

GOVERNMENT

Planning staff may assume entire workload of ZBA

BY PETER B. BRACE
INDEPENDENT WRITER

By a vote of 8-0, the Nantucket Planning & Economic Development Commission endorsed the concept of creating a memorandum of an agreement with the Board of Selectmen for the planning staff to assume all Zoning Board of Appeals duties.

Should such an agreement — a statement of governing parameters between the Planning Commission and the selectmen — be drawn up and finalized, the planning staff will have the authority to handle all of the ZBA's workload and report on it to Planning Director Andrew Vorce until the position of ZBA administrator is either filled or restructured.

Ever since Town Manager Libby Gibson fired ZBA Administrator Linda Williams on Sept. 25, the planning staff has been doing her duties of preparing for monthly ZBA meetings, processing applications, doing inspections and generally working with the public on board of appeals issues. This memorandum of agreement will allow part-time planning staff member John Brescher to continue handling Williams' workload, said Senior

Planner Leslie Woodson.

If created, the MOA between the Planning Commission and the selectmen would also formalize the position of Planning Board Administrative Specialist Catherine Ancero, and it would establish a structure and set goals for a housing planner that the commission is hoping to hire next year through Community Preservation Committee funding.

The memorandum of agreement has yet to be drawn up, but support for it was unanimous among the commissioners and Gibson, as Planning Director Andrew Vorce and Woodson stressed that ZBA work would not overburden the planning staff.

"When the [ZBA administrator] position was first vacant, I was doing a lot of the follow-up work and what was left over from the previous meeting," said Woodson. "Between those items, it wasn't a huge amount of work. Having it as an administrative position, one person can easily handle that amount of work."

Woodson said that the MOA would likely be written and voted on after the annual Town Meeting in April when the fate of the housing planner is determined. ■

TICKS

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he still carries to a degree.

"When it really kicked in I was bedridden," he said. "I went for blood tests and was given the same type of medicine used for malaria and some antibiotics. I felt sick for about a month."

Wendelken said he has pets but does not know how he came down with either babesiosis or Lyme disease. In the latter case, Wendelken did display the signature bullseye rash near an armpit where the tick had lodged. Though he did not experience flu-like symptoms Wendelken did have pain in all his joints. By the time his condition was diagnosed the antibiotics he began taking had little effect and he still felt ill for quite a while.

"It's not good stuff," he said of the tick diseases.

Another islander who asked not to be named had the double whammy of Lyme disease and babesiosis at the same time this summer. Besides having a fever, chills and joint pain, he learned that his red blood cell count had dropped to 54 when it should have been above 300. He was knocked for a loop and was out of

work for six weeks. He could only manage partial day schedules when he returned to his office because he was still so exhausted.

"I just felt incredibly fatigued. It was miserable," he said, noting that he required nutritional supplements after his round of antibiotics and continues to feel residual fatigue. "It's nothing to mess with."

Dr. Lepore maintains that the major contributing factor for the island's tick disease problem is an overabundance of deer. Telford agrees, saying Nantucketers cannot breathe easily about ticks until the deer overpopulation is brought under control. Although a February deer hunt was added to the previous December hunting period in 2005, in December of that year citizens decided against the extra hunt and it was discontinued.

"Public education has been a great tool and has helped, but reduction [of the deer population] is the primary way to clean up the environment to the 1960s level when ticks were more rare," Dr. Telford said. "August and September are safe because [the ticks] are only in the larval stage and won't be infected, but that's not to say that people shouldn't be on the lookout for ticks." ■



Patty Roggeveen



Allen Reinhard



Whitey Willauer



Brian Chadwick



Mike Kopko



ON SELECTMEN

AT ITS MEETING TONIGHT, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 5, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN WILL:

- Hear a Land Bank request for a vote to pledge the town's full faith and credit relating to the Land Bank's issuance of its 2007 Series A bonds.
- Hear a Land Council request for approval of a conservation restriction at 12 North Liberty St.
- Hear a request for a change of manager on the liquor license for the Starlight Cafe. The new manager is also new owner Mark Watson.
- Hear a presentation of recommendations from the Cemetery Commission Workgroup.
- Hear a town administrator's report on a new procurement alternative relating to the construction manager for the 2 Fairgrounds Road public safety facility.
- Take action on two proposed non-binding ballot questions for the annual 2008 town elections. The questions, submitted by Town Clerk Catherine Stover, regard the beach nourishment proposed for 'Sconset and construction of a municipal parking garage.

AT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING, NOV. 28, MEMBERS FIRST CONVENED AS THE BOARD OF HEALTH AND: (Brian Chadwick absent)

- Unanimously approved amendments to Board of Health regulations pertaining to the Madaket and Nantucket Harbor Watershed Protection Districts. The amendments extend the deadline for Madaket septic system inspections for 23 months and for one year in the town district. "We are on the right track, we are doing the right thing and I am comfortable with what we are going to add on to the Madaket Harborshed District," said Health Inspector Richard Ray, explaining that his staff is too small to be able to complete inspections within the original deadline of Dec. 14. "We seem to be seeing a lot of cooperation in Madaket where many systems have an effect on Hither Creek." Ray noted that of 477 Madaket systems, 24 have failed so far and 15 passed, not counting the dozen that were to be examined last Wednesday. In the Nantucket district, 239 of 254 have passed inspection.

CONVENING AS THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, MEMBERS:

- Unanimously approved a county administrator's request for revisions to funding sources for the FY08 county budget.

CONVENING AS THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN, MEMBERS:

- Unanimously approved a request for a change of manager on the liquor license for Alice's Restaurant at the airport. The new manager is Marc Berkowitz.
- Unanimously approved a request for a change of manager on the liquor license for Pi Pizzeria. The new manager is Maria Costanzo.
- Unanimously approved a request for a waiver of conflict of interest regarding Town Counsel's representation of both the town and Land Bank in a financial transaction.
- Took no action on a Land Bank request for approval of a resolution and memorandum of understanding relating to bond issuance for real estate acquisition.
- Unanimously approved a Finance Department request to execute interim loan documents for a \$44 million loan over a 30-year term connected with the Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.
- Took no action on a Verizon request for a pole relocation on Candle House Lane. The board sought more information.
- Heard an appeal of a Historic District Commission decision for property at 2 East Hollowell Lane and upheld the HDC decision. A similar hearing for 29 Baxter Road was continued to Jan. 16.

— Compiled by Mary Lancaster