

In The Matter Of:
Coastal Resources Management Council

Planning and Procedures Subcommittee Meeting
July 23, 2024

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

* * * * *

IN RE: PLANNING AND PROCEDURES SUBCOMMITTEE

* * * * *

Date: July 23, 2024
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Administration Building
One Capitol Hill
Conference Room A
Providence, RI

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Raymond C. Coia, Chairman
Donald T. Gomez
Patricia Reynolds
Ronald Gagnon, DEM

Anthony DeSisto, Esquire, Legal Counsel
Mark Hartmann, Esquire, Legal Counsel

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeffrey Willis, Executive Director
Laura Miguel, Deputy Director
Bruce Lofgren, Coastal Policy Analyst
Lisa Turner, Recording Secretary
Ryan Moore, IT

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I N D E X

1. Call to Order.....4
2. Approval of previous meeting minutes.....5
3. Old Business/Works in Progress.....5
4. Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on
Petition For Promulgation of Rules.....5

SPEAKER	PAGE
MIKE JARBEAU.....	9
STEVEN LOMBARDI.....	12
JAMES BOYD.....	14
JOE PARRILLO.....	20
EVAN KENNY.....	21
FRED DEFINIS.....	21
KEVIN CULTON.....	22
ALEX PARENTE.....	23
PETER CHWALISCEWSKI.....	24
JEFF GLADSTONE.....	27
PHILLIP CASACALENDA.....	31
MIKE MURPHY.....	32
MICHAEL WOODS.....	33
KEVIN DONOVAN.....	36
TIM SIMONSON.....	37
BILL MATHEWS.....	39
ED FORMISANO.....	41

Planning and Procedures Subcommittee Meeting - July 23, 2024

SPEAKER	PAGE
JEFFREY CARROLL.....	41
GREG GULINO.....	44
BOB McCANN.....	44
RICH HITTINGER.....	46
SCOTT TRAVERS.....	48
KEVIN HAUGHEY.....	49
RICHARD LANGSETH.....	51
KARL WADENSTEN.....	54
JOHN RUSSELL.....	58
JOANNE WEST.....	60
ARMANI SEPE.....	60
CHRISTIAN RUFFASTO.....	62
PETER GENDREAU.....	64
AMY SONDER.....	64
ELAINE GEBHARDT.....	66
KEN RUDMAN.....	68
LOU DALISE.....	71
MICHAEL BAKER.....	73
5. Other Business.....	75
6. New Business.....	75
7. Staff Reports.....	75
8. Adjourn.....	75

Planning and Procedures Subcommittee Meeting - July 23, 2024

4

1 TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024

2 (MEETING COMMENCED AT 3:15 P.M.)

3 CHAIRMAN COIA: Is everyone signed in that
4 wishes to speak? There's a sign-in sheet that's
5 over there for individuals who wish to speak. It's
6 over there where the gentleman is right there.

7 Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to
8 call to order the State of Rhode Island Coastal
9 Resources Management Council's Planning Procedures
10 Subcommittee to order. Today is Tuesday,
11 July 23, 2024. As I indicated, we have a sign-in
12 sheet for anyone that wishes to speak. I'd ask
13 Lisa, if you could just retrieve that because we'll
14 work off that, and then if anyone else comes in
15 that wants to sign it, they can sign the duplicate
16 or the one underneath that one.

17 We are a hybrid meeting. There is a
18 public link for public viewing only. There is a
19 camera there. We are recording the proceedings as
20 well.

21 For anyone that wishes to speak, we'll
22 have you come forward. We will ask you your name.
23 Spell it for the record, and just speak clearly.
24 And with that, I'm going to ask for a motion to

1 approve the minutes of the previous meeting, the
2 previous meeting being May 14, 2024.

3 MS. REYNOLDS: So moved.

4 CHAIRMAN COIA: Motion's been made. Is
5 there a second?

6 MR. GAGNON: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN COIA: Motion made and seconded.
8 Any discussion?

9 (NO RESPONSE)

10 CHAIRMAN COIA: Hearing none, all in favor
11 say, "aye."

12 (VOICE VOTE)

13 CHAIRMAN COIA: Anyone opposed?

14 (NO RESPONSE)

15 CHAIRMAN COIA: That motion carries.

16 (MOTION PASSED)

17 CHAIRMAN COIA: Next on our agenda is old
18 business/works in progress. I don't believe there
19 are any. Is that correct, Director Willis?

20 MR. WILLIS: That is correct, Mr. Chair.

21 CHAIRMAN COIA: All right. Next on our
22 agenda would be No. 4, Advanced Notice of Proposed
23 Rulemaking on a Petition for Promulgation of Rules.
24 That being 2024-04-071, Quidnessett Country Club.

1 It's a petition for change the map of water type
2 classification for North Kingstown (north). I
3 would ask, at this time, for Director Willis to
4 give an explanation -- a brief explanation as to
5 why we're here, what the application is for the
6 benefit of those that may not know.

7 MR. WILLIS: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
8 So back in the later spring, we received a petition
9 from the country club to change the water type from
10 Type II to Type I. That was put out to notice in
11 an advanced notice of public rulemaking that we
12 advertised on May 21st of this year with a public
13 comment period that ended on June 22nd -- 28th.
14 Excuse me.

15 Within that time period, we received
16 several comments, obviously, and some of those
17 comments asked for a public hearing under a section
18 of the statute for when we are actually in
19 rulemaking. We are not actually in rulemaking now.
20 It's an advanced notice so the advanced notice is
21 to do what we're doing tonight, gather comment.
22 However, the section of the General Laws that
23 offers if 25 people or more request a hearing, one
24 shall be given, was for when you are in actual

1 rulemaking. However, since we received more than
2 25 requests to have a hearing under the incorrect
3 statutory citation, it was pretty clear that we
4 needed this type of meeting in addition to
5 gathering public comments that we put out in the
6 advanced notice back in May and June.

7 That's why we're here tonight. We're here
8 only to receive public comment, whether you are
9 for, against, or otherwise for this particular
10 petition. We will not be making any decisions
11 tonight, but we welcome your comments relative to
12 the request of the country club to change the
13 regulations of the Coastal Resources Management
14 Council.

15 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Any questions
16 from our Council members of Mr. Willis?

17 MS. REYNOLDS: No.

18 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Okay. I'm now
19 going to turn it over to our legal counsel,
20 Anthony DeSisto, to give an explanation as to the
21 procedure for the meeting here today.

22 MR. DeSISTO: Well, this meeting is
23 pursuant to Section 42-35-2.5, Subsection A and
24 Subsection D of the General Laws. And that allows

1 this subcommittee to solicit comments and
2 recommendations from the public. And that's what
3 we're here for today. It's just for the comment
4 period on this proposed rulemaking. And from here,
5 after these comments are taken and noted, this will
6 be sent out to staff, and staff will make a
7 recommendation. We'll come back to this committee
8 for further action prior to going to the Council.
9 And that is under the same statute.

10 CHAIRMAN COIA: Okay. Any questions?
11 Mr. Willis.

12 MR. WILLIS: Can I just do a couple of
13 housekeeping matters?

14 CHAIRMAN COIA: Absolutely.

15 MR. WILLIS: So a number of you have
16 signed in to speak tonight or not, but you've also
17 signed in if you're opposing or in favor of the
18 matter. We ask that if you would like to be on our
19 email list for any future meetings or actions on
20 this matter, to please give that to us now, or you
21 can see Lisa Turner, our recording secretary, after
22 the meeting and she can take down your email
23 address, and we'll make sure that you're added to
24 any future notifications that we issue.

1 And then one more housekeeping matter.
2 The exit door over there underneath the exit sign
3 on my far left, your right, is only to be used in
4 an emergency. There's are active meetings in
5 offices going on with State folks over there. They
6 asked us not to go in and out of that door while
7 we're in this meeting. But, of course, if there's
8 an emergency, we have that exit, that exit, this
9 one, and the one behind us if we need to. So thank
10 you all for that. Mr. Chair.

11 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Okay. We will
12 begin. I'm going to go down the list, and the
13 first individual that is signed up is Mike Jarbeau.
14 Am I saying it correct? So just for the record, if
15 you could identify yourself.

16 MR. JARBEAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
17 name is Mike Jarbeau, J-A-R-B-E-A-U, and I'm
18 representing Save the Bay.

19 We previously submitted written comments
20 on this matter. Hopefully, you've had a chance to
21 read them. Tonight, I just wanted to highlight a
22 few of the key issues from Save the Bay's
23 perspective for you.

24 We believe this petition should be denied,

1 and given the applicant's ongoing violation and the
2 harm to coastal resources, it is inappropriate to
3 even consider this petition at this time. We
4 believe the petition should be denied for several
5 reasons.

6 First, the Council's stated goal is to
7 preserve and protect Type I waters. The applicant
8 failed to make a case for why the water type
9 classification should be changed from Type I. No
10 substantive changes have been made to the area
11 under consideration since its designation as
12 Type I. Type II waters, especially in this part of
13 the bay, are characterized by hardened structures
14 and docks, many of which precede the CRMC. These
15 areas rarely have sandy shorelines or provide the
16 habitat value of the site in question today.

17 The applicant relies on the construction
18 of condos more than 1,500 feet from the shoreline
19 and a minor addition at an adjacent property to
20 justify the water type change. These upland
21 changes have no relevance to the Type I water
22 classification.

23 Second, prior to the illegal construction
24 of the wall currently on the shoreline, the area

1 supported coastal functions, provided shoreline
2 habitat, and allowed for unrestricted public
3 access. These are important features of Type I
4 waters. A 2012 CRMC staff report related to a
5 previously proposed, less intrusive project on this
6 project detailed likely loss of natural functions,
7 habitat, reduced shoreline access, and the
8 elimination of a sediment source for an adjacent
9 wetland system. Approval of this petition would
10 set an incredibly dangerous precedent, weakening
11 CRMC regulations and encouraging unchecked coastal
12 development.

13 Finally, it is inappropriate to consider a
14 water type change as a potential path to allowing
15 the wall to remain in place. There is no evidence
16 to show that the wall was built in accordance with
17 standards, and it will need to be removed, even if
18 the water type is changed through this process.

19 Finally, Save the Bay encourages the
20 subcommittee to deny this petition to maintain the
21 Type I water type classification, and we ask the
22 Council to proceed with enforcement action,
23 including the removal of the illegally built wall
24 and restoration of the shoreline. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Next is
2 Steven Lombardi.

3 MR. LOMBARDI: Hi. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to speak. My name is Steven Lombardi,
5 L-O-M-B-A-R-D-I. I'm the executive director of the
6 East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce. I'm also a
7 past member of the New England Golf Course Owners
8 Association, as my family has been in the golf
9 course business for many years.

10 By way of background, I've had a long and
11 personal business affiliation with Quidnessett.
12 Quidnessett is a long-time member of the
13 East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce. We have our
14 annual meeting at Quidnessett, and we often do two
15 events per year at Quidnessett.

16 Further, many of our East Greenwich
17 Chamber members are Quidnessett members and host
18 events there, including golf events. And I've been
19 quoted in the Boston Globe in the US -- USA Today,
20 and in a previous letter. I realized the
21 importance of Quidnessett Country Club to the
22 community and the State of Rhode Island at an early
23 age when I attended an Arnold Palmer versus Sam
24 Snead golf event in the early '60s.

1 I was also the president of the
2 University of Rhode Island Alumni Association when
3 we had our annual alumni golf tournament at
4 Quidnessett. And I pressed for that because I
5 thought it was such a great place for our
6 university to gather, and I would want subsequent
7 organization events to always have that opportunity
8 to come to Quidnessett.

9 Quidnessett is a very important asset to
10 our entire community. It provides jobs, social and
11 networking opportunities, and serves both the
12 business community and the many organizations
13 seeking a great site for events.

14 Quidnessett is an 18-hole golf course as
15 presently configured, and it's an aesthetic and
16 green space asset to our community. So the reason
17 I'm advocating the petition is that the integrity
18 and the preservation of the 18 holes is critical to
19 Quidnessett's continued success and its valuable
20 role in the community and the entire state.

21 So I respectfully ask that you consider
22 adopting Quidnessett's water type change petition.
23 Regardless of previous circumstances, I am
24 advocating in the strongest possible terms that

1 Quidnessett be granted approval so that the future
2 of this important community and state asset can be
3 ensured.

4 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

5 MR. LOMBARDI: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN COIA: Next, Bob --

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All set. I'll
8 pass.

