

TOM NEVERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 2011 Newsletter

Have you been getting our TNCA Email Alerts?

Over the past few months, 309 of our Members have been receiving special TNCA email alerts.

These alerts have brought our members advanced warning of the sewer funding ballot initiative that would have increased our taxes here in Tom Nevers. (Thankfully, it was defeated in large part due to our members' "get out the vote" actions.)

If you HAVE NOT been receiving these special email alerts...and would like to be added to our distribution list... just fire off a quick email to us.

Send it to us at--

info@tomnevers.org

Keep informed on all the key issues affecting Tom Nevers!

Make sure we have your latest email address!

Sewer Funding:

Ballot Question #1 was soundly defeated at the June 14th Special Town Election...with 61-percent of Nantucket voters saying "No". If it had passed, it would have shifted about \$26-million of debt-service costs (for the 'Sconset and Surfside wastewater treatment plants) away from sewer system users...and onto the backs of all taxpayers.

In the past, 70% of these costs were the direct responsibility of sewer system users. If the new plan had been approved, their direct obligation would have dropped to 33%. And here in Tom Nevers, we'd have seen our real estate tax bills increase an extra \$100 per \$1.2M of property assessment year after year...with zero recognition of the fact that we have to bear the full cost of maintaining and perhaps eventually replacing our septic systems. In our view, this was clearly unfair!

But of even greater concern to us was the major precedent that would have been created. Who will pick up the tab for all Nantucket sewer system expansions in the future? Sewer users...or the rest of us? We're talking about really big costs here! And it's predictable that sewer users will want us to pay for most of the costs.

Thankfully, Ballot Question #1 was defeated on June 14th. But frankly, the battle has just begun. At the April 2011 Nantucket Town Meeting, the article that led to Ballot Question #1 was approved by the majority of voters in attendance. But since it involved capital expenditures, it had to pass the additional hurdle of being put before voters again at a Special Town Election in June. Thanks to our aggressive "get-out-the-vote" effort (both here in Tom Nevers and across the Island), we won...probably blind-siding

the opposition with our turn-out.

Due to complacency, only 17% of all Nantucket's registered voters showed up at the polls that day. So our 61-percent win, while impressive, was made up of only 828 voters out of the 1,369 who came out to vote. We can be certain that voters on the sewer system won't stay home next time!

And there will be a next time! Starting in early 2011, former Selectman and current Finance Committee member, Tim Soverino, sponsored a citizen's petition to shift the entire debt for the 'Sconset and Surfside wastewater treatment plants to the general tax base.

The Facts Behind the Sewer Funding Controversy

! ! !

After negotiations with the Board of Selectman and the town administration, Soverino agreed to a compromise shift...the one expressed in Ballot Question #1.

Right after the June 14th defeat, the "Inquirer & Mirror" quoted Soverino as saying... "I'm not going to give up." He attributed the loss not only to a push-back from septic-system users, but also to the failure of the Selectmen's to advocate in favor of the initiative and clearly convey the... "consequences"...to voters.

And indeed, our Selectmen are taking this sewer funding matter seriously. They're planning a series of workshops and meetings around the Island, aimed at developing an action plan to address the future financing, funding and prioritizing of all our capital projects, including sewer systems. As a start, one of our Selectman and our Town Manager Libby Gibson have asked to address us at our August 6th Annual Meeting to get our views. (Another important reason for you to be there!) *Continued on Page 2...*

The Facts Behind the Sewer Funding Controversy... *Continued from Page 1...*

Seizing the initiative—

From the very beginning, the TNCA has been fighting for tax fairness to septic-system users. You'll recall that back in 2008, we championed the current "one-third to the general tax base" sewer funding formula. And we've led the way in defeating this latest "two-thirds to the general tax base" replacement formula.

