



## **SPIA Winter Letter 2024**

February 2024

### **Dear SPIA Members:**

Sometimes you might think that Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney must have visited a place like Salters Point 60 years ago before they wrote songs like, An Octopus' Garden or Yellow Submarine:

**I'd like to be  
Under the sea  
In an octopus' garden  
In the shade.**

**Oh, what joy  
For every girl and boy  
Knowing they're happy  
And they're safe.**

### **OR:**

**And our friends are all aboard.  
Many more of them live next door  
And the band begins to play.**

**As we live a life of ease  
Every one of us has all we need.  
Sky of blue and sea of green  
In our yellow submarine**

Perhaps a stretch on the lyrics, but both tunes about the sea, being happy, being together with friends in a safe place! All reminders of that special place we call, Salters Point.

On a more sobering topic and trying to stay away from a third rail some refer to as “politics”, I’d like to make some recent pecuniary observations (from an SPIA perspective) from the Town of Dartmouth and insurance premium increases: 61B (“recreational” tax preference) property taxes at SPIA are up ~24% or ~\$6000, water & sewer usage rate has more than doubled from 2022 from 0.26 cents per use to 0.61 cents-that translates into a fourfold annual increase to \$1800, and our Property Insurance renewal (Casino/Barn on 6/10/24) will inevitably rise as some property premiums around the point have already experienced significant increases over the prior year!

Last year’s property and liability premiums totaled almost \$21k which was 17% higher than prior year due to a coverage increase (asset values were increased at our initiatives). The irony of much of these cost observations is for years your BOG referred to Taxes/Insurance/Utilities as a FIXED COST category on all budget calculations!

Good news. Last year’s budget already accounted for a \$6000 increase in 2024FY for these so-called fixed costs to \$54,000. – unfortunately, those costs will likely rise again in 2025FY. I have great empathy for each community member saddled with these increased “cost of ownership” issues and understand the difficult conversations for some around the dinner tables about keeping an ideal that once seemed forever. I’m sure 30%+ increases in property taxes, significant property insurance increases and utility increases will all contribute to a difficult environment for any progress on “future” SPIA project items like: burying the utility wires, breakwater repair, salt pond restoration, sea wall repair, pier beach beatification, south beach debris removal, barn upgrades, tennis court maintenance, and casino maintenance. We will need to focus on priorities going forward and your BOG needs your inputs so please participate in 2024 town hall meetings, special meetings, and annual meetings - we all live in our own “yellow submarine” at SPIA.

Winter storms at SPIA have been quite devastating already as any winter resident, curious seasonal check in, or visitor may not recognize pier beach piled high with rocks/debris 2-3 feet above where the beach stood in September or south beach parking lot with 18-20” of sand. We lost some pier rails that will need to be repaired as well. Malcolm and Tait will delay any beach maintenance until late

spring or early summer as nature is exerting forces on the point we haven't seen in years. We also need to check with town conservation commission for any south beach lot remediation as permits may be required for storm over wash into wetlands and flood zones.

Barn/Casino improvements should begin in early February 2024 (weather depending). Our contractor will begin with replacing south facing windows in the casino and move to the barn after completion. As a reminder the barn windows will all be replaced, and new shingling will follow as well as grading the back of the barn all work should be completed before April. We will paint the barn interior in May as the weather warms. As a reminder total budget for Barn/Casino repairs \$160k. We will have more detailed cost update in early March (from BOG zoom meeting minutes) as the project progresses.

Tennis court #1 (closest to Casino) north/west corner had significant drainage issues last year. Danny has put in a French drain to mitigate the pooling/ponding issue and will regrade the court as the weather warms in April before Cape and Islands Tennis commissions the courts for the summer.

In October we removed several dead trees on the point. Both the dead pine on the Green and the large maple in front of Burns' home have been removed in addition to several other locations around the point.

We should mention several discussions with the town on the "Smart Recycling Program"; all invoices from the town this year (\$90/house) will be sent directly to each homeowner. Last year's invoices were sent as a group to Adamowski in error.

Wires Project: Really don't know where to start; but let's keep this discussion at a high level (pun intended) and explore if there is an appetite for members to continue this process. I think a "straw vote" at the Special Meeting might be in order after a town hall update in May. First, I'd like to acknowledge Malcom and Pete for all the work that has been done in preparation for this project. Second, we have already spent ~\$15,000 of your monies, voted on by you several years ago for engineering and site work for this project - consider this a "sunk costs". Current total cost estimate for the project is \$1.1MM to \$1.2MM including a \$100k "contingency" figure. By far the largest component of that cost is the electrician cost to dig and wire the entire project. The actual cost for Eversource to remove

poles and lines is cheaper than the 2002 estimate from NStar (predecessor company).