9 CHAIRMAN COIA: All right. James Boyd.

10 MR. BOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
11 name is James Boyd, B-O-Y-D.

12 Mr. Chairman, Council Members Reynolds and
13 Gagnon, CRMC legal counsel and CRMC staff, it's
14 very nice to see you all. And I must say, it's odd
15 for me to be sitting on this side of the table as
16 opposed to over with the staff. As you know, I
17 spent more than two decades working with the CRMC
18 helping to write regulations and policy and help in
19 the enforcement of rules and regulations of the
20 CRMC in protection of our wonderful natural
21 resources here in Rhode Island.

22 My June 26th letter was submitted. For
23 the record, I'm not going to read that letter
24 verbatim. There are a few points I do want to

1 discuss and summarize here this evening.

2 Primarily, I am opposed to the water type
3 change classification as put forth in the petition
4 by the country club. The only reason that the
5 country club has put forth this petition is to
6 cover up for an illegally constructed wall on their
7 property. They knowingly constructed this wall
8 knowing that a permit was necessary to do so and,
9 in fact, they've known so for more than a decade,
10 going back at least to 2012.

11 Because at that time, you'll recall, or
12 certainly staff will, that they had applied for a
13 wall at that time. It was a different type of
14 wall. It was a wall, a sheet-pile wall that was
15 going to be set back from the inland edge of the
16 bluff. Somewhere around 25 feet inland of the
17 bluff. It would have been within the 50-foot
18 setback so it was, obviously, to be regulated. But
19 at that time, we did not have regulations that
20 would have treated that as structural shoreline
21 protection. Its intended purpose was to protect
22 the 14th fairway in the future from erosion.

23 The country club never carried forth with
24 that application. The Council, at that time, had

1 admonished them to come forward with a combined
2 application to do nonstructural shoreline and
3 revegetation in combination with that seawall. And
4 the Council was so concerned with that application
5 at the time, we actually wrote new regulations. I
6 drafted them. The Council approved those
7 regulations in June of 2012 to deal with any
8 sheet-pile wall or structure similar to, that was
9 constructed within the 50-foot setback, would be
10 considered structural shoreline protection, which,
11 as you know, is prohibited on Type I shorelines.

12 This is a Type I shoreline. From
13 Calf Pasture Point, just north of Davisville, all
14 the way up to Green River, to the mouth there at
15 Sand Point and Greenwich Bay, there's a Type I
16 shoreline. The country club in its petition is
17 suggesting that this is a residential, recreational
18 area.

19 Well, the Mount View neighborhood
20 immediately south and abutting the country club is
21 indeed Type II. It's a medium dense, residential
22 area. Homes are within tens of feet of the coastal
23 feature, and there are many preexisting seawalls.
24 It was appropriately classified by the CRMC in the

1 1980s as a Type II shoreline. But everything
2 north, up to the Green's River and everything south
3 to Calf Pasture Point is Type I.

4 There are residences there, townhouses on
5 the country club property. There's 47 townhouses
6 and 17 structures, as I understand it. The nearest
7 townhouse is 500 feet from the shoreline. The
8 country club is 1,000 feet from the shoreline.
9 Neither of those are at risk from erosion on this
10 particular shoreline.

11 The structure itself. As you know, it's
12 an illegally constructed revetment. From all the
13 photographs that I've seen, from my observations on
14 the water -- and I'm on the bay 200 days a year now
15 since I've retired from the CRMC -- and I see this
16 wall almost every day that I go out because I come
17 out of Apponaug to go into the upper bay, and I
18 look over and I can see this structure. It is
19 really obvious on that shoreline. It does not
20 appear to be an engineered structure. It looks as
21 though the stone was mostly dumped in place and
22 maybe some of it placed with machinery.

23 We've seen no evidence that this was
24 designed by a Rhode Island registered professional

1 engineer and plans prepared by a professional
2 engineer, which is a requirement of the CRMC
3 regulations, irrespective of if this wasn't a
4 Type I shoreline. In my view, it needs to be
5 removed. And the enforcement here should be that
6 this wall should be removed and the shoreline
7 restored.

8 As it exists right now, it is blocking
9 lateral public access along the shoreline at high
10 tide. That's clear from the photographs taken
11 prior to the construction of the wall last year.
12 And as it exists today, if you were to walk that
13 shoreline at high tide today, like around 10 a.m.,
14 you would be walking up on the revetment and
15 endangering yourself walking along the rocks to get
16 from north to south or south to north along that
17 shoreline.

18 Lastly, clearly, the country club did this
19 to protect the 14th fairway because that's the one
20 that is in closest proximity to that bank that is
21 experiencing the erosion problem. I'm certainly
22 not suggesting that the club let the 14th fairway
23 fall into the bay. And I don't think anyone here
24 wants to see that happen either. However, the

1 country club has alternatives.

2 There are four fairways in that northeast
3 corner of the country club. They can be redesigned
4 and realigned and moved away from that eroding
5 bluff. That bluff, the angle of repose on that
6 bluff can be angled back so it's less erosive. It
7 can be planted and nonstructural methods can work
8 there.

9 The club touts the fact that it's a
10 Donald Ross-designed course, and I have no doubt
11 that it is. And I'm sure it's a fabulous course.
12 I don't play golf. I happen to live in
13 East Providence. We have another -- a couple of
14 Donald Ross-designed courses in East Providence.

15 Most recently, Met Links was opened up,
16 the former Metacomet Golf Club, which is now being
17 redeveloped as a multiuse property with residential
18 and commercial businesses. But just a month ago,
19 the new Met Links nine-hole golf course was just
20 opened. It was designed by Northeast Golf,
21 Robert McNeill, who did a fabulous job redesigning
22 and realigning a Donald Ross-designed course. If
23 it can be done there, it can be done at
24 Quidnessett. The revetment is not necessary. It

1 should be removed, the shoreline restored, and
2 alternatives be considered.

3 With that, Mr. Chairman, I'd be happy to
4 answer any questions that you or other Council
5 members have. Otherwise, I'll conclude my
6 comments.

7 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

8 MR. BOYD: You're welcome.

9 CHAIRMAN COIA: Next, Joe Parrillo.

10 MR. PARRILLO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 Hello, everyone. My name is Joe Parrillo,
12 P-A-R-R-I-L-L-O. I am going to speak to you today
13 about my employer and the ramifications this may
14 have on employees. This is important to me because
15 not only is this company our job, it's our
16 livelihood.

17 Quidnessett Country Club is a pillar to
18 the community, and I hope it can continue to thrive
19 and showcase the beauty of its golf course. From
20 special events, weddings, charitable golf
21 tournaments, and nonprofits, Quidnessett Country
22 Club and its employees work hard to support their
23 families and households.

24 I support the change to Type II as it

1 affects the success of the company as well as each
2 and every employee that works there. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN COIA: Evan Kenney.

4 MR. KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 Good afternoon, Councilors.

6 I'm not here to -- Evan Kenney,
7 K-E-N-N-E-Y -- I'm not here to debate about Type I
8 and Type II waters. I'm not qualified to assess
9 those matters. That's the important work that you
10 folks do. I'm just here to ask for discretion and
11 advocate for -- as an employee of the company to
12 advocate for discretion in any pursuit of
13 restoration efforts or any other punitive measures
14 that you folks may consider.

15 I think it's important to protect the
16 club, and I think it's important to make sure that
17 any measures that this Council requires are
18 financially reasonable. And I just want to make
19 sure that every employee, you know, in the club,
20 can continue to enjoy employment and not have to
21 face any sort of unreasonable financial obligations
22 that may have been unforeseen. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN COIA: Fred Definis, did I say
24 that right?

1 MR. DEFINIS: Very good. Thank you.
2 Fred Definis, D-E-F-I-N-I-S. I am the second vice
3 president of Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers
4 Association. A group that represents about 2,000
5 saltwater anglers in Rhode Island, a subset of over
6 45,000 licensed saltwater anglers in Rhode Island.

7 We all know, through the CRMC, that the
8 water designations require careful and painstaking
9 analysis to come to these designations, and there
10 is really no compelling public interest at this
11 time to be downgrading a particular waterway
12 because we have construction of a wall contrary to
13 the CRMC's own regulation.

14 I feel that this would undermine the
15 authority and credibility of the CRMC, and I,
16 therefore, urge that the CRMC abstain from any
17 rulemaking that would downgrade this waterway from
18 its current status. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Matt Branigan.

20 MR. BRANIGAN: Pass.

21 CHAIRMAN COIA: Kevin Culton.

22 MR. CULTON: My name is Kevin Culton. I
23 am the assistant golf professional at
24 Quidnessett Country Club. I've been employed there

1 for three years. They've been nothing but great to
2 me. It's a place that I would like to continue to
3 work at.

4 Unfortunately, this decision will directly
5 affect me and all the other employees that work
6 there as well. I would hope you take that into
7 consideration and look at this in a more holistic
8 view because this is bigger than golf. This is
9 also our careers and our lives. So please just
10 take that into consideration. Thank you for your
11 time.

12 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Alex Parente.

13 MR. PARENTE: Hello, everyone. My name is
14 Alex Parente. It is P-A-R-E-N-T-E. I am also the
15 assistant golf professional at Quidnessett Country
16 Club. A little bit different than my fellow golf
17 professional, Kevin. I have actually worked there
18 for 12 years. It's the only job I've ever had.
19 Quidnessett Country Club means so much to me, and
20 part of that is our golf course. Right? It's one
21 of the top golf courses in the state. All 18 holes
22 are spectacular, the 14th hole in particular.
23 Under the current water type, we are not able to
24 protect it.

1 If the golf course falls into the ocean,
2 it is not the golf course anymore. It is not
3 Quidnessett Country Club. And just for the record,
4 Quidnessett Country Club was designed by
5 Geoffrey Cornish, not Donald Ross.

6 But, yeah, I mean, as an employer of the
7 club, the club has -- I mean, I've grown with the
8 club. I started out as a kid. And hopefully,
9 people agree, I think I've turned myself into a
10 relatively upstanding young man.

11 The club in its entirety, all the members,
12 ownership have always been very good to me. And I
13 would hate to see it fall into the ocean and no
14 longer be what it should be.

15 I appreciate any support of this water
16 type change. And I just -- like Kevin said, I just
17 want you guys to realize that, you know, there are
18 employees here that the club means a lot to, and
19 our employment may rest in the balance of keeping
20 this golf course a golf course. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Peter --

22 MR. CHWALISCEWSKI: You're not going to
23 try my last name?

24 CHAIRMAN COIA: I was.

1 MR. CHWALISCEWSKI: I think you're going
2 to want me to spell it.

3 CHAIRMAN COIA: It's not written that neat
4 so I can give it a shot, but you're going to say it
5 for us, please.

6 MR. CHWALISCEWSKI: Members of the
7 committee, good afternoon. My name is
8 Peter Chwaliscewski. I'm the golf professional at
9 Quidnessett. Chwaliscewski is spelled
10 C-H-W-A-L-I-S-C-E-W-S-K-I. I did think you needed
11 it spelled.

12 I work with Alex and Kevin. And Alex just
13 stole my line referencing that it's designed by
14 Geoffrey Cornish. I think it's important to
15 reiterate because the other gentleman mentioned
16 that it would be -- you can redesign the golf
17 course and you could bring in an architect. It
18 sounds like he didn't know that we're -- who our
19 golf course architect was, and so my guess is that
20 his knowledge of course design is not that
21 extensive either.

22 If we were to -- if we were to redesign
23 the golf course and change everything, we would
24 cease to be Quidnessett Country Club. It is a

1 special place. It's a Rhode Island icon. We
2 hold -- we hold many junior golf clinics. We've
3 had thousands of kids come through our golf
4 instructional clinics.

5 We're trying to -- we're trying to grow
6 the game and provide a service to our members and
7 members of our community. As an employee of the
8 club, I rely on this club to provide for my wife
9 and family. I think the perception of country
10 clubbers is it's a very privileged place. And I
11 would say that there's a lot of employees here that
12 work for this organization that rely on it to
13 provide for themselves and their families. The
14 decisions that are made based on the input in this
15 meeting have serious consequences, not only for the
16 members and the golfers but for all of us
17 employees.

18 And secondly, given the events of COVID
19 and everything that's happened in the last five or
20 six years, you know, people have -- people have
21 really tried to embrace their outdoor spaces. And
22 so I understand that the role of CRMC is to help
23 protect the coastline and things of that nature.
24 But also please don't lose sight of the fact that

1 we need help protecting our outdoor spaces, and one
2 of those is this golf course. So I hope that you
3 take that into consideration, and I appreciate your
4 time. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN COIA: Jeff Gladstone. I can say
6 that one. That's easy.

