

THE CHATHAM ALLIANCE FOR PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance
Chatham/Harwich Hospital Auxiliary
Chatham Windmill Group
Friends of Trees
South Chatham Village Association

Chatham Conservation Foundation
Chatham Historical Society
Eldredge Public Library
Friends of Pleasant Bay
West Chatham Association

Chatham Garden Club
Chatham Marconi Maritime Center
Friends of Chatham Waterways
Old Village Association
Women's Club of Chatham

The above-named non-profit organizations make up the Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation, which is 25 years old this year, 2018. This organization of organizations seeks to promote and advocate for preservation and conservation to sustain Chatham's historic, natural, and cultural resources.

In October 2017, Tim Wood, Editor of the Cape Cod Chronicle, wrote an editorial titled "The Unintended Consequences of Popularity". It is provided below so that our audience understands why this topic was selected for our 2018 Public Forum, and why Tim Wood was selected as its moderator.

Panel Members: Deborah Ecker, Jack Farrell, Bill Litchfield, Karen Murdoch, and John Whelan.

EDITORIAL

The Unintended Consequences of Popularity

Traffic was snarled in downtown Chatham, nary a parking place to be found, and crowds roamed the sidewalks and packed Kate Gould Park. A typical summer day in town?

No. That was the situation this past Saturday when the town was flooded with people here to take advantage of the fair fall weather and to participate in the Chatham Merchants Association-sponsored Oktoberfest.

Perhaps it's the string of unusually warm days, or maybe it's just the growing popularity of Cape Cod in the fall, but it seems to us that it's been a busier September and October than in the past. No doubt, there are many people who don't come here during the summer because of the crush of the crowds, which makes the shoulder seasons—especially the fall, when the weather is more predictably temperate than in the spring or early summer—the best time to visit. Ask folks who live here, and many will tell you this is their favorite time of year. Is that being endangered by the growing popularity of autumn on Cape Cod?

Alas, this is the price we pay for maintaining a desirable place to live and visit. Recent discussions about proposed improvements to the Route 28/Crowell Road intersection in Chatham got us thinking about the changes and sacrifices that sort of desirability entails. We've always had to scale things for the summer population—larger police and fire departments, more town services and more parking—rather than for the approximately 6,000 year-round residents in Chatham and Orleans, and even the 12,000 or so souls who call Harwich home for 12 months of the year. As more seasonal homeowners spent time here in the fall, and weekends, at least, take on the aspect of summer days, the inconveniences of summer—choked roads, clogged intersections, lack of parking—get stretched farther and farther. Labor Day runs into Columbus Day, which runs into Thanksgiving and then Christmas and First Night; Fall for Harwich, ClamBQ, Oktoberfest, Christmas by the Sea in the Harwiches, all seem to create a seamless continuum for faux summer in the year's waning months.

While this is good for local businesses and helps bolster a closer to year-round economy, it also means that intersections, like Route 28 and Crowell Road, that are inadequate and dangerous in the summer are unable to support traffic into the fall. It could mean summer-level town services needed longer; maybe not your typical summer activities like beaches, but emptying downtown trash bins and keeping the transfer stations running smoothly. And as the warm weather lingers longer, harbor departments may need to maintain larger staffs, and popular tourist attractions like the Chatham Fish Pier may need more oversight. And workforce and affordable housing, necessary to keep those services and businesses going, may become even more acute.

It's nice to be popular. Those pesky unintended consequences, it seems, are only starting to make themselves known. (Tim Wood, Editor *Cape Cod Chronicle* –October 26, 2017)