In thinking through this project a few important considerations need to be established: 1) Eversource requires 100% residential participation from the point – “all or nothing” proposition, 2) all underground lines will be dug OPPOSITE side of the street from the existing wires, 3) transformer locations will be same OPPOSITE side of street from existing wires-you will have NO say on location of transformers (~4x4ft box), and 4) construction likely will interrupt summer activities as winter construction activity unlikely.

Mark has many (archived) documents from the 2002 attempt to bury wires at SPIA including letters, memos, correspondence for/against the project that are available for your consideration. Mark has also worked on several financing options from our banks: Bay Coast and Bristol County Savings for a “construction loan” of \$1MM.

I’d like discussions to continue into the summer Town Halls (5/25 and 6/29 @ 9am), to answer questions and pursue options before we get to any type of “vote” on this project. That said, if you are beyond considerations and opposed to the project send the BOG a letter/email and we will curtail all discussions for future generations at SPIA. We have an obligation to pursue the opportunity for a safer SPIA without hanging wires (fire hazard) from each house. The aesthetic benefits are obvious to all so appreciate not only current but future generations your obligation to provide a safe upgraded infrastructure at SPIA when you consider this project.

Dues for FY 2025 will be sent out May 1, 2024, in the amount of \$3800, a \$200 increase was voted at Annual meeting 2024. Please look for that invoice in your (email) inbox May 1st! Each spring we send out a request to update the SPIA Directory and EVERY YEAR too many emails from Adamowski bounce back. As a reminder IF YOUR EMAIL or ADDRESS has changed, please notify Cynthia ([secretary@salterspoint.org](mailto:secretary@salterspoint.org)) with any changes.

**Website:** Many thanks to Laura B Nielsen and Leah Lovelace for their leadership in getting SPIA into “next gen” technology. ALL CALENDAR Events/Activities/Meetings should be current on the website. If you’d like to add an event, please send to Laura and Leah for approval, first - note: our insurance

provider requires any correspondence/letters/announcements on the website to be approved by BOG/webmaster before posting.

**Banya update:** Many thanks for your notes/emails on the current Banya location on the point, and NO the BOG does not have the ability (nor the inclination) to provide an exemption for “temporary structures on trailers”. There are provisions in the Bylaws for alternative locations for the Banya: Barn lot and trailer lot. We also plan to work with the Bylaw Committee and Banya owners for a possible amendment to ByLaws to permit a Banya location agreed to by a membership vote. Therefore, it is important to understand the current Banya location on Gosnold Ave is in violation of current Bylaws as considered by both BOG and Bylaw Committee. We hope to discuss this further at Town Hall meetings early summer, looking for solutions.

I met recently with the Bylaw Committee on several other items, most pressing are concerns by several members of **aggressive dog incidents** on the point during the off season. First, if you come across an aggressive animal in the future, the Town of Dartmouth has Animal Control Officers available to residents:

<https://www.town.dartmouth.ma.us/158/Animal-Control> , please follow the protocols in the link above. We will provide that link/information on the SPIA website as well. Second, at our next BOG meeting in March we will consider adding a provision in Rules and Regulations to restrict ALL CONTRACTORS from bringing pets on SPIA property. It’s important that we provide a safe environment for all members and their pets; I will also ask Ralph to take on this issue as the Director of Safety and Security.

**Activities:** We will be adding more events as they get scheduled by Leah in the future onto the website. Oliver Pope will be returning as our tennis pro, Community Garden spring clean-up and plantings will be forthcoming as well and look for a boater safety class in July. We will also include waterfront commissioning dates, tennis court openings, beach cleaning days onto the website as they become scheduled. Many of these activities will be planned after the March BOG meeting so stay tuned.

As the weather in southwest Florida heats up, pitchers and catchers start to trickle into Fenway South and hopes of a better season for the beloved Red Sox begin to rise with the heat. Just a personal favorite indicator that summer 2024 at SPIA is

just around the corner. Enjoy the rest of your winter/spring season and here's to looking forward to this summer's Octopus' Garden in the Shade. Speaking of gardens the collective Purnell Green Thumbs ("the great 8") have some new things percolating for your produce probing pallet this year- a special "Thank you" to the Purnell Family and Gwenny's Bread and Butter!

Dick Hurd