7 MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, that's correct.
8 Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Thank you,
9 members of the Board.

10 My name is Jeffrey Gladstone. I come here
11 on a number of -- wearing a number of hats and a
12 yamaka, as a matter of fact. I am a member, and I
13 have been a member of Quidnessett Country Club for
14 about 30 years. I lived in East Greenwich, I live
15 in Warwick, and I'm a lifelong Rhode Islander. I'm
16 very familiar with the CRMC, DEM. I'm an active
17 lawyer. I've been practicing since the '80s.
18 Anthony DeSisto is one of my great opponents, who I
19 always am in fear of when I go in a courtroom and
20 see him standing there.

21 But what I would like to stress, if I may,
22 is coming from somebody who understands the impact
23 that these regulations and that, quite frankly, the
24 change in sea level is having on all of us not only

1 in Rhode Island but everywhere, we're going to be
2 having to face a lot of -- a lot of difficult
3 changes. And some of those changes are going to be
4 impacting landowners, such as Quidnessett Country
5 Club and other private landowners. And it's not
6 anybody's fault that we're in this situation, but
7 we, many of us, enjoy the shoreline, and we
8 appreciate what Rhode Island has to give. And one
9 of the things that I am hoping that we can do here
10 is develop an approach that is going to respect
11 what we've all come to love and to cherish in
12 Rhode Island, and that's our seacoast and the
13 development along the seacoast. And that includes
14 Quidnessett Country Club.

15 Quidnessett Country Club is a very unique
16 place. Although, I heard that there is a
17 suggestion of a redesign. I can tell you from
18 having played there for decades that you really
19 can't do that, and that's also because not only
20 CRMC regulations but DEM regulations. There are
21 wetlands all over the place. It's very narrow in
22 terms of where you can develop without actually
23 impacting water bodies. So I think I would suggest
24 that it would be impossible to maintain an 18-hole

1 golf course with the limited amount of space that
2 there is and the configuration of the golf course
3 because it's broken up the way it is.

4 So we are -- we have what I would consider
5 to be a historic landmark. And that I think
6 Quidnessett is old enough to become a historic
7 landmark. And we have to, I would hope, consider
8 the impact that we have not only in our beautiful
9 natural resources, but also on the development that
10 people have grown to love and depend on and have
11 become historic.

12 And I would suggest that we are confronted
13 with a situation where there really is very little
14 that can be done to protect the -- it's really the
15 green area as opposed to the fairway, by the way.
16 So it's a very important area. The tee of the
17 15th hole and the green area around the 14th hole,
18 in order to maintain that, there obviously was
19 constructed the structure to maintain it. If that
20 were lost, the golf course would be lost. And then
21 not only is it Quidnessett that's impacted, but
22 you'll also note that there is next door a senior
23 living facility that is also in a unique position
24 as well.

1 I would ask that the Council exercise its
2 discretion to change this from a Type I to Type II
3 waters. It truly is a recreational area. When I'm
4 out and I have the pleasure of playing there and
5 the privilege of playing there, I look out at the
6 boat races that are going on, I watch the
7 quahoggers, I watch the people fishing, the people
8 paddling by. I don't see, by the way, nor have I
9 seen for about 30 years, anybody walking along the
10 beach because it really did come up at high tide
11 and there was really no access as it is. There is
12 a sand area down -- hundreds of feet down the way,
13 but the impact of that I don't -- I think would be
14 nonexistent.

15 So I ask you to, in these very unusual
16 circumstances, to exercise your discretion and
17 understand that there are very little, if any,
18 alternatives to what was done. And the timing of
19 it and the manner in which it was done you can
20 criticize and talk about. But I'm just looking at
21 it from a practical position saying that we are in
22 a difficult place. How do you protect everybody's
23 interests? And I would suggest that maintaining
24 the structure is the only way to truly protect the

1 interest of all Rhode Islanders and of the
2 environment and of the people who enjoy their
3 recreational area.

4 So with that, all I can do is say that I
5 put my faith and trust in the people who are on the
6 Coastal Management Commission and that you will do
7 the right thing, and we can all move on together
8 and protect the beauty of Rhode Island. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN COIA: Phillip Casacalenda.
10 We'll go from there. Is Phillip here, Casacalenda?

11 MR. CASACALENDA: Casacalenda.

12 CHAIRMAN COIA: There you go.

13 MR. CASACALENDA: My name is
14 Phillip Casacalenda, C-A-S-A-C-A-L-E-N-D-A. I've
15 been a member of Quidnessett for a few years, and
16 I've played there for the last 25 years. And it's
17 just a beautiful place. And I'm not an engineer.
18 And I see the wall, and they needed to -- I feel
19 like they needed to protect their property. And I
20 just -- it's riprap. I don't know anything about
21 wall engineers -- engineering at all, but I just
22 wish that you people would consider giving them
23 some relief. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Mike Murphy.

1 MR. MURPHY: Good afternoon, everyone. My
2 name is Mike Murphy, M-U-R-P-H-Y. And I'm a
3 longtime member at Quidnessett Country Club. And
4 myself, like everyone else here that's here on
5 behalf of Quidnessett, we love the place. It's
6 beautiful. We love Rhode Island. We love the
7 seashore. We love the green space.

8 And, you know, we have a problem here, and
9 I think that there's certainly a way to have a
10 really positive outcome with this situation, this
11 unfortunate situation, as we sit here today. But
12 it really can become a positive situation. I'm
13 sure of it. Because it just makes sense to have --
14 to maintain the beautiful coastline and to maintain
15 the beauty of Quidnessett Country Club and the
16 history of Quidnessett Country Club.

17 And many of the members at the club are
18 also fishermen and boaters, and they're really
19 looking at the ocean from the club, from the green
20 grass, and they're looking at the green grass from
21 the ocean. And so everyone together, working
22 together here, can certainly come to a reasonable
23 conclusion. That's a win-win for everyone. Thank
24 you.

1 CHAIRMAN COIA: Michael Woods.

2 MR. WOODS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
3 Committee members. My name is Michael Woods,
4 W-O-O-D-S. And I'm here today on behalf of the
5 New England chapter of Backcountry Hunters &
6 Anglers. We're interested in protecting access to
7 public lands, waters, and wildlife, and we also
8 advocate for the habitat that fish and wildlife
9 depend upon.

10 I have heard that it is important to the
11 country club to protect their interests in this
12 piece of property by defending it, but I would
13 remind the Council that you are the stewards of the
14 public's interest in this area, and that comes from
15 Rhode Island's Constitution through the
16 General Assembly, who empowered the
17 Coastal Resources Management Council to provide for
18 the regulation and the development of our coastal
19 resources on behalf of the public who collectively
20 owns these things. And so I would urge you to give
21 equal deference to the public's interest in this
22 area.

23 Now, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers did
24 submit written comments, and in these, we urge the

1 Council -- the Subcommittee and ultimately the
2 Council to not proceed with rulemaking for the
3 water type change. In those written comments --
4 and I'm not going to reiterate them -- we provided
5 our rationale as to why this area identified as
6 Type I waters and was appropriately cited currently
7 and the change was unnecessary.

8 I also want to acknowledge that, you know,
9 that there is some need to look at these
10 enforcement cases, and there's no doubt that
11 there's an enforcement case against an illegal
12 development in this area on their own facts.

13 As I see it, what has happened here is
14 there is an applicant that knew they needed a
15 permit, and they did not get it. They proceeded
16 with construction, knowing that they shouldn't have
17 done it; and outside of the advice of this Council
18 and any of the public input that would have come
19 with granting a permit, they proceeded.

20 The project here was major. It has major
21 implications. As one of the previous witnesses
22 stated, you can see it from a mile and a half away
23 on the bay. This was not somebody that was
24 changing their garden beds or the curvature of

1 their driveway near the beach. This is a major
2 undertaking and has major implications on the area.

3 And finally, when it was brought to the
4 Council's attention and an enforcement action was
5 made, they didn't want to work within the
6 enforcement of, you know, the enforcement or the
7 adjudication. They came to the Council to change
8 the rules in their favor so that their illegal
9 activity would be legitimized, and that is what's
10 happening here.

11 I will finish off here by just giving my
12 take on what will happen if this rulemaking
13 proceeds and the wall is allowed to stay. This
14 would effectively amount to an alternative path for
15 some people, those who can afford counsel to
16 represent them and to fight it out in litigation,
17 an alternate path to permitting. You would no
18 longer have to come to the Council and show your
19 plans and have public comment to get your permit to
20 do your project. Now you would be able to do your
21 project, and there will be another path to get it
22 to stay.

23 And so for that reason, we are very
24 concerned with this as the first step on the road

1 to that destination. And again, I urge you to not
2 proceed with rulemaking here and to carry out the
3 enforcement action against the illegal activity
4 that is already pending.

5 I'm happy to answer any questions if you
6 have them, and I thank you for your time.

7 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Kevin Donovan.

8 MR. DONOVAN: An easy name,
9 Kevin Donovan, D-O-N-O-V-A-N.

10 CHAIRMAN COIA: Donovan.

11 MR. DONOVAN: My comments are pretty
12 brief. I'm not an expert at all in your processes
13 or in any provable potential harm that could occur
14 due to some rocks sitting there that are there to
15 try to attempt to preserve important land. From my
16 reading, it does seem that it's approvable. That
17 Type II water is the right decision here,
18 considering what it's based upon.

19 But more important from my perspective is,
20 in addition, I would encourage you to do no major
21 damage to the Quidnessett Country Club. It's not
22 just a golf course. It's a place where families
23 like mine for decades and decades can gather with
24 their children at the pool, at events, parents and

1 children benefit from the recreation, comradery,
2 skill development as well. And it's a place where
3 many high school proms, recognition award nights
4 take place. Also, people from all around
5 Rhode Island hold wedding receptions at the special
6 place. It can be one of the best days in their
7 lives.

8 So I trust your ability to reason very
9 logically and to act with balance as you evaluate
10 all of this and try to keep the importance of a
11 place like Quidnessett in mind as well. I'd
12 strongly request you to approve the change in the
13 water type classification, but mostly I just want
14 to thank you for your time today. Thanks.

15 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. C. Simonson.

16 MR. SIMONSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
17 members of the Board. My name is Tim Simonson,
18 S-I-M-O-N-S-O-N, and I am a member of
19 Quidnessett Country Club.

20 So as I approach you today, I've tried to
21 put myself in the position of the Board and the
22 staff involved in the rulemaking subject. And if I
23 understand correctly, some of the rules on this
24 topic go back 30 years, maybe to the 1980s,

1 something like that.

2 So I think about what was the world like,
3 what was Rhode Island like in the 1980s, and what
4 is it like today? I think we all can agree there's
5 been a few changes. There are wind turbines off
6 our coast increasing in quantity, and that's a
7 reality. They provide renewable energy for us.
8 And that has something to do with what we're
9 talking about here, water and things that are
10 changing.

11 If I understand from the popular media,
12 this is a quote, "Temperatures Are Rising." Quote,
13 2024 could surpass 2023 as the hottest year since
14 records began, end quote. So we have rising sea
15 levels as well. So these three observable facts,
16 which I don't think any of us would acknowledge but
17 do exist -- wouldn't contest, they do exist. So
18 there is change. During this same time that I've
19 just described, 30 years, 40 years, whatever it is,
20 we've also seen the erosion of, according to the
21 department's records, between 42 and 57 feet of
22 shoreline exactly where these rocks are today. So
23 we see that things are changing.

24 How is that change to be arrested in a way

1 that doesn't compromise the interest of all
2 parties? I don't know the answer to that question.
3 That's your job. But I do reach back into history
4 and find a quote by the Honorable Winston Churchill.
5 And the quote attributed to him is something like
6 this. Quote, When facts change, I change my mind.
7 What do you do, madam, end quote. So I don't know
8 which way you'll go. I hope you'll go in the way
9 of supporting the change, finding the facts as they
10 are, and changing the -- respectfully, changing the
11 rule from I to II to allow no erosion and no
12 irreparable harm to Quidnessett Country Club.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN COIA: I also have a C. Simonson.

15 MR. SIMONSON: That was -- you want me to
16 do it again?

17 CHAIRMAN COIA: I have a C.

18 MR. SIMONSON: No.

19 CHAIRMAN COIA: It looks like C. Simonson,
20 a B. Mathews, and then T. Simonson. So I don't
21 want to -- unless I'm pronouncing the "C" wrong.
22 But it's different in writing. You are, sir?

