



Google

Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Fwd: Fences make angry neighbors

1 message

Matthew Sturgis <matthew.sturgis@capeelizabeth.org>
To: Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Wed, Aug 5, 2020 at 8:54 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Rich West** <capeelizabethhappy@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 8:03 AM

Subject: Re: Fences make angry neighbors

To: Christopher Straw <christopher.straw@capeelizabeth.org>

Cc: Matthew Sturgis <matthew.sturgis@capeelizabeth.org>, Valerie Adams <valerie.adams@capeelizabeth.org>

Thanks so much for your message, Chris. I always appreciate a member of the *elected* community getting back to a taxpaying (and visible) constituent. One would hope that every town councilor will respond to an email but alas (no one is *that* busy in this town), with a brother who is a state cop, a mother a former *elected* town clerk for 36 years, and a father who was a city building inspector, I recognize when political peeps are nervous, anxious, or resistant. The history of the Town Council in Cape Elizabeth has witnessed people with all of those qualities...and then some. And yet, too, like you, there are/have been some great citizen-advocates on the TC.

I might finally add, too, that the vindictiveness of transplants and people with new money remain among the most annoying and distressing points of town evolution.

I appreciate your candor, as always, and recognize that this town has evolved... Sometimes in such a negative way, prompting me and scores of others to wonder what the true vision is...if any. With the approval of monstrosity (and UGLY) home blueprints, interlopers who could give a damn about permanent residents, and a strip mall and now a "Cape Dental Complex" as representative of our Town Center, Falmouth and Yarmouth no longer seem to be the only towns in search of an identity.

Cape Elizabeth can now claim that mantra, too.

With my schedule now permanently altered, I find myself in Cape 24-7, rather than the five days a week over the last 10 years. I guess this means I'll engage myself even further into the conversations taking place both in my neighborhood and in the town.

Until then, your efficiency and transparency are deeply appreciated and anything I can do to support your views, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks again.

Rich West

On Jul 19, 2020, at 4:30 PM, Christopher Straw <christopher.straw@capeelizabeth.org> wrote:

Rich -

Thank you for all the work you put into maintaining your beautiful property -- it is truly a gem and the Town is fortunate to have it within its borders.

I too was surprised that the property owner elected to build the "Great Wall of Cragmoor" -- that said, my wife was chastised earlier this year for letting our labrador retriever happily walk along the wall on Shore (like kids have done for decades) so I guess nothing should surprise me anymore as the general theme in Maine appears to be switching from "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should" to "If I can, I will."

As for modifying the fence ordinance, unfortunately IMHO a majority of the Town Council are completely wrong-headed when it comes to zoning and are making decisions that will eventually turn us into OOB North. (Moreover, the surest way to get a majority behind a zoning issue is apparently to have me advocate the opposite view. Hmmm... maybe I should send them an email saying I believe the fence ordinance is fine the way it is?). I can only hope that time proves my concerns to be unfounded.

Regards,

Chris Straw

On Sat, Jul 18, 2020 at 11:48 AM Rich West <capeelizabethhappy@gmail.com> wrote:

Greetings!

Now that the fence on Shore Road/Cragmoor has gone up, this 8 foot monstrosity remains an embarrassment, particularly as the Town Council has considered rejuvenation to Shore Road in the future. Clearly, as a Shore Road homeowner/resident for over 2 decades, I've seen it all--including an entirely new turnover of neighbors in Cragmoor, and to the left and right of me for several houses (except for Patty Monaghan).

But, in my life, I never thought I'd witness such a horrible display of "fence verbosity," and what I see as undercutting the integrity of this marvelous road. I don't care about the rationale for the fence, owned by a landowner who arrived to Cape from NYC a few years ago; My question is clear:

Is this anyway to welcome guests to our own and for neighbors to co-exist?

At several points over the years, I thought speeding would remain as the biggest imperative to address (the solar speed system by Island View is laughable at this point because cars are going FASTER than I imagined).

Now, it's the aesthetic horror of Home Depot wood slats that rise up like Trump's border wall.

Aside from the overt ridicule by walkers and runners--from Charles to Mitchell, from Forest to Glen--I have listened *ad nauseam* to Cape people wonder in amazement how a "resident" can do this ("You're kidding? 8 feet up?"). I've been told by Ben that the height is within code.

To this end, and the reason for writing: I would strongly recommend that the town quickly get a height ordinance to avoid other visual catastrophes as the one the town will now experience for years to come. We have no zoning regulations on fences? Are you kidding me?! That's outrageous!

As someone on Beach Bluff told me yesterday: The fence has made this gateway into our beautiful town "look like a farm in Aroostook County."

Um, that observation is so very kind at this point.

Regards and appreciation for your commitment to our town! I also appreciate that this email is public domain so that others can come by and look at what is legally allowed on one of the most traveled roads in Southern Maine.

Rich West
821 Shore Road

Matthew E Sturgis, CMA
Town Manager
Town of Cape Elizabeth



Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Just so you know...

1 message

Rich West <capeelizabethhappy@gmail.com>
To: cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org

Thu, Jul 30, 2020 at 1:18 PM

Hello:

I'm hoping that if you haven't done so already, the Council will expeditiously identify the fence ordinance on a formal agenda because now I'm hearing someone on Oakhurst is looking to do the same height after finding out Cape has no height ordinance (yep, the Cragmoor horror show prompted her).

