

Town of Edgartown
Cape Pogue DCPC

Minutes of Meeting
June 27, 2024 5:00 P.M.

In Attendance (virtual):

Cape Pogue Property Owner appointed by the Edgartown Board of Selectmen (Rachel Self)
Edgartown Conservation Commission (Jane Varkonda)
The Trustees of Reservations Membership (Bob Hayman)
Conservation/Wildlife Specialist (appointed jointly by Sheriffs' Meadow Foundation, Vineyard Conservation Society, and Vineyard Open Land Foundation) (Matt Pelikan)
Edgartown Marine Advisory Committee (Ed Handy)
The Trustees of Reservations Staff (Darci Schofield)
Edgartown Shellfish Constable (Rob Morrison)
Massachusetts Environmental Police (Matthew Bass)
Edgartown Police Department (Sgt. Ryan Ruley)

Meeting called to order.

The minutes from the previous meeting were submitted for approval. Bob Hayman moved to accept them; Ed Handy seconded. A roll call vote was held and the minutes were accepted.

Water Issues

Update from Harbormaster and Shellfish Warden

Rob Morrison indicated that he was hopeful for a good bay scallop season this year due to a good seed population last year. He would be helping the shellfish group with their eel grass research soon.

Rachel Self inquired whether Sgt. Ruley had any reports regarding activity in the harbor. Sgt. Ruley explained that while he was sworn in as an assistant Harbormaster, the rest of the department had been given authorization to enforce M.G.L. c. 90B in the harbor, which included responding to accidents on the water, masking arrests for OUI, etc. There had been an increase in call volume this year, perhaps due to increased crowd sizes, which had been growing since COVID. He hoped to be of assistance to the Harbormaster and Shellfish Warden.

Bob Hayman asked whether the signs and buoys had been placed at the Gut yet; Rob Morrison did not have updated information. Rachel Self confirmed that the no wake buoy coming into the Gut appeared to be up.

Land Issues

Report of DCPC Subcommittee

Now that the minutes with the subcommittee's charge had been approved, the subcommittee would be moving forward with more clarity in the coming month.

Bird Update

Nesting and hatching and beach closure Norton Point

Jane Varkonda reported that there were large least and common tern populations this year, as well as 32 black skimmers nesting and hatching. The rain storm and some predation had suppressed activity in a certain tern colony, so the road in that area might be able to be opened once there were no more chicks. Things were going very well for the birds. OSV access was as good as it was going to get.

Nesting and hatching and beach closure Leland, Wasque and Cape Pogue

Darci Schofield reported that this year was a much better season than last in terms of the number of mating pairs, and reduction in the amount of nest predation. The first piping plover chick had fledged out at the Gut. Cape Pogue was currently closed to OSVs; a nest had hatched on Sunday evening and had moved to East Beach, and would be monitored. More information might be available by Monday. Very high tides had impacted some nests. There was more hatching expected in the coming weeks. Leland Beach was mostly open, with a 5 MPH zone for OSVs, aside from restricted areas where active chicks were present.

Discussion of Future Plans

Recreational OSV access

Rachel Self indicated that there were a lot of moving parts on this issue at this point, and it was up in the air.

Stairs at Wasque

This had been approved by the Conservation Commission the previous night. Darci Schofield indicated TTOR was looking forward to getting the stairs in.

Relocation of Tom's Neck Trail

This had also been discussed by the Conservation Commission the previous night, and no decision had been reached.

Ed Handy moved to adjourn the meeting. Darci Schofield seconded.

The next meeting would be scheduled via email for the fourth Thursday in July.

Meeting adjourned.