23 MR. MATHEWS: I'm Bill Mathews.

24 CHAIRMAN COIA: All right.

1 MR. MATHEWS: M-A-T-H-E-W-S. A member for
2 over 30 years. I've seen a lot of changes in the
3 30 years. The membership has grown significantly.
4 The 47 condos and all the neighbors. The number of
5 events, which, by the way, are dependent upon an
6 18-hole golf course. All of the ballrooms overlook
7 the 14th fairway. It's the signature hole on the
8 course.

9 And what we experienced recently that
10 required the fix was something that actually was
11 experienced a decade ago approximately, and
12 Quidnessett came to you and asked you for your
13 help. And what you did, even though we were Type I
14 waterway, was you allowed these massive sandbags --
15 I think you called them burritos filled with
16 sand -- stacked, essentially functioning the same
17 way as the rocks. And I thank you for making that
18 decision a decade ago.

19 Did that -- is that an exception to Type I
20 waterways? I don't know. It sounds like, at the
21 same time, Type II should have been granted. You
22 made the right decision with the sandbags. I'm
23 asking you to make the right decision with the
24 rocks. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COIA: No way I can even see the
2 name. Whoever signed after T. Simonson, no one
3 could read that.

4 MR. FORMISANO: I think it's me. I'm
5 sorry. I did it on purpose. Good afternoon,
6 Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN COIA: It looks like two
8 initials.

9 MR. FORMISANO: My name is Ed Formisano,
10 F-O-R-M-I-S-A-N-O. I'm an attorney for Jan Co. I
11 also do legal work for the Janikies family. It's a
12 wonderfully run company that's employed hundreds of
13 thousands of Rhode Islanders over the last 50 years.

14 The Janikies family is also a wonderful
15 family. They've tried everything to eliminate this
16 problem. If the petition is not granted, it will
17 be a grave harm to the country club, as well as to
18 the people and employees. I respectfully request
19 that the Board grant the petition. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN COIA: Jeffrey Carroll.

21 MR. CARROLL: How are you today?

22 CHAIRMAN COIA: Good. How are you?

23 MR. CARROLL: My name is Jeffrey Carroll,
24 C-A-R-R-O-L-L. I've been employed with the

1 Jan Companies for close to 13 years as the general
2 manager of both the Norton Country Club and the
3 Sterling National Country Club. Additionally, I've
4 been involved as a consultant on special projects
5 at Quidnessett Country Club for a number of years.
6 I work directly for and with Vice President
7 Janice Mathews; CEO and President William Janikies;
8 the club's treasurer, Cindy Simonson. I've had the
9 pleasure of working for our founder,
10 Nicholas Janikies, prior to his passing. And I
11 have seen firsthand the positive impact this family
12 has made on employees, as well as the community,
13 the State of Rhode Island, and New England as a
14 whole.

15 As owners and operators, we are required
16 to provide our employees, members, and guests with
17 a pleasurable and safe experience. Coastal erosion
18 along the 14th hole not only placed our property at
19 risk, it placed our staff, members, guests, and
20 tournament participants at risk as well.

21 The rejection of our original proposal in
22 2012 would have been a terminal act had we not
23 taken this action. I guarantee you've never seen
24 the PGA play on a 17-hole golf course. I also

1 guarantee that you've never participated in a
2 charity outing on a 17-hole course. Without the
3 14th hole, we don't have a golf course; therefore,
4 we don't have a country club.

5 The conditions were at the point that it
6 required immediate action in order to protect our
7 business, which in turn protects revenue for the
8 State of Rhode Island, employment for hundreds of
9 Rhode Island residents, as well as a venue for
10 endless charities that rely on Quiddnessett's golf
11 course and amenities as a driving force for their
12 fundraising.

13 Losing the 14th hole, which was inevitable
14 prior to the seawall construction, would seal the
15 fate of one of Rhode Island's finest properties and
16 dispatch a 64-year-old legacy. I can tell you
17 firsthand that this company, this family cares
18 about the impact it has on its employees, members,
19 guests, patrons, and as well as the community. On
20 behalf of the entire company, I'm asking for
21 leniency from the Council as we navigate through
22 these challenges.

23 The actions taken were not of malice
24 intent. This is one Rhode Island company, one

1 family, trying to save their business. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN COIA: Greg Gulino.

3 MR. GULINO: My name is Greg Gulino,
4 G-U-L-I-N-O. I am an employee of the Jan Companies.
5 I am a director of real estate. It's a position
6 I've held for 12 years. It's afforded me a lot of
7 challenges, many opportunities, but most
8 importantly, a lot of stability.

9 I'm here in favor of the motion that's
10 before you today for reasons similar to several of
11 my fellow employees. My concern is the cost
12 associated with taking the wall down, impact
13 continued erosion would have on Quidnessett as the
14 preeminent golf course in Rhode Island and its
15 business will have on my continued employment and
16 the employment of other fellow employees. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRMAN COIA: Bob McCann.

19 MR. McCANN: I didn't sign up to speak,
20 but I'll come up. How are you doing, guys, ladies?

21 CHAIRMAN COIA: How are you?

22 MR. McCANN: There has to be a solution
23 that works for everybody. I'm a huge lover of the
24 coast. I own property on the coast. I'm a boater.

1 I love Rhode Island. Born and raised in
2 Rhode Island.

3 Quidnessett Country Club, I've been a
4 member there for 25 years. So you've heard enough
5 about their contributions to our community, to
6 charities, to the employment of hundreds of people,
7 all of that type of thing.

8 So I guess what I would say is, first of
9 all, the course can't be redesigned. There's just
10 not enough real estate there to do that. If that
11 hole fell into the ocean, there's going to be
12 condos there. There will be no golf course there.
13 All the community and all that stuff is history.

14 I think there has to be a solution. I
15 don't know how long that wall is. They're asking
16 for an exception for a wall that maybe it's a
17 couple hundred feet long in that particular area.
18 And I don't think they randomly just built a wall.
19 I mean, that thing was going down. That club was
20 going -- it was going to fall into the ocean. They
21 wouldn't have wanted to do that, have that expense,
22 etc., so.

23 I'd love to see if you guys could come up
24 with solutions. There's been a lot of great

1 comments today. I agree with what Jeff Gladstone
2 said. I'm putting the trust in you guys. I mean,
3 you seem like intelligent, you know, folks and,
4 hopefully, make a decision that makes the most
5 sense for Rhode Island. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Rich Hittinger.

7 MR. HITTINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 My name is Rich Hittinger. It's H-I-T-T-I-N-G-E-R.
9 I'm the first vice president of Rhode Island
10 Saltwater Anglers. And along with Scott, who
11 spoke -- or Scott, who will speak after me and
12 Fred, who spoke earlier, we represent 7,500
13 affiliate members in Rhode Island, Massachusetts,
14 and nearby Connecticut. We are opposed to this
15 reclassification.

16 If building an illegal structure has led
17 someone to request reclassification so that a
18 permit application could be submitted, that's kind
19 of putting the cart way before the horse.

20 Quidnessett Country Club is a great place.
21 I've been there. I've actually even played golf
22 there. But, as an organization, they should have
23 made their case long before building an illegal
24 wall. They knew from previous discussions and

1 previous applications to the CRMC that this was not
2 allowed. And I understand going through the
3 reclassification process, but it's way too late.
4 That should have been done long ago.

5 Doing it this way, I say, is analogous to
6 a very influential and wealthy person getting a
7 ticket on Route 95 for driving 75 in a 55 and then
8 coming forward and saying, well, my attorney is the
9 former Attorney General and I have an engineer here
10 who can document that that stretch of highway where
11 I was ticketed really is straight, it's very safe,
12 it can be driven 75. You should change the speed
13 limit on that section of the highway to 75. You
14 don't do that retroactively. And then, even if
15 that speed limit was changed, the ticket still is
16 valid because the individual violated the law at
17 the time.

18 So this wall cannot stand. It must be
19 removed. And then, if the water quality
20 reclassification is appropriate, then a designed
21 structure of some sort to prevent this erosion can
22 be considered, and an application, properly
23 submitted, can be considered by the Council.
24 Otherwise, we're very much opposed to the

1 reclassification. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Scott Travers.

3 MR. TRAVERS: Good evening, members of the
4 Council. I am Scott Travers, T-R-A-V-E-R-S. I'm
5 the executive director of the Rhode Island
6 Saltwater Anglers Association. Again, the Council
7 is here to preserve and protect Rhode Island
8 waters. Preserve and protect. Changing a water
9 type simply to support an illegally-built structure
10 is a terrible precedent. It neither preserves nor
11 protects Rhode Island waters. It tells other
12 developers, if you ignore the law, you develop, you
13 build, you change the waterfront, no one will stop
14 you.

15 Any effort to intentionally build a
16 structure, knowing that it was being done illegally
17 and without proper permitting, should not be
18 condoned, supported, or endorsed in any way. There
19 are plenty of examples of those who would act
20 outside the law and seek to change the law to avoid
21 consequences of their actions.

22 I've heard many people speak this evening
23 regarding protecting the club, the employees, their
24 careers, and money. Who here is charged with

1 protecting the environment? Who here is going to
2 protect Rhode Island's waters? Coastal Resource
3 Management Council is here to do just that.

4 Rhode Island's waters are special places,
5 too. Rhode Islanders depend on these waters and
6 shore access for locally sustainable food sources
7 for families. I urge the Council to act to
8 preserve and protect Rhode Island's waters in this
9 matter. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Kevin Haughey.

11 MR. HAUGHEY: Yeah. Good evening.

12 CHAIRMAN COIA: Good evening.

13 MR. HAUGHEY: My name is Kevin Haughey,
14 H-A-U-G-H-E-Y. I've been a member of
15 Quidnessett Country Club for over 40 years. In
16 fact, I met my wife there. My kids -- I enjoyed
17 raising my kids there. I've made great friends
18 over the years and even secured my first business
19 loan through a relationship I had there.

20 When I first joined Quidnessett Country
21 Club, the area that we're discussing had all
22 50 feet, in my opinion, of beach there. People
23 used to walk out to the beach, both members and
24 nonmembers. Did clams, did quahogs, which

1 otherwise would not have been able to happen if
2 Quidnessett, over time, did not do the things it
3 required to do to keep the coastline accessible.

4 The burritos were a failure,
5 unfortunately. They used them more than once. I
6 believe it was twice. And over time, they spent
7 multiple dollars in order to protect this 14th hole
8 that we're discussing. Storms have, obviously,
9 caused major erosion over those 40 years, and I've
10 experienced the decay decade after decade.

11 Deterioration of the shoreline at
12 Quidnessett Country Club is obviously not the only
13 place this is happening. As stated by many others
14 today, this is happening all over Rhode Island. My
15 question is, do we look at water analysis from
16 decades ago and just say this is what -- this is
17 what it is and watch properties get destroyed and
18 eliminated or do we look at this today with new
19 science showing global warming becoming a major
20 issue?

21 This topic is discussed all the time on
22 the news, as we all know, and the science requires
23 updating, not only potentially the waterway
24 classifications but how decisions are made. I

1 realize there needs to be rules and regulations,
2 but quite often in our society rules and
3 regulations are changed.

4 It's obvious that both parties have spent
5 great time and money to research this process.
6 Instead of making this an example, I ask you to
7 make this an opportunity to re-visit the waterway
8 classifications, not only outside of Quidnessett
9 Country Club but for the entire state of
10 Rhode Island, since it's been decades that this has
11 been done.

12 Not to be sarcastic, but in Rhode Island,
13 if someone was to enter your home and you felt
14 threatened, you're allowed to shoot them. However,
15 if you watch your property deteriorate and continue
16 investing in it over the years, you're not allowed
17 to protect your property. I think that may be
18 something we want to look at. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN COIA: Richard Langseth.

20 MR. LANGSETH: Richard Langseth,
21 Budlong Farm Road in Warwick. It's
22 L-A-N-G-S-E-T-H.

23 I'd like to speak on behalf of the staff
24 of CRMC who enforce the regulations, including

1 seawalls. In my neighborhood in Buttonwoods, we've
2 had two seawall incidents. The first was a failure
3 of the Buttonwoods Fire District seawall, which
4 created mayhem environmentally. That seawall was
5 not permitted and it failed during
6 Hurricane Gloria, spewing rocks and debris for a
7 half a mile down the beach. If the CRMC had been
8 involved in that and created an appropriate
9 seawall, it would not have failed.

10 So this creation of a seawall without a
11 permit raises substantial questions about the
12 safety of the people in the area and the use of the
13 beach, and it creates great difficulty for the
14 staff of CRMC who are trying to enforce regulation
15 if the committee were to suggest that the rule be
16 changed. As you know, I'm a strong advocate of the
17 CRMC and its staff's work.