Now, anticipating a renewed push to pass it...or worse yet...to pass a "three-thirds to the general tax base" funding scheme—one that totally ignores the major costs borne by septic-system users—we're taking the initiative by proposing the Island-wide development of a comprehensive new "Funding Plan for Clean Water on Nantucket".

The goal of this plan will be to provide an equitable framework in which all taxpayers pay their fare share of those capital project costs needed to protect and preserve clean water, both fresh water and salt, on Nantucket. These projects include sewer mains and their associated equipment...wastewater treatment plants...and septic systems in those areas not served by the sewer system. All three are critical to clean water on Nantucket, so properly the costs of all three should be included in any realistic funding plan. By developing such a framework, we hope to effectively remove the contention and in-fighting over who pays for which improvement...allowing public debate to focus exclusively on the only critical questions— Is a new project needed? And if so, when is it needed? Is this the best solution for the problem? Are there any better alternatives?

Over the next several months, our TNCA president, Dual Macintyre, will be working as a private citizen with Town officials, department heads, and others to refine and develop this type of comprehensive "Plan for Clean Water". It's a vital topic...from both a health and economics point-of-view. And succeeding in its development will require considerable time, skill and effort. The TNCA Board greatly appreciates Dual's volunteer efforts on all our behalf...and fully supports this initiative. ❖

Taking Our Pulse...

In the interest of "Getting To Know Each Other Better"... we focused this year's TNCA Member Survey on our personal statistics and personal views about the Greater Tom Nevers Area and about Nantucket in general. Here's some of what we found—

- 1. We're a well established community--**
On average, Tom Nevers property-owners...
 - Have been coming to Nantucket for... 32 years.
 - Have owned property in Tom Nevers for... 16 years.
 - Their average time here is... 5 months per year.
- 2. 20% of our property-owners are year-rounders—**
Some are retired, but half are still working...
 - On average, each of their households has... 2 people.
 - The percent working full or part time is... 50%.
- 3. 80% of our property-owners are seasonal residents—**
And they do like to entertain while they're on-Island...
 - On average, their households consists of... 3 people.
 - Extra family members and guests who come to visit them each year... 12 more people on average.
- 4. Not that many of us rent-out our properties—**
And fewer still rent for more than 2-3 weeks per year—
 - The percent who try to rent out their houses... 30%.
 - The average number of days rented... 16-17 per year
- 5. Things are still pretty lively in the "off season"--**
Here's the percent of us in Tom Nevers by month--
 - January..... 21%
 - February..... 20%
 - March..... 21%
 - April..... 36%
 - May..... 51%
 - June..... 75%
 - July..... 87%
 - August..... 86%
 - September..... 79%
 - October..... 61%
 - November.....35%
 - December..... 32%

We then went on to ask you...

What do you like best about “Nantucket”?
And what improvements would you most like to see?—

In this year’s TNCA Member Survey, we asked our Tom Nevers property-owners to tell us what they really liked about Nantucket and what they’d like to see improved. These questions were open-ended...allowing respondents to express their views verbatim and unaided. After reviewing all the responses, we grouped them into summary categories to permit statistical analysis.

How do your views compare with what we found? —

1. Things we say we like best about Nantucket --

- Its natural beauty/open spaces.....53%
- Small town charm/friendly people.....43%
- Great beaches/breezes/fresh air..... 40%
- Escape from mainland frenzy.....34%
- Its history/historic preservation.....19%
- Lots to do (galleries, lectures, restaurants).... 13%
- Misc. other..... 9%

2. Things we say we’d like to see improved --

Overall--

- No changes / Love it as it is..... 20%

In Infrastructure--

- More parking & better traffic control..... 32%
- More bike paths..... 9%
- Better/smarter Town Government..... 7%
- Year-round public transportation..... 7%
- Deer reduction/tick control..... 7%
- Misc. other*.....<1%

* more affordable housing, better beach management, enforce leash laws, ban mopeds, trim bushes around traffic signs, remove seals from Great Point, remove Loran tower, etc.