And someone on Forest send me this, as it directly relates to the problem:

https://www.memun.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?EntryId=5259&Command=Core_Download&language=en-US&PortalId=0&TabId=119

The fact that this town has gotten this far with no ordinance on height is amazing, to be sure. But, I and others do NOT want this horrifying 8 foot Home Depot-like monster going up all over town now that citizens see that it's legal.

I'm now done writing about this but this issue will always be with us, especially if you live on this side of the Cape.

Thanks.

Rich West
821 Shore



Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Fwd: The Cragmoor Wall of Shame

1 message

Matthew Sturgis <matthew.sturgis@capeelizabeth.org>
To: Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Wed, Aug 5, 2020 at 8:56 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Rich West <capeelizabethhappy@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 10:53 AM
Subject: The Cragmoor Wall of Shame
To: <cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org>

Hello again:

While I await the necessary changes to ensure 100% safety of pedestrians and vehicles regarding the wall on Cragmoor/Shore, I have found myself, once again, in the unenviable position, over the past 2 weeks, of talking to scores of people who walk, run, bike, or otherwise meander on the most traveled pedestrian route in town (at this point, I forgot how many people listen to me and my views but I have informed others that Valerie A. and Chris, or about 30% of the Council, acknowledged the email in case they want to write but also know who/what to expect).

Unequivocally, the person's fence has become the target of--and I'll be kind here--"provocative" comments. As an avid gardener and outside enthusiast, over the past decades, I have found myself as the unofficial directional for both locals and out-of-staters ("How far are we from Ft. Williams?") and therefore, in a position of knowing how many people feel about that fence.

[No kidding: I talk to between 60-80 people per week while outside; it's almost 11 in the morning now and I've already learned about an autistic niece, a vacation in Boothbay, heavy equipment on Stonybrook, an oil leak, and even Taylor Swift's new album ("It'll kill the charts") from about a dozen people who walk on both sides of the street]].

First, a special thanks to both Valerie A. and Chris for clarification and sincere acknowledgement of my concerns (and as it stands, the concerns of others). I really appreciate the fact that the two of you were so respectful of my concern and responded so efficiently.

Second, as this fence has elicited so much conversation "on the street," in the end, I, for one, will look forward to 1) any modification of the fence legally and appropriately and 2) the Town Council workshop or meeting where fence height will be on the agenda.

Everyone I have spoken to at CSalt, Cookie Jar, or by my stone wall is shocked that this height can occur in our town and as my neighbor has written to you, can you imagine if I and others started to erect such intrusive and hideous fences on Shore Road? Once a meeting or workshop is scheduled for the ordinance, I and others will make it a priority to express both the sadness and outrage regarding the ability for any homeowner to build a Home Depot-like fence on a route such as Shore Road.

And, for the record: I know of no other homeowner on Shore who plans on building a stockade fence.

Rich West
821 Shore Road

Matthew E Sturgis, CMA
Town Manager
Town of Cape Elizabeth



Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>

Fwd: "Wall" at Cragmoor

1 message

Valerie Adams <valerie.adams@capeelizabeth.org>

Wed, Aug 5, 2020 at 10:27 AM

To: Debra Lane <debra.lane@capeelizabeth.org>, Matthew Sturgis <matthew.sturgis@capeelizabeth.org>

We also received this one which could be included as well?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <cindy.talbot@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 12:48 PM

Subject: "Wall" at Cragmoor

To: <cetowncouncil@capeelizabeth.org>

CC: <benjaminmcdoubal@capeelizabeth.org>

Dear Council Members.

I don't know if this is in your jurisdiction; however, I feel compelled to write to you for the first time since moving to Cape in 2013. I live at [825 Shore Rd](#), at the corner of Stonybrook. (You may remember us as the house where the young driver crashed through our stone wall late one night in October 2013.)

Below is the 2019 Google street view of the property diagonally across Shore Road from us. A couple of summers ago the new homeowner planted a substantial mixed "hedge" along the stone wall, I assume because she wanted more privacy. However, now she seems to find it necessary to erect a huge wall within a couple of feet of the stone wall and, because the ground here is already 3' +/- higher than the sidewalk, we are looking at a barrier more than 10 feet high. It is just awful. Not only does it block a beautiful view, but it must be a hazard - blocking the view for cars exiting Cragmoor. I have seen people walking down the sidewalk "give the finger" to the wall. I can only assume they feel like it is a hateful display of trying to keep people out, in addition to her blatant "private property - under surveillance" signs. I wonder how she would feel if her neighbors erected a 10' wall on the water side of her property?

My understanding through our neighbor, Richard West, is that the town has no ordinance to prevent this sort of construction and this seems unbelievable as it is so close to the road and there really aren't any other fences like this all along Shore Road. Is it within the right-of-way from Shore Road? The telephone pole at the corner is within the fence, don't the utilities require relatively easy access to their infrastructure? If nothing can be done to convince the homeowner that this was a mistake and is unnecessary as the plantings have already blocked most of her view, then at least we should make sure it isn't allowed in the future. Can you imagine if all of us along Shore Road erected "walls" to keep people from simply looking at our homes? The beautiful drive/bike/walk/run down Shore road would feel like progressing down a tunnel.

I attended the informational meeting last year regarding the reconstruction of Shore Road from Preble to Ft. Williams. It seems like that expense is intended to make the road safer for everyone as well as enhance the beauty of this area. Let's keep it an open and welcoming community by making sure no more walls close it off.



Cindy

Cynthia J. Talbot



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Valerie A. Adams, Town Councilor
Valerie.Adams@capeelizabeth.com



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