18 In the second instance, a neighbor of mine
19 built a very substantial seawall without a
20 permit -- hundreds of thousands of dollars -- on
21 Budlong Farm Road. The CRMC came by and suggested
22 that he take the seawall down. He took the seawall
23 down and rebuilt the seawall appropriately. Now we
24 have a good seawall.

1 If the CRMC were to go down the road
2 suggested by the petitioners, it would cut the legs
3 off of the staff who are attempting to enforce the
4 current regulation. No matter what the water type
5 is. This is a very, very serious issue. And as we
6 all know, the CRMC has been subject to question in
7 the past about not following staff recommendations.
8 And in the past three or four years, there's been a
9 great improvement in that. And I recommend,
10 Mr. Coia, that you should be, you know, commended
11 for that. You've done good work in this. So,
12 therefore, what I'm saying is, this is a very, very
13 bad situation. Not economic development. Not
14 about pristine waters versus Type II waters. But
15 just the fact of CRMC doing its job. It needs to
16 be supported by the Board so that it can do its job.

17 There's one other point I want to make. A
18 lot of people here are suggesting that this is an
19 economic development issue, that jobs will be lost
20 if this were to go forward. But I need to remind
21 everybody that tourism in Rhode Island is probably
22 the number one industry after maybe military
23 construction. It's very, very important. The
24 commerce corporation spends millions of dollars a

1 year on tourism, and we need to make sure that we
2 have Type I water protection for tourism. And I do
3 believe that that's one of the missions of the
4 CRMC. So, obviously, I'm much opposed to this.
5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Karl Wadensten.

7 MR. WADENSTEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 Thank you, Board members. Wadensten,
9 W-A-D-E-N-S-T-E-N.

10 I'm here today as a resident of
11 South Kingstown, lived on the water my whole life,
12 as a board member for Commerce Corporation. That,
13 yes, Rhode Island is a big commerce destination.
14 I'm not speaking on behalf of Commerce, but we are
15 a big destination, it's a big part of the economy.
16 But we need places for people to go. And the
17 places that people want to go are Block Island,
18 the cliff walks down from Block Island that all of
19 us love and we can no longer get down those because
20 they were not maintained. There are the cliff --
21 the mansion walks along Newport that were not
22 maintained.

23 And, you know, I live down in Matunuck.
24 I've lived there my whole life. I've watched

1 Governor Chafee's estates be moved twice. Their
2 houses have been moved twice and the shoreline's
3 been tried to be protected to save those homes.
4 And I think now they're abutted on the property
5 line that they're going into the water.

6 You see Narragansett and Narrow River, a
7 place that I love to go with my children and surf
8 and be, and Narragansett is a mere shadow of what
9 it used to be. It's really, really sad. This blue
10 economy at the State House level and the initiative
11 for the state of Rhode Island, and I'm sure you
12 guys know on the Board because you have your wind
13 farms and you have all the things that go with blue
14 economy, you are building the plane while you're
15 flying it. It's a hard job. It's a really hard
16 job.

17 These things are coming at us extremely,
18 extremely fast. When these laws and all these
19 things were promulgated 30 or 40 years ago, who
20 would have ever have thought the water would raise
21 this high? I remember being a young student at
22 Rocky Hill off of Ives Road and walking around that
23 whole shoreline during a science class and our
24 senior project and being able to go down to

1 Matunuck, and I could walk the whole Potter's Pond
2 area. Whether it was high or low tide, I could
3 walk the whole shoreline. If you try to do that
4 today, you'd be waist-deep or neck-deep in water.
5 And it's just really, really sad to see these
6 resources changing so rapidly, and a lot of it's
7 due to environmental. A lot of it's due to man. A
8 lot of it's due to a lot of things. But what do we
9 do here in Rhode Island as the Ocean State? You
10 know, I love the Ocean State. I have grandchildren
11 now that I'd love to be able to do the things that
12 I've done before on the water.

13 You have private, public, profit,
14 nonprofit having a big bang together. They're all
15 fighting for what they need and how they support
16 the State of Rhode Island. The environmental and
17 economic impacts for our state are competing
18 urgencies.

19 And I don't admire the job that you guys
20 have here because there's a lot of people doing
21 things. And there's business owners, I'm a
22 business owner and a president of a manufacturing
23 company, and thank God I live far inland because
24 maybe I'll be waterfront one day in Richmond. But

1 thank God I'm that far out.

2 And we do have protected waters there. We
3 have a big gravel bank. We have aquifers there
4 that feed that whole area, and I've watched that
5 get decimated. Right?

6 But the key with business people, and as
7 you hear business people talk about this, everybody
8 heard business and economy pop up here, business
9 people do things to survive for the people that
10 work for them. That's their -- that is their
11 credo. People give up their daily time to come and
12 work for a business. They expect business owners
13 to make sure that they have gainful employment all
14 the time. And when we see a problem, we go and fix
15 it.

16 And maybe building a seawall wasn't the
17 right fix, but I think it was in all good respect
18 for the people, for the golf course. And for me,
19 as a business owner, my shortsightedness, I'd
20 rather see pristine land there than condominiums.
21 We don't need more building along the waterfront.
22 And I'm sure you guys are abreast of that. So if
23 they can keep a golf course, it's a win-win. And
24 please consider that. And if you have any

1 questions, you're more than welcome to ask.

2 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you, sir. Some of
3 the individuals that had signed did not put a
4 checkmark that they wish to speak, but they did
5 sign. A Mark Scott. Does Mark wish to speak? Is
6 he here? No. Okay. John Russell?
7 Christian Ruffasto. Oh, he's getting up.

8 MR. DeSISTO: He's obscured by the --

9 MR. RUSSELL: Am I overparked? I know
10 this will be terrific, my remarks. Nice to see
11 you, ladies and gentlemen.

12 I am a short-term member of
13 Quiddnessett Country Club. Just about six years
14 now. And --

15 CHAIRMAN COIA: Can you identify yourself
16 for the record, please.

17 MR. RUSSELL: Yeah, John Russell,
18 R-U-S-S-E-L-L.

19 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

20 MR. RUSSELL: The experience of playing
21 golf, for me, I'm such a high handicapper, I really
22 deserve to have a handicap. I played for a long
23 time in different parts of the country. And there
24 is something about playing on a course again and

1 again. It really gets to be a part of your, of
2 your being. And this particular course is
3 beautiful. It's the most gorgeous view that I can
4 think of in Rhode Island looking out on the water.
5 And that is something that is, I think, very near
6 and dear to all of the members.

7 You have a difficult job. And, obviously,
8 there has been some regulations and procedures that
9 have been ignored to a certain extent. And on the
10 other hand, I think if you're the owner of the
11 property and you're watching all of this
12 deterioration, finally, I think it just comes to a
13 point where you say, I can't stand it any longer,
14 I've got to do something about this. And I think
15 that's kind of the operating dynamic, if you will,
16 here in this case.

17 So I would plead with you, ladies and
18 gentlemen, to try to look at this as possibly a
19 one-time thing. An extraordinary expense has
20 already been incurred and more of an extraordinary
21 expense coming just hearing as you have all
22 suggested it should. That's asking a lot. So
23 other than that, I just hope you'll rule in our
24 direction.

1 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

2 MR. RUSSELL: Thank you.

3 (DONALD GOMEZ IS NOW PRESENT)

4 CHAIRMAN COIA: Joanne West.

5 MS. WEST: Council, my name is Joanne West,
6 W-E-S-T. I am an employee of Quidnessett, and I do
7 support the petition to change the waterway from
8 Type I to II. I believe what they're trying to do
9 is a good thing. It's a wonderful place to work.
10 I know my other fellow colleagues have said it's
11 like a family, and it certainly is. And I believe,
12 again, they were just trying -- they were trying to
13 do a good thing, you know, for their members and
14 for their employees and just for their business
15 altogether. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. I called a
17 Christian Ruffasto.

18 MR. SEPE: Mr. Chairman, Armani Sepe.
19 We're going to have to do a healthy swap, if that's
20 okay.

21 CHAIRMAN COIA: Okay.

22 THE WITNESS: Thank you. I'm Armani Sepe,
23 S-E-P-E. I don't come today as an angler or even a
24 member of Quidnessett Country Club. I come as a

1 licensed nursing home administrator of
2 Bayview Scalabrini, right next door to Quidnessett.
3 We have about a thousand feet of shoreline. We're
4 home to about 120 residents of North Kingstown,
5 about 300 families, and about 115 employees.

6 You know, people choose Bayview for many
7 reasons. One of them being, you know, being right
8 on the shoreline. And we really are trying to
9 preserve that at all costs. I know we haven't come
10 before the Council before. I know we haven't put
11 in a petition or, you know, a water class change,
12 but our shoreline has definitely eroded over the
13 years. I mean, this land has so much history
14 between the Allen family, Rhode Island Hospital,
15 when they opened up Crawford L. Memorial Hospital,
16 the Whitman family. You know, I just turned
17 30 years old, and I can't safely walk that
18 shoreline. Nor on our property, a thousand feet,
19 is there any beach access for any public to be able
20 to come in.

21 Our goal for Bayview Scalabrini is to
22 continue growing. Certainly, we know that
23 Rhode Island is the oldest state in the entire
24 country. Right now we operate as a skilled-nursing

1 facility and long-term care facility, but we do
2 have intentions of one day expanding to offer
3 assisted living, independent living, which is much
4 needed for Rhode Islanders in this state.

5 So with that being said, I fully support
6 this petition. Our residents love to go outside
7 and watch people tee off on the 15th hole. You
8 know, be able to see them putting on the 14th. And
9 you know, despite doing something reactive, it
10 really was necessary because I'm out there just
11 looking at it, and it's right there. Even our
12 residents say it. Residents that have been there
13 for ten-plus years.

14 So with that being said -- again, I come
15 from a different standpoint, but I fully support
16 them. So thank you for your time.

17 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Peter Gendreau.
18 Does Peter wish to speak? Excuse me?

19 MR. RUFFASTO: Christian.

20 CHAIRMAN COIA: Okay.

21 MR. RUFFASTO: Thank you, Chair. My name
22 is Christian Ruffasto, R-U-F-F-A-S-T-O. And I am
23 the club manager of Quidnessett Country Club. I
24 used to be the former chef. I started at

1 Quidnessett back in 2019. And I mean, it's been a
2 great, great spot. Definitely changed my career
3 around that I took over the club. And, you know,
4 it's been a successful time. The golf course is a
5 great spot. I met new members. The staff work
6 one-on-one. And it's just been a great, great,
7 great place to work at.

8 I'm here in favor to the club. I've
9 worked directly for Janice Mathews, who is vice
10 president of the company. And, obviously, what we
11 are asking for is to change the type water
12 from I to II, and that would just, you know,
13 benefit, I mean, the club as far as, like, what we
14 do for the community.

15 I mean, we do a lot of events on
16 Quidnessett. We do charity events. We donate
17 constantly to the North Kingstown pantry, food
18 pantry and also the Veteran's Association. So we
19 do lots of good stuff for the club -- I mean, for
20 the society. I'm just here to support, and if
21 there's anything else that, if you have any
22 questions, I'm more than happy to help.

23 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Peter Gendreau
24 to speak?

1 MR. GENDREAU: Peter Gendreau,
2 G-E-N-D-R-E-A-U. I've been a 30-plus-year employee
3 for Jan Co, for which I'm grateful for my position.
4 I am currently the banquet manager at Quidnessett.
5 And I have a large, diverse group of people that
6 work for me. Grandmothers, grandfathers, moms,
7 dads, URI students who are all in very much need of
8 their income. I'm basically here to advocate for
9 them and ask for your -- you know, respectfully ask
10 for the change we're requesting.

11 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

12 MR. GENDREAU: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. All right.
14 Amy Sonder.

15 MS. SONDER: Hi. Thank you. Amy Sonder.
16 I'm a resident of North Kingstown, a member of the
17 North Kingstown Conservation Commission, and I own
18 a small survey and design company who works
19 frequently with coastal resources.

20 We heard this case before the
21 Conservation Commission in North Kingstown. And
22 although many of the members were somewhat
23 sympathetic to the country club and their employees
24 and members, the Conservation Commission and

1 Harbor Commission felt very strongly against this
2 petition, as this approval would, one, set a
3 precedent for other landowners abutting Type I
4 waters to go through the same process. I myself
5 live in Wickford and abut Type I waters, and
6 respect and appreciate and act as a good neighbor
7 to those waters.