In Development/Commerce--

- Greater diversity of stores in Town..... 7%
- More year-round stores in Town..... 7%
- Less development..... 7%
- More reasonably priced restaurants..... 4%
- Better enforcement of building codes..... 3%
- Misc. other*.....<1%

* more off-season kid’s activities, fewer second dwellings, better private plane regulations, no pools, etc.

Quality of Life--

- Less divisiveness between island groups..... 4%

And what do you like best about
“Tom Nevers”? And what improvements
would you most like to see?—

These questions too were open-ended...allowing respondents to express their views verbatim and unaided.

How do your views compare with what we found? —

1. Things we say we like best about Tom Nevers --

- Its peace & quiet.....74%
- Scenic beauty.....30%
- Near beach and ‘Sconset/far from Town.... 27%
- Large properties/lots of conservation land... 22%
- Friendly neighbors.....18%
- Misc. other..... 7%

2. Things we say we’d like to see improved --

Overall--

- No changes / Love it as it is..... 23%

In Infrastructure--

- Bike path/lane along TN Road..... 49%
- Clean up messy property on TN Road..... 13%
- NRTA or Park/Ride along TN Road..... 13%
- Reduce speeding on TN Road..... 9%
- Clean up/improve Tom Nevers Field..... 9%
- Greater/safer beach access..... 8%
- Deer reduction/tick control..... 6%
- More fire hydrants..... 6%
- Landscape corner of TN & Milestone Roads 5%
- Better cell phone service..... 2%
- Misc. other*..... <1%

* bury power/phone lines, mail service, stricter hunting controls, reduce airplane noise, etc.

In Development/Commerce--

- Slow development..... 3%
- Fewer summer rentals..... 1%

Quality of Life--

- Less noise/parties at Tom Nevers Head.....1%
- More neighborhood get-togethers..... 1%
- Less divisiveness between factions..... 1%

About the Survey--

This survey was conducted by mail in February 2011. Survey questionnaires were inserted into the “TNCA Winter 2011 Newsletter” and sent to all TNCA Members. Completed questionnaires were returned by mail and the results tallied. The full survey report (including the study methodology and a copy of the questionnaire) can be viewed on our TNCA website... www.tomnevers.org.

Then we asked you to tell us...

Your favorite Nantucket activities?—

In our TNCA Member Survey, we asked Tom Nevers property-owners to tell us their favorite “things to do” on Nantucket. On average, most people named 3 or 4 activities. (Thankfully, no one ‘fessed up to binge drinking or R-rated texting.)

In all, it sounds like we enjoy a pretty healthy balance of physical, social, cultural and restorative activities. (No wonder we live so long and love it here!)

How do your picks compare with these averages from your neighbors? —

Favorite “things to do” on Nantucket--

■ Going to the Beach.....	67%
■ Hiking/Walking.....	35%
■ Family Gatherings.....	35%
■ Just Relaxing.....	34%
■ Eating Out.....	33%
■ Entertaining Friends.....	29%
■ Reading.....	29%
■ Golf.....	21%
■ Gardening.....	18%
■ Fishing.....	15%
■ Exploring Town.....	15%
■ Biking.....	13%
■ Tennis.....	10%
■ Boating.....	9%
■ Concerts/Lectures.....	8%
■ Hobbies.....	6%
■ Volunteer Work.....	3%
■ Running.....	3%
■ Work.....	2%
■ Crafts/Art Projects.....	2%

And your favorite Nantucket restaurants?

We asked you to tell us your three favorite Nantucket restaurants. Remarkably, 41 different restaurants were named...a tribute to just how many great places we have to choose from (or how varied out tastes?)

But we should underscore that a full 11-percent of our members said...“We don’t eat out.”

Though a few did add-- “... unless, of course, one of our guests is picking up the tab!”

