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League Urges Select Board To Review ZBA Behavior

By TAYLOR FRUZZETTI

The League of Women Voters is urging the select board to carefully review the behavior of zoning board of appeals members during recent public meetings before deciding whether to reappoint them to another term.

The league's urging came in the form of what it calls an observer report. Observers from the nonpartisan group attend public meetings and write reports about what they see regarding the issues these boards and committees deal with through the year and adherence to Open Meeting Law.

The reports are then posted in the organization's bulletin. The reports are also sent to the committee or board it concerns as well as the select board.



Marc Finneran

The observer report concerning the zoning board, written by League of Women Voters secretary Richard Johnson, dated June 6 and then revised on June 7, states that "The Committee Handbook Code of Conduct calls upon all members to treat their colleagues, applicants, and their representatives with courtesy and respect despite differences of opinion, and to never engage in personal insults. That standard is often violated by one member in particular; several other members have done so to a lesser extent."

The observer report notes multiple instances of what it considers poor behavior during various meetings and provides the exact time in the Falmouth Community Television recording of the meeting that this behavior can be reviewed.

The meetings and timeframes listed are as follows: June 22, 2023, at 2:22; April 25, 2024, starting at 2:40 until the end; May 30, 2024, at 2:30; and May 23, 2024, at 1:10.

While the "one member in

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Town Hall Closure, Trash Delays

Falmouth Town Hall will be closed Wednesday, June 19, for the Juneteenth holiday.

Also, there will be no trash pickup on that day. Following the holiday, residents should place their trash bins at the curb one day after their usual collection day.

Weather Forecast

This afternoon it will be mostly sunny. At night it will be mostly cloudy with a chance of showers. The high will be around 75; the low will be around 62. Tomorrow during the day it will be mostly sunny with a chance of showers. The high will be near 74. At night it will be mostly clear. The low will be about 53. Extended forecast for Sunday indicates sunny during the day and partly cloudy at night. The high will be near 73. The low will be around 61.

Air 75; Water 66

The water level at Long Pond is 7.82 USGS vertical datum feet above sea level.

Forecast and water temperature are from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) websites.



A team from the UMass Boston Stone Living Lab uses a drag net to collect samples of marine life off of Trunk River Beach Tuesday. The goal is to assess whether a cobble berm used for coastal protection farther up the shore line is affecting marine life in the area. Doctoral student Curtis Morris (left) and summer techs Ingrid Comella, Lily Knudsen and Colette Carter examine the catch for anything unusual.

Photographs by GENE M. MARCHAND/ENTERPRISE



Pickle Jar Kitchen Set To Reopen

By NOELLE ANNONEN

Owners of the Pickle Jar Kitchen hope to officially open their doors again on June 27, after months of repairing damage from a New Year's Day fire in the building. But the stakes are high, since the Main Street restaurant has already missed out on essential revenue from the spring and shoulder seasons. "If we don't have our summer season, we will not survive the winter," owner Cassandra Gallant said this week.

The Pickle Jar is housed at 176 Main Street, in what is known as the Weeks Block, which caught fire in the late hours of New Year's Day. The cause of the fire has remained "undetermined, but it started in one of the two second-story apartments above the Main Street businesses inside. The apartment was already engulfed in flames by the time emergency responders arrived.

Ms. Gallant lives in Falmouth and said her phone began ringing off the hook when the fire started. She and her family headed to the scene right away, and she worried that someone had left a coffee pot on or was somehow responsible for the fire. Ms. Gallant and her husband and co-owner, Benjamin Gallant, watched firefighters attack the blaze from the parking lot behind the building.

"It was really scary to watch," Ms. Gallant said.

The couple would spend the

next several months helping the town and fire department staff assess the building by giving them access and providing any information they could. Overall, Ms. Gallant said the Pickle Jar Kitchen was very lucky, and the damage to their space was minimal. There was water in the ceiling of the restaurant, which needed to be replaced. While the actual fire never reached their business, Ms. Gallant said some of their stock was damaged: a freezer warped, and no longer fits in its former place.

Pickle Jar is one of four businesses in the building, along with Twigs Falmouth, Sea Bags and Homespun Garden. Ms. Gallant and her family opened the Pickle Jar in 2013, and this will be their 12th summer on Main Street, she said.

Kerry Bourne owns the building with her brothers, Conor R. McLaughlin, Keith McLaughlin and Brian McLaughlin Jr.. The family bought the Weeks Block through their company, Spellbound Highpoint Properties, for \$2.93 million on August 4, 2023.