8 The country club and golf course was
9 substantially built in the time frame of these
10 regulated Type I waters. There has been ample
11 evidence and was ample evidence at the time of
12 design and construction noting the receding
13 shoreline over the past hundred years. There
14 should have been more consideration of this
15 potential shoreline erosion during the initial
16 design and for the past 40 to 50 years.

17 I strongly suggest you side on the err of
18 the shoreline and environmental features, such as
19 the very sensitive tributary to the south of this
20 area of Tibbets Creek. These areas cannot speak
21 for themselves, and it's your job to do so. We do
22 not know the effects of the installation of this
23 wall as it is, as it was installed without permits
24 and no oversight by any agency.

1 I do not -- I do feel that something can
2 be negotiated between Coastal Resources and
3 Quidnessett Country Club, but Quidnessett Country
4 Club may have to make some adjustments and
5 sacrifices, which they seem to not be willing to do
6 when it comes to their property.

7 I strongly encourage you to consider the
8 letters -- the letter from the Town of
9 North Kingstown Town Council voting against this
10 petition, and making a decision that will effect
11 the public's interest and not the private interest
12 of the county club.

13 Lastly, as a resident and boat owner who
14 frequently uses the bay, this installation is an
15 eyesore and, at a minimum, should be removed and
16 closely restored to its recent state prior to the
17 install of the wall. Again, thank you for your
18 consideration, and I appreciate your work.

19 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you.

20 Elaine Gebhardt.

21 MS. GEBHARDT: Elaine Gebhardt. Last name
22 is spelled G-E-B-H-A-R-D-T. I come here today, and
23 I am the executive director of the New England Golf
24 Course Owners Association. Quidnessett Country

1 Club is one of my member clubs. I am here to
2 support them today.

3 One thing that I want to do is just share
4 with you the impact that golf has, the golf
5 industry has on the economy. We are \$101 billion
6 of economic impact. You've heard from a number of
7 employees here from Quidnessett. We employ 1.6
8 million employees across the country. We're a
9 significant employer.

10 The nice thing about the employee
11 situation is that we employ from the very first
12 jobs that young teenagers get all the way through
13 retirees coming and working after they retire from
14 their primary careers. So employment is a huge
15 impact across the board.

16 We have 41 million people who play golf in
17 the country. And you've heard from some of those
18 folks as well in support of Quidnessett's situation.

19 And then, lastly, I'd like to comment on
20 the charitable impact that we, through the golf
21 industry and the golf events that take place, over
22 \$10.8 billion is raised in charitable funds.
23 That's more than the NFL, the MLB, the NBA, and
24 even -- what's the third one? There 's one more.

1 I can't remember. But all of them combined. So
2 the charitable impacts.

3 So coming up with a resolution that keeps
4 Quidnessett viable as far as their employees go, as
5 far as their functions go, they've probably got
6 functions that are booked out for years to come,
7 and for all of those events that are raising
8 charities that are held at their facility. So we
9 would like to see that a resolution can come that
10 works for all, and in particular doesn't impact all
11 of those issues that I just said. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN COIA: Ken Rudman.

13 MR. RUDMAN: Hi. My name is Ken Rudman,
14 R-U-D-M-A-N. I didn't come here to speak today. I
15 really came here in support of the club that I
16 belong to because, since I joined there about four
17 years ago, they've been very, very supportive. Not
18 just of me but of my special needs son. So I
19 thought it's the least I could do.

20 But when I showed up today, I saw a good
21 friend of mine. He was here to speak for the other
22 side. His name is Rich Hittinger. He was sitting
23 right in the middle there where I was sitting. And
24 we have been good friends for over a decade. And

1 he's on the other side.

2 He's in the Rhode Island Anglers
3 Association, and he's -- as a career now, he's a
4 fisherman. We swim together a lot, and we fish
5 together occasionally also. I'd call him a really,
6 really good friend. Been to each other's homes and
7 that sort of thing. And we didn't know that we
8 were both going to be here today.

9 I play golf as an activity, a social
10 activity. I don't really consider it much
11 exercise. It's a social exercise. For somebody
12 like myself, who's not very sociable, it's a really
13 good exercise.

14 Quidnessett Country Club, they really
15 shouldn't be calling it a country club. It's more
16 of a golf club. It's not -- it's nothing like
17 Augusta. It's not like people think. We have
18 people of all ethnicities, all colors. You saw
19 Jeff Gladstone get up with a hat that you wouldn't
20 see at a lot of country clubs. It's a great place.

21 But that being said, I've been on the
22 other end of it. About three years ago, I received
23 a letter from Coastal Resources that I had
24 transgressed the law. And I was a little bit

1 curious as to what to do. I was asking friends.
2 And I asked a few people at Quidnessett and the
3 family of the ownership.

4 And one of the people said -- well, let me
5 backtrack. A lot of recommendations were, oh, you
6 need to hire an attorney. I spoke to an attorney,
7 and we're going to fight it. I was going to spend
8 all the money I've made in 44 years of dentistry
9 and be so old that I wouldn't be able to enjoy the
10 fruits of the victory if I won, which was unlikely.

11 So somebody at Quidnessett suggested, why
12 don't you speak to a biologist and see what can be
13 done. And I spoke to a biologist and in a
14 relatively short amount of time, we came to an
15 agreement, my problems went away. And I can sit
16 here and tell you that I'm actually a fan of CRMC
17 because not only did that problem go away, I didn't
18 know about two years later my house was going to
19 get struck my lightening, and I was going to be at
20 the mercy of Coastal Resources again. And they
21 expedited things for me.

22 And I guess what I'm saying is I think
23 there's a lot of room for compromise here. I don't
24 know the particulars of the building of this wall

1 and permitting, but I don't think it's cut and dry
2 like my friend Rich said, tell them to take this
3 thing down. Some people are saying, change the
4 type of the water. I'm not sure if anything is
5 that simple.

6 But I know, with some of the personnel
7 that's in this room today, that there's definitely
8 a way that it could be amicably settled and agreed
9 and compromised. And if it doesn't, then it can go
10 on with court and whatever and make it into a
11 federal case. But I just think that there is some
12 room.

13 I don't want to quote a politician, but I
14 can tell you that there's good people on both
15 sides. That's it. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. That is
17 everyone that signed up to speak. Is there anyone
18 that wishes to speak that did not sign up? Sir,
19 come forward.

20 MR. DALISE: My name is Lou Dalise,
21 D-A-L-I-S-E. One of the things that I feel that
22 has happened, by building the wall, we have
23 protected a very vital piece of real estate, but
24 we've also done something else. Along that wall

1 there are now snails, oysters, clams, all kinds of
2 environmental things that are living in the wall.
3 We have sea birds that are nesting there. This has
4 more of a natural impact on the environment in a
5 good way than, obviously, in a bad way.

6 It's done more good for the property, and
7 it's doing a lot for the environment. We have a
8 very nice situation that is created by that wall.
9 We have living creatures that are now enjoying that
10 wall.

11 I've heard a lot of talk about do this, do
12 that. I think the wall has created a very nice
13 situation for the club by protecting the 14th hole.
14 It's also helped the environment and the living
15 creatures that come out of the sea that are using
16 that wall today as their home. Thank you very much
17 for your time.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm not coming up.
19 Not everybody speaks as loud as I do. A
20 suggestion. There should be a microphone for the
21 Chairman, a microphone for the people that want to
22 speak. We've got a lot of old people over here who
23 can't hear.

24 CHAIRMAN COIA: My suggestion there is

1 tell me that two hours ago, and I would have made
2 some arrangements. I want everyone to hear
3 everything that's going on.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Some people have
5 been speaking loud enough.

6 CHAIRMAN COIA: Okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And other people
8 have been -- okay. A suggestion.

9 CHAIRMAN COIA: All right. Yes, sir.

10 MR. BAKER: My name is Michael Baker,
11 B-A-K-E-R. Can everyone hear me? I'll try to be
12 loud. I reside in North Kingstown and have been a
13 long-time member of Quidnessett Country Club.

14 I'm speaking in favor of the applicant's
15 request today. The goal of the request is to save
16 and protect one of the most iconic waterfront
17 vistas in Narragansett Bay, our 14th hole. As a
18 long-time member, I have witnessed the increasing
19 severe winter storms and their devastating effect
20 on the area in question in this application.

21 You are only being asked today to reclass
22 a portion of the QCC waterfront property being
23 affected by the erosion. The more sensitive areas
24 of the waterfront areas will be left as Class I

1 waters. It seems evident that the uses on the
2 portions of Quidnessett, construction of the
3 condos, and the Scalabrini property doubling the
4 size of their facility have intensified the use of
5 the property and now properly fit into Class II
6 waters in those areas.

7 An important point that you should be
8 aware of and consider is the waterfront and
9 undeveloped land which the golf course sits on is
10 subject to an open space easement granted to the
11 Town of North Kingstown when QCC Corp developed the
12 condominiums, which now sit on the inland portion
13 of the course.

14 This easement prevents any further
15 development of the property in the future. There's
16 no ulterior motive for this application. The
17 motive is simple, to preserve and protect what
18 exists there today.

19 I ask you to do your job as committee
20 members. Understand the applicant's request,
21 listen and read all the relevant testimony and
22 evidence presented, and make a thoughtful decision,
23 and ignore the political rhetoric and those who
24 want to pit the rich country club owners and

1 members against the average Joe. That has no place
2 in this hearing room. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN COIA: Thank you. Anyone else
4 wish to speak?

5 (NO RESPONSE)

6 CHAIRMAN COIA: That will close this part
7 of the P and P meeting for today.

8 Next matter on our agenda is any other
9 business.

10 MR. WILLIS: There is no other business on
11 the agenda, Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRMAN COIA: Any new business?

13 MR. WILLIS: No new business.

14 MR. DeSISTO: None.

15 CHAIRMAN COIA: Staff reports?

16 MR. WILLIS: No staff report tonight,
17 Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRMAN COIA: Before we entertain a
19 motion to adjourn, I just want to thank everyone
20 for your comments and the professionalism in the
21 delivery of it. I know when there's something
22 going on both sides of an issue, sometimes it gets
23 a little contentious, but everyone handled
24 themselves well. So I want to thank everyone for

1 that. With that, I would entertain a motion to
2 adjourn.

3 MS. REYNOLDS: So moved.

4 MR. GAGNON: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN COIA: Motion made and seconded.

6 All in favor say, "aye."

7 (VOICE VOTE)

8 CHAIRMAN COIA: Opposed?

9 (NO RESPONSE)

10 CHAIRMAN COIA: Motion carries. Thank you.

11 (MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:58 P.M.)

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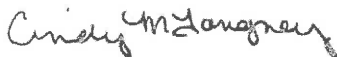
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Cindy M. Tangney, a Commissioner in and for the State of Rhode Island, hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and accurate record of my stenographic notes that were reduced to print through computer-aided transcription.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand this 21st day of August, 2024.