How do your favorite restaurants compare with those of your neighbors?- —

Here are their Top 10 choices—

1. The SeaGrille
2. LoLa 41
3. Company of the Cauldron
4. The Galley
5. Le Languedoc
6. The ‘Sconset Café
7. The Downyflake
8. Black Eyed Susan’s
9. American Seasons
10. 21Federal*

*gone but not forgotten

And here are the runners up—

11. Pi Pizzeria
12. Straight Wharf Restaurant
13. The Boarding House
14. The Brotherhood of Thieves
15. The Chanticleer
16. The RopeWalk
17. Dune
18. Topper’s
19. Oran Mór
20. Centre Street Bistro

Tom Nevers Progress Report...

Why is it that things seem to take so long to accomplish on Nantucket?

It's certainly not for lack of trying that we're still "fighting the good fight" to accomplish all of these initiatives ranked high on our priority list. But "nevers" one to settle—we'll keep pushing until they're all wins--

■ Reducing Tick-borne Diseases—

Last year's top priority has seemed to fade from the headlines. But we're told that things are progressing according to plan...now under the jurisdiction of our new Board of Health. Any changes to reduce the deer herd won't occur until 2012.

■ Bike Lane along Tom Nevers Road—

Everyone agrees it's a great idea...but Pam Bartlett's article to OK it got pulled by the Selectmen just prior to the April Town Meeting. Still there's enough support among many Town officials to keep us pushing ahead until it's approved.

■ Clean-up of unsightly properties—

You know the worst one! The parked vehicles are gone, but the old shack and junk remains. Even after dozens of phone calls, letters and more...we keep being told nothing more can be done. If this property was in Town or in 'Sconset, how long do you think it would take to clear it?

■ Landscaping at the corner of Milestone Road—

Another jurisdictional issue. Seems the State owns part of the parcel and their approval is needed. All we can say is—"We're still working on it!"

■ Fire Protection—

The fire at 122 Tom Nevers Road and reports that the Nantucket Fire Department had to go to 'Sconset for an adequate water supply alarmed us all...because the NFD has repeatedly told us that we have an adequate water supply right here in Tom Nevers. Turns out they went to 'Sconset by choice...deeming the house already a total loss when they arrived. 'Sconset was considered a more convenient, but not critical, water source. Even so, expect more on this at our Annual Meeting.

■ Beach Access Points—

Even though the Town has declared they're public rights of way, some property owners have taken legal action to block beach access. The Town has to fight this one!

■ Walking path to new bus stop on Milestone Road—

We're working with the Nantucket Conservation Foundation to give us safer and more convenient access from Tom Nevers Road. Things look promising. ❖

Be sure to attend our TNCA Annual Meeting!

The Date:

Saturday—August 6th

The Time:

9:00 – to – 10:15 AM

Followed by a special 90-minute
presentation and guided tour
of our new Police Station complex

The Place:

"Nantucket Public Safety Facility"
7 Fairgrounds Road

Special Guests:

Libby Gibson and one of our Selectman
Joining us to get our direct feedback on key
Island issues

This year's Annual Meeting promises to be
both very informative and highly spirited.

Then as an added treat...

it will give us a rare opportunity to see the
inner workings of our impressive new
Public Safety Facility (aka. Police Station)
on Fairgrounds Road.

Here's your chance to see it all
"on the right side" of the bars!

Join us for our Annual TNCA Cocktail Party

The Date:

Saturday—July 23rd

Rain date—July 24th



The Time:

5:30 – to – 7:00 PM



The Place:

4 Longwood Drive

On the lawn of our hosts...Anne & Jack Warner

It's always a fun evening...and a great chance to
chat with old and new friends.

Be sure to come!

**And please bring some
hors d'oeuvres to share, if you can.**



Your “Dues are Due” Reminder...

If a dues remittance envelope is
included in this newsletter...
we still haven't received your
2011 Annual Dues.

It's just \$15 for your whole
family...
So little for so much!

Many thanks!!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tom Nevets Civic Association
P.O. Box 2926
Nantucket, MA 02584