morning hours and 85 advanced reservations for the afternoon (300 vehicle trips through the Special Way per day). They reported to the Waldron's Bottom Road Association this was about 65% capacity of past years (35% more per day would be about 53 vehicles or 106 more trips.....up to 406 vehicle trips through a Special Way). I know it was not possible to get reservations for most of August.

It is clear the traffic has increased tremendously since the designation of a Special Way, without a permit from the Town.

- It is very dangerous to travel this road during the Summer due to the inability to see from one end of this section to the other (from Waldron's Bottom to the entrance to Trustees). Vehicles are traveling at higher speeds; everyone seems to be in a hurry. There has been a lot more bicycle traffic than past years.
- Sections of the road are expanding in size (against the rules of a Special Way) due to the traffic. The inability to see from one end to the other of this section makes it impossible to see if a vehicle (motorized or not) is coming in the opposite direction. Vehicles are pulling over into the property (off the road) of Mr. and Mrs. Latter, 37-42.1, to allow cars coming in the opposite direction to pass. One "cut out" on their property started off small years ago (about a foot) and has expanded to about 10 feet. Another small cut out, onto their property, just started last Summer close to Waldron's Bottom Rd. I know the Latter's sent a letter to the town (Planning and Zoning) last year which may have been misinterpreted. Although Scrubby Neck Road is part of their property, the traffic is enlarging the road onto more of their property.

Lori M. Connetti