This spring, Ms. Bourne told the Enterprise that they pulled a building permit to demolish parts of the building that were damaged by smoke or water during the fire. Contractors removed the sheetrock walls and portions of the ceilings on the

see Pickle Jar on Page 16



COURTESY CASSANDRA GALLANT

The owners of the Pickle Jar Kitchen, Cassandra Gallant (left), Benjamin Gallant and Elisabeth Lay, hope to open the business again by the end of the month.

Commission Receptive To Y's Open Space Waiver Request

By TAYLOR FRUZZETTI

The new YMCA facility proposed on Brick Kiln Road received mostly positive feedback from those who tuned into the Cape Cod Commission's first public hearing for the project Wednesday. This included the YMCA's request for a waiver from the commission's standard open space requirements.

The meeting was held virtually. The 68,000-square-foot, \$35 million facility is proposed for land behind Christ Lutheran Church and abutting Falmouth High School.

"This is a project that is long in coming to the Town of Falmouth and the Upper Cape," select board member Robert P. Mascali said. "It is something that certainly has benefits for the town and the region," he said.

The facility will include two swimming pools, a strength training "wellness center," a gymnasium with courts on the ground level, with an elevated walking track above.

Studio spaces for group exercise classes and a community room with a kitchen are also proposed for the facility, along with outdoor activity spaces, a childcare center and an adventure room for older children.

Select Board member Doug C. Brown said that he found the proposed project to be a "great resource for Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich and Bourne."

"This would be a unique opportunity for our region. I hope we can grant whatever is needed to make it happen," he said.

Town Planner Jed Cornock said that although he was in favor of

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Coast Guard Cuts Canal Station Hours

By MADISON SCHOFIELD

The Cape Cod Canal Coast Guard Station at the Sandwich Marina will no longer support search and rescue 24/7. Staffing shortages have forced the Coast Guard to cut the station's hours to eight hours a day, five days a week.

The Coast Guard is currently facing the largest workforce shortage in its 233-year history, Coast Guard First District spokeswoman Lieutenant Samantha Corcoran said. The Coast Guard is anticipating shortages to worsen; they have already begun to impact frontline operations and readiness.

To address the shortages, the Coast Guard is consolidating hours and moving staff to where they are needed most. The canal station is one of 19 stations across the nation selected for scheduling changes.

"Last year, the service made the difficult decision to manage risk by distributing workforce gaps across all units; however, attempting to accomplish the same missions with fewer personnel degrades mission readiness and increases risk to service members,

see Hours on Page 16

Septic Utility Program: What Is It And How Can It Help With I/A Systems?

By NOELLE ANNONEN

The water quality management committee learned about a potential helper for managing innovative/alternative septic systems in town as it works to prepare the town to meet regulations from the state.

Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center (MASSTC) Director Brian Baumgaertel and septic utility program manager David Iorio Izzo introduced a program that could help residents manage their future innovative/alternative septic systems. The presentation

was made during the committee's meeting on June 5.

The state Department of Environmental Protection released regulations last year, pushing Cape towns like Falmouth to address nitrogen pollution and clean up their coastal water bodies within a certain timeframe.

While the town is working to expand sewerage in dense areas of town, some neighborhoods will not be sewerage. In those cases, homeowners will likely need to invest in innovative/alternative septic systems.

Committee consultant Kristen

Rathjen of ScienceWares said taking on the responsibility of regulating innovative/alternative septic systems, wherever they are deemed necessary, would be a tall order for the town. Mr. Baumgaertel and Mr. Izzo suggested that the county could take on that role instead. The septic utility program, or SUP, would act as a support system for the new septic systems and the residents who need to buy and maintain them.

Mr. Izzo said the septic utility program is intended to help residents on Cape Cod protect public

health and the environment by ensuring their innovative/alternative septic systems work efficiently and are maintained properly.

"Something that we live by is 'do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you,'" Mr. Izzo said.

The utility program would manage everything from permitting and installation of a system to its long-term maintenance and operation. Homeowners interested in innovative/alternative septic systems could contact staff with the program and get a property

assessment and soil testing to ensure compliance with regulations.

Staff could help homeowners find licensed septic system designers and installers in addition to helping them plan how to finance the systems. Program staff could help homeowners create an agreement with inspection and maintenance providers or contract an operator for the homeowner through the program. Mr. Izzo added that the county plans to help educate residents on how to properly activate the systems

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