CINDY M. TANGNEY, RMR

My Commission (RI) Expires on 06/30/2025

	Additionally (1) 42:3	agenda (4) 5:17,22;75:8,11	angler (1) 60:23	12:23
\$	address (1) 8:23	ago (9) 19:18;40:11,18; 47:4;50:16;55:19; 68:17;69:22;73:1	Anglers (8) 22:3,5,6;33:6,23; 46:10;48:6;69:2	around (6) 15:16;18:13;29:17; 37:4;55:22;63:3
\$10.8 (1) 67:22	adjacent (2) 10:19;11:8	agree (3) 24:9;38:4;46:1	annual (2) 12:14;13:3	arrangements (1) 73:2
\$101 (1) 67:5	adjourn (2) 75:19;76:2	agreed (1) 71:8	Anthony (2) 7:20;27:18	arrested (1) 38:24
A	ADJOURNED (1) 76:11	agreement (1) 70:15	anymore (1) 24:2	Assembly (1) 33:16
ability (1) 37:8	adjudication (1) 35:7	agrees (1) 71:8	appear (1) 17:20	assess (1) 21:8
able (8) 23:23;35:20;50:1; 55:24;56:11;61:19; 62:8;70:9	adjustments (1) 66:4	Alex (4) 23:12,14;25:12,12	applicant (3) 10:7,17;34:14	asset (3) 13:9,16;14:2
abreast (1) 57:22	administrator (1) 61:1	Allen (1) 61:14	applicant's (3) 10:1;73:14;74:20	assistant (2) 22:23;23:15
Absolutely (1) 8:14	admire (1) 56:19	allow (1) 39:11	application (8) 6:5;15:24;16:2,4; 46:18;47:22;73:20; 74:16	assisted (1) 62:3
abstain (1) 22:16	admonished (1) 16:1	allowed (6) 11:2;35:13;40:14; 47:2;51:14,16	applications (1) 47:1	associated (1) 44:12
abut (1) 65:5	adopting (1) 13:22	allowing (1) 11:14	applied (1) 15:12	Association (7) 12:8;13:2;22:4; 48:6;63:18;66:24; 69:3
abutted (1) 55:4	Advanced (5) 5:22;6:11,20,20;7:6	allows (1) 7:24	Apponaug (1) 17:17	attempt (1) 36:15
abutting (2) 16:20;65:3	advertised (1) 6:12	almost (1) 17:16	appreciate (5) 24:15;27:3;28:8; 65:6;66:18	attempting (1) 53:3
access (7) 11:3,7;18:9;30:11; 33:6;49:6;61:19	advice (1) 34:17	along (10) 18:9,15,16;28:13; 30:9;42:18;46:10; 54:21;57:21;71:24	approach (2) 28:10;37:20	attended (1) 12:23
accessible (1) 50:3	advocate (5) 21:11,12;33:8; 52:16;64:8	alternates (1) 35:17	appropriate (2) 47:20;52:8	attention (1) 35:4
accordance (1) 11:16	advocating (2) 13:17,24	alternative (1) 35:14	appropriately (3) 16:24;34:6;52:23	attorney (5) 41:10;47:8,9;70:6,6
according (1) 38:20	aesthetic (1) 13:15	alternatives (3) 19:1;20:2;30:18	approvable (1) 36:16	attributed (1) 39:5
acknowledge (2) 34:8;38:16	affect (1) 23:5	Although (2) 28:16;64:22	Approval (3) 11:9;14:1;65:2	Augusta (1) 69:17
across (2) 67:8,15	affected (1) 73:23	altogether (1) 60:15	approve (2) 5:1;37:12	authority (1) 22:15
act (5) 37:9;42:22;48:19; 49:7;65:6	affects (1) 21:1	Alumni (2) 13:2,3	approved (1) 16:6	average (1) 75:1
action (6) 8:8;11:22;35:4; 36:3;42:23;43:6	affiliate (1) 46:13	always (3) 13:7;24:12;27:19	approved (1) 16:6	avoid (1) 48:20
actions (3) 8:19;43:23;48:21	affiliation (1) 12:11	amenities (1) 43:11	approximately (1) 40:11	award (1) 37:3
active (2) 9:4;27:16	afford (1) 35:15	amicably (1) 71:8	aquifers (1) 57:3	aware (1) 74:8
activity (4) 35:9;36:3;69:9,10	afforded (1) 44:6	amount (3) 29:1;35:14;70:14	architect (2) 25:17,19	away (4) 19:4;34:22;70:15, 17
actual (1) 6:24	afternoon (5) 4:7;21:5;25:7;32:1; 41:5	ample (2) 65:10,11	area (22) 10:10,24;16:18,22; 29:15,16,17;30:3,12; 31:3;33:14,22;34:5, 12;35:2;45:17;49:21; 52:12;56:2;57:4; 65:20;73:20	aye (2) 5:11;76:6
actually (8) 6:18,19;16:5;23:17; 28:22;40:10;46:21; 70:16	again (9) 36:1;39:16;48:6; 58:24;59:1;60:12; 62:14;66:17;70:20	Amy (2) 64:14,15	areas (5) 10:15;65:20;73:23, 24;74:6	back (9) 6:8;7:6;8:7;15:10, 15;19:6;37:24;39:3; 63:1
added (1) 8:23	against (6) 7:9;34:11;36:3; 65:1;66:9;75:1	analogous (1) 47:5	Armani (2) 60:18,22	Backcountry (2) 33:5,23
addition (3) 7:4;10:19;36:20	age (1) 12:23	analysis (2) 22:9;50:15	Arnold (1)	background (1)
	agency (1) 65:24	angle (1) 19:5		B
		angled (1) 19:6		

<p>12:10 backtrack (1) 70:5 bad (2) 53:13;72:5 Baker (2) 73:10,10 B-A-K-E-R (1) 73:11 balance (2) 24:19;37:9 ballrooms (1) 40:6 bang (1) 56:14 bank (2) 18:20;57:3 banquet (1) 64:4 based (2) 26:14;36:18 basically (1) 64:8 Bay (10) 9:18;10:13;11:19; 16:15;17:14,17; 18:23;34:23;66:14; 73:17 Bay's (1) 9:22 Bayview (3) 61:2,6,21 beach (7) 30:10;35:1;49:22, 23;52:7,13;61:19 beautiful (5) 29:8;31:17;32:6,14; 59:3 beauty (3) 20:19;31:8;32:15 become (3) 29:6,11;32:12 becoming (1) 50:19 beds (1) 34:24 began (1) 38:14 begin (1) 9:12 behalf (6) 32:5;33:4,19;43:20; 51:23;54:14 behind (1) 9:9 belong (1) 68:16 benefit (3) 6:6;37:1;63:13 best (1) 37:6 big (5) 54:13,15,15;56:14;</p>	<p>57:3 bigger (1) 23:8 Bill (1) 39:23 billion (2) 67:5,22 biologist (2) 70:12,13 birds (1) 72:3 bit (2) 23:16;69:24 Block (2) 54:17,18 blocking (1) 18:8 blue (2) 55:9,13 bluff (5) 15:16,17;19:5,5,6 Board (9) 27:9;37:17,21; 41:19;53:16;54:8,12; 55:12;67:15 boat (2) 30:6;66:13 boater (1) 44:24 boaters (1) 32:18 Bob (2) 14:6;44:18 bodies (1) 28:23 booked (1) 68:6 Born (1) 45:1 Boston (1) 12:19 both (7) 13:11;42:2;49:23; 51:4;69:8;71:14; 75:22 Boyd (4) 14:9,10,11;20:8 B-O-Y-D (1) 14:11 Branigan (2) 22:19,20 brief (2) 6:4;36:12 bring (1) 25:17 broken (1) 29:3 brought (1) 35:3 Budlong (2) 51:21;52:21 build (2) 48:13,15</p>	<p>building (7) 46:16,23;55:14; 57:16,21;70:24;71:22 built (5) 11:16,23;45:18; 52:19;65:9 burritos (2) 40:15;50:4 business (21) 12:9,11;13:12;43:7; 44:1,15;49:18;56:21, 22;57:6,7,8,8,12,12, 19;60:14;75:9,10,12, 13 business/works (1) 5:18 businesses (1) 19:18 Buttonwoods (2) 52:1,3</p>	<p>Carroll (4) 41:20,21,23,23 C-A-R-R-O-L-L (1) 41:24 carry (1) 36:2 cart (1) 46:19 Casacalenda (6) 31:9,10,11,11,13,14 C-A-S-A-C-A-L-E-N-D-A (1) 31:14 case (6) 10:8;34:11;46:23; 59:16;64:20;71:11 cases (1) 34:10 caused (1) 50:9 cease (1) 25:24 CEO (1) 42:7 certain (1) 59:9 certainly (6) 15:12;18:21;32:9, 22;60:11;61:22 Chafee's (1) 55:1 Chair (9) 5:20;6:7,9;10,16; 20:10;54:7;62:21; 75:11,17 CHAIRMAN (89) 4:3;5:4,7,10,13,15, 17,21;7:15,18;8:10, 14;9:11;12:1;14:4,6, 9,10,12;20:3,7,9;21:3, 4,23;22:19,21;23:12; 24:21,24;25:3;27:5,8; 31:9,12,24;33:1,2; 36:7,10;37:15,16; 39:14,17,19,24;41:1, 6,7,20,22;44:2,18,21; 46:6,7;48:2;49:10,12; 51:19;54:6;58:2,15, 19;60:1,4,16,18,21; 62:17,20;63:23; 64:11,13;66:19; 68:12;71:16;72:21, 24;73:6,9;75:3,6,12, 15,18;76:5,8,10 challenges (2) 43:22;44:7 Chamber (3) 12:6,13,17 chance (1) 9:20 change (29) 6:1,9;7:12;10:20; 11:14;13:22;15:3; 20:24;24:16;25:23;</p>	<p>27:24;30:2;34:3,7; 35:7;37:12;38:18,24; 39:6,6,9;47:12;48:13, 20;60:7;61:11;63:11; 64:10;71:3 changed (6) 10:9;11:18;47:15; 51:3;52:16;63:2 changes (6) 10:10,21;28:3,3; 38:5;40:2 changing (7) 34:24;38:10,23; 39:10,10;48:8;56:6 chapter (1) 33:5 characterized (1) 10:13 charged (1) 48:24 charitable (4) 20:20;67:20,22; 68:2 charities (3) 43:10;45:6;68:8 charity (2) 43:2;63:16 checkmark (1) 58:4 chef (1) 62:24 cherish (1) 28:11 children (3) 36:24;37:1;55:7 choose (1) 61:6 Christian (4) 58:7;60:17;62:19, 22 Churchill (1) 39:4 CHWALISCEWSKI (5) 24:22;25:1,6,8,9 C-H-W-A-L-I-S-C-E-W-S-K-I (1) 25:10 Cindy (1) 42:8 circumstances (2) 13:23;30:16 citation (1) 7:3 cited (1) 34:6 clams (2) 49:24;72:1 class (4) 55:23;61:11;73:24; 74:5 classification (6) 6:2;10:9,22;11:21; 15:3;37:13 classifications (2)</p>
		C		
		<p>Calf (2) 16:13;17:3 call (2) 4:8;69:5 called (2) 40:15;60:16 calling (1) 69:15 came (5) 35:7;40:12;52:21; 68:15;70:14 camera (1) 4:19 can (49) 4:15;8:12,21,22; 14:2;17:18;19:3,6,7,7, 23,23;20:18;21:20; 25:4,16;27:5;28:9,17, 22;29:14;30:19;31:4, 7;32:12,22;34:22; 35:15;36:23;37:6; 38:4,41:1;43:16; 47:10,12,21,23;53:16; 54:19;57:23;58:15; 59:3;66:1;68:9;70:12, 15;71:9,14;73:11 care (1) 62:1 career (2) 63:2;69:3 careers (3) 23:9;48:24;67:14 careful (1) 22:8 cares (1) 43:17 carried (1) 15:23 carries (2) 5:15;76:10</p>		

