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August 14, 2024

Select Board
Town of Brewster

To the Honorable Members of the Select Board of the Town of Brewster:

The Brewster Ponds Coalition (BPC) supported and continues to support the acquisition of the former Cape Cod Sea Camps properties. Throughout the discussion of potential uses of the Long Pond Property, BPC's key concern has been that use of the property should help protect the water quality in Long Pond and the downstream Herring River Estuary watershed, as well as Town wells that are located in that area. Accordingly, we would have preferred that the entire Long Pond property be conserved as open space.

Despite our expressed concerns, a proposed plan for affordable housing on the Long Pond property – now planned to be over 40 affordable housing units on the 10 acres of the property abutting Long Pond Road - appears to be moving forward. On the assumption that this plan may gain momentum, we wish to remind the Select Board of assurances made that the Final Comprehensive Plan for the Long Pond property would address the concerns of BPC, citizen stakeholders and environmental experts regarding protection of Long Pond and other crucial water resources in the immediate vicinity of the property.

Specifically, we were assured that the Final Comprehensive Plan for the Pond Property approved by Town Meeting would address the BPC's concern about protection of Long Pond, and further, that the plan would not only help meet the need for affordable housing in Brewster, but also would have environmental advantages – i.e., would be a win/win/win solution for affordable housing, open space preservation and pond protection. To achieve this net positive environmental effect, it was stated that the wastewater treatment installed for the affordable housing units could also be connected to nearby houses (off the Sea Camps property), improving wastewater treatment for these houses as compared to the existing septic systems. This would result in a net reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus to groundwater in the area. Since the groundwater in the area flows both towards Long Pond and across the street from the property towards Pleasant Bay, making such connections would result in reduction of nutrients to both the Long Pond/Herring River and Pleasant Bay watersheds. This would help meet the nitrogen reduction requirements desired for both the Pleasant Bay and Herring River watersheds, or, if the minimum required reductions are already being met through other actions,

would provide additional reductions that would further improve these waters and provide additional “buffer capacity” for future development.

Whether the environmental benefits which we were assured will in fact be achieved depends on the final plan details and implementation. The BPC, therefore, strongly requests that details regarding the wastewater management plan and its implementation be released as soon as possible. We believe the issue of wastewater management needs to be addressed holistically, considering all the needs, present and future, to protect our ponds and all waters of the Town. Wastewater treatment in the area of the Long Pond property could be an important part of such a holistic plan. We urge the Select Board to expedite such holistic wastewater management planning and in accordance with the assurances made by the Town when the Final Plan for the Long Pond Property was approved.

We look forward to continuing the BPC’s productive partnership with the Town towards protecting our many ponds and all waters of Brewster.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bridges
President
Brewster Ponds Coalition

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