<p>50:24;51:8 classified (1) 16:24 clear (2) 7:3;18:10 clearly (2) 4:23;18:18 cliff (2) 54:18,20 clinics (2) 26:2,4 close (2) 42:1;75:6 closely (1) 66:16 closest (1) 18:20 Club (81) 5:24;6:9;7:12; 12:21;15:4,5,23; 16:16,20;17:5,8; 18:18,22;19:1,3,9,16; 20:17,22;21:16,19; 22:24;23:16,19;24:3, 4,7,7,8,11,18;25:24; 26:8,8;27:13;28:5,14, 15;32:3,15,16,17,19; 33:11;36:21;37:19; 39:12;41:17;42:2,3,5; 43:4,45:3,19;46:20; 48:23;49:15,21; 50:12;51:9;58:13; 60:24;62:23,23;63:3, 8,13,19;64:23;65:8; 66:3,4,12;67:1;68:15; 69:14,15,16;72:13; 73:13;74:24 clubbers (1) 26:10 clubs (2) 67:1;69:20 club's (1) 42:8 Co (2) 41:10;64:3 coast (3) 38:6;44:24,24 Coastal (15) 4:8;7:13;10:2;11:1, 11;16:22;31:6;33:17, 18;42:17;49:2;64:19; 66:2;69:23;70:20 coastline (3) 26:23;32:14;50:3 COIA (79) 4:3;5:4,7,10,13,15, 17,21;7:15,18;8:10, 14;9:11;12:1;14:4,6, 9;20:7,9;21:3,23; 22:19,21;23:12; 24:21,24;25:3;27:5; 31:9,12,24;33:1;36:7, 10;37:15;39:14,17,19,</p>	<p>24;41:1,7,20,22;44:2, 18,21;46:6;48:2; 49:10,12;51:19; 53:10;54:6;58:2,15, 19;60:1,4,16,21; 62:17,20;63:23; 64:11,13;66:19; 68:12;71:16;72:24; 73:6,9;75:3,6,12,15, 18;76:5,8,10 colleagues (1) 60:10 collectively (1) 33:19 colors (1) 69:18 combination (1) 16:3 combined (2) 16:1;68:1 coming (7) 27:22;47:8;55:17; 59:21;67:13;68:3; 72:18 COMMENCED (1) 4:2 commended (1) 53:10 comment (6) 6:13,21;7:8,8:3; 35:19;67:19 comments (13) 6:16,17;7:5,11;8:1, 5;9:19;20:6;33:24; 34:3;36:11;46:1; 75:20 Commerce (6) 12:6,13;53:24; 54:12,13,14 commercial (1) 19:18 Commission (5) 31:6;64:17,21,24; 65:1 committee (5) 8:7;25:7;33:3; 52:15;74:19 community (13) 12:22;13:10,12,16, 20;14:2;20:18;26:7; 42:12;43:19;45:5,13; 63:14 Companies (2) 42:1;44:4 company (10) 20:15;21:1,11; 41:12;43:17,20,24; 56:23;63:10;64:18 compelling (1) 22:10 competing (1) 56:17 compromise (2)</p>	<p>39:1;70:23 compromised (1) 71:9 comradery (1) 37:1 concern (1) 44:11 concerned (2) 16:4;35:24 conclude (1) 20:5 conclusion (1) 32:23 conditions (1) 43:5 condominiums (2) 57:20;74:12 condoned (1) 48:18 condos (4) 10:18;40:4;45:12; 74:3 configuration (1) 29:2 configured (1) 13:15 confronted (1) 29:12 Connecticut (1) 46:14 consequences (2) 26:15;48:21 Conservation (3) 64:17,21,24 consider (11) 10:3;11:13;13:21; 21:14;29:4,7;31:22; 57:24;66:7;69:10; 74:8 consideration (6) 10:11;23:7,10;27:3; 65:14;66:18 considered (4) 16:10;20:2;47:22, 23 considering (1) 36:18 constantly (1) 63:17 Constitution (1) 33:15 constructed (5) 15:6,7;16:9;17:12; 29:19 construction (9) 10:17,23;18:11; 22:12;34:16;43:14; 53:23;65:12;74:2 consultant (1) 42:4 contentious (1) 75:23 contest (1)</p>	<p>38:17 continue (5) 20:18;21:20;23:2; 51:15;61:22 continued (3) 13:19;44:13,15 contrary (1) 22:12 contributions (1) 45:5 corner (1) 19:3 Cornish (2) 24:5;25:14 Corp (1) 74:11 corporation (2) 53:24;54:12 correctly (1) 37:23 cost (1) 44:11 costs (1) 61:9 Council (27) 7:14,16;8:8;11:22; 14:12;15:24;16:4,6; 20:4;21:17;30:1; 33:13,17;34:1,2,17; 35:7,18;43:21;47:23; 48:4,6;49:3,7;60:5; 61:10;66:9 Councilors (1) 21:5 Council's (3) 4:9;10:6;35:4 counsel (3) 7:19;14:13;35:15 Country (62) 5:24;6:9;7:12; 12:21;15:4,5,23; 16:16,20;17:5,8; 18:18;19:1,3;20:17, 21;22:24;23:15,19; 24:3,4;25:24;26:9; 27:13;28:4,14,15; 32:3,15,16;33:11; 36:21;37:19;39:12; 41:17;42:2,3,5;43:4; 45:3;46:20;49:15,20; 50:12;51:9;58:13,23; 60:24;61:24;62:23; 64:23;65:8;66:3,3,24; 67:8,17;69:14,15,20; 73:13;74:24 county (1) 66:12 couple (3) 8:12;19:13;45:17 course (41) 9:7;12:7,9;13:14; 19:10,11,19,22;20:19; 23:20;24:1,2,20,20;</p>	<p>25:17,19,20,23;27:2; 29:1,2,20;36:22;40:6, 8;42:24;43:2,3,11; 44:14;45:9,12;57:18, 23;58:24;59:2;63:4; 65:8;66:24;74:9,13 courses (2) 19:14;23:21 court (1) 71:10 courtroom (1) 27:19 cover (1) 15:6 COVID (1) 26:18 Crawford (1) 61:15 created (4) 52:4,8;72:8,12 creates (1) 52:13 creation (1) 52:10 creatures (2) 72:9,15 credibility (1) 22:15 credo (1) 57:11 Creek (1) 65:20 critical (1) 13:18 criticize (1) 30:20 CRMC (27) 10:14;11:4,11; 14:13,13,17,20;16:24; 17:15;18:2;22:7,15, 16;26:22;27:16; 28:20;47:1,51;24; 52:7,14,17,21;53:1,6, 15;54:4;70:16 CRMC's (1) 22:13 Culton (3) 22:21,22,22 curious (1) 70:1 current (3) 22:18;23:23;53:4 currently (3) 10:24;34:6;64:4 curvature (1) 34:24 cut (2) 53:2;71:1</p>
				D
				<p>dads (1) 64:7</p>

<p>daily (1) 57:11</p> <p>DALISE (2) 71:20,20</p> <p>D-A-L-I-S-E (1) 71:21</p> <p>damage (1) 36:21</p> <p>dangerous (1) 11:10</p> <p>Davisville (1) 16:13</p> <p>day (3) 17:16;56:24;62:2</p> <p>days (2) 17:14;37:6</p> <p>deal (1) 16:7</p> <p>dear (1) 59:6</p> <p>debate (1) 21:7</p> <p>debris (1) 52:6</p> <p>decade (6) 15:9;40:11,18; 50:10,10;68:24</p> <p>decades (6) 14:17;28:18;36:23, 23;50:16;51:10</p> <p>decay (1) 50:10</p> <p>decimated (1) 57:5</p> <p>decision (8) 23:4;36:17;40:18, 22,23;46:4;66:10; 74:22</p> <p>decisions (3) 7:10;26:14;50:24</p> <p>defending (1) 33:12</p> <p>deference (1) 33:21</p> <p>Definis (3) 21:23;22:1,2</p> <p>D-E-F-I-N-I-S (1) 22:2</p> <p>definitely (3) 61:12;63:2;71:7</p> <p>delivery (1) 75:21</p> <p>DEM (2) 27:16;28:20</p> <p>denied (2) 9:24;10:4</p> <p>dense (1) 16:21</p> <p>dentistry (1) 70:8</p> <p>deny (1) 11:20</p> <p>department's (1)</p>	<p>38:21</p> <p>depend (3) 29:10;33:9;49:5</p> <p>dependent (1) 40:5</p> <p>described (1) 38:19</p> <p>deserve (1) 58:22</p> <p>design (4) 25:20;64:18;65:12, 16</p> <p>designation (1) 10:11</p> <p>designations (2) 22:8,9</p> <p>designed (5) 17:24;19:20;24:4; 25:13;47:20</p> <p>DeSisto (5) 7:20,22;27:18;58:8; 75:14</p> <p>despite (1) 62:9</p> <p>destination (3) 36:1;54:13,15</p> <p>destroyed (1) 50:17</p> <p>detailed (1) 11:6</p> <p>deteriorate (1) 51:15</p> <p>Deterioration (2) 50:11;59:12</p> <p>devastating (1) 73:19</p> <p>develop (3) 28:10,22;48:12</p> <p>developed (1) 74:11</p> <p>developers (1) 48:12</p> <p>development (9) 11:12;28:13;29:9; 33:18;34:12;37:2; 53:13,19;74:15</p> <p>different (5) 15:13;23:16;39:22; 58:23;62:15</p> <p>difficult (3) 28:2;30:22;59:7</p> <p>difficulty (1) 52:13</p> <p>direction (1) 59:24</p> <p>directly (3) 23:4;42:6;63:9</p> <p>Director (6) 5:19;6:3;12:5;44:5; 48:5;66:23</p> <p>discretion (4) 21:10,12;30:2,16</p> <p>discuss (1)</p>	<p>15:1</p> <p>discussed (1) 50:21</p> <p>discussing (2) 49:21;50:8</p> <p>discussion (1) 5:8</p> <p>discussions (1) 46:24</p> <p>dispatch (1) 43:16</p> <p>District (1) 52:3</p> <p>diverse (1) 64:5</p> <p>docks (1) 10:14</p> <p>document (1) 47:10</p> <p>dollars (3) 50:7;52:20;53:24</p> <p>Donald (5) 19:10,14,22;24:5; 60:3</p> <p>donate (1) 63:16</p> <p>done (14) 19:23,23;29:14; 30:18,19;34:17;47:4; 48:16;51:11;53:11; 56:12;70:13;71:24; 72:6</p> <p>Donovan (5) 36:7,8,9,10,11</p> <p>D-O-N-O-V-A-N (1) 36:9</p> <p>door (4) 9:2,6;29:22;61:2</p> <p>doubling (1) 74:3</p> <p>doubt (2) 19:10;34:10</p> <p>down (15) 8:22;9:12;30:12,12; 44:12;45:19;52:7,22, 23;53:1;54:18,19,23; 55:24;71:3</p> <p>downgrade (1) 22:17</p> <p>downgrading (1) 22:11</p> <p>drafted (1) 16:6</p> <p>driven (1) 47:12</p> <p>driveway (1) 35:1</p> <p>driving (2) 43:11;47:7</p> <p>dry (1) 71:1</p> <p>due (4) 36:14;56:7,7,8</p>	<p>dumped (1) 17:21</p> <p>duplicate (1) 4:15</p> <p>During (4) 38:18;52:5;55:23; 65:15</p> <p>dynamic (1) 59:15</p>	<p>67:7,11</p> <p>employed (3) 22:24;41:12,24</p> <p>employee (8) 21:2,11,19;26:7; 44:4;60:6;64:2;67:10</p> <p>employees (19) 20:14,22;23:5; 24:18;26:11,17; 41:18;42:12,16; 43:18;44:11,16; 48:23;60:14;61:5; 64:23;67:7,8;68:4</p> <p>employer (3) 20:13;24:6;67:9</p> <p>employment (8) 21:20;24:19;43:8; 44:15,16;45:6;57:13; 67:14</p> <p>empowered (1) 33:16</p> <p>encourage (2) 36:20;66:7</p> <p>encourages (1) 11:19</p> <p>encouraging (1) 11:11</p> <p>end (3) 38:14;39:7;69:22</p> <p>endangering (1) 18:15</p> <p>ended (1) 6:13</p> <p>endless (1) 43:10</p> <p>endorsed (1) 48:18</p> <p>energy (1) 38:7</p> <p>enforce (3) 51:24;52:14;53:3</p> <p>enforcement (9) 11:22;14:19;18:5; 34:10,11;35:4,6,6; 36:3</p> <p>engineer (4) 18:1,2;31:17;47:9</p> <p>engineered (1) 17:20</p> <p>engineering (1) 31:21</p> <p>engineers (1) 31:21</p> <p>England (4) 12:7;33:5;42:13; 66:23</p> <p>enjoy (4) 21:20;28:7;31:2; 70:9</p> <p>enjoyed (1) 49:16</p> <p>enjoying (1) 72:9</p>
E				
			<p>earlier (1) 46:12</p> <p>early (2) 12:22,24</p> <p>easement (2) 74:10,14</p> <p>East (6) 12:6,13,16;19:13, 14;27:14</p> <p>easy (2) 27:6;36:8</p> <p>economic (4) 53:13,19;56:17; 67:6</p> <p>economy (5) 54:15;55:10,14; 57:8;67:5</p> <p>Ed (1) 41:9</p> <p>edge (1) 15:15</p> <p>effect (2) 66:10;73:19</p> <p>effectively (1) 35:14</p> <p>effects (1) 65:22</p> <p>effort (1) 48:15</p> <p>efforts (1) 21:13</p> <p>either (2) 18:24;25:21</p> <p>Elaine (2) 66:20,21</p> <p>eliminate (1) 41:15</p> <p>eliminated (1) 50:18</p> <p>elimination (1) 11:8</p> <p>else (5) 4:14;32:4;63:21; 71:24;75:3</p> <p>email (2) 8:19,22</p> <p>embrace (1) 26:21</p> <p>emergency (2) 9:4,8</p> <p>employ (2)</p>	

enough (4) 29:6;45:4,10;73:5	36:24;40:5;63:15,16; 67:21;68:7	extremely (2) 55:17,18	feature (1) 16:23	74:5
ensured (1) 14:3	everybody (4) 44:23;53:21;57:7; 72:19	eyesore (1) 66:15	features (2) 11:3;65:18	five (1) 26:19
enter (1) 51:13	everybody's (1) 30:22	F	federal (1) 71:11	fix (3) 40:10;57:14,17
entertain (2) 75:18;76:1	everyone (14) 4:3,7;20:11;23:13; 32:1,4,21,23;71:17; 73:2,11;75:19,23,24	fabulous (2) 19:11,21	feed (1) 57:4	flying (1) 55:15
entire (5) 13:10,20;43:20; 51:9;61:23	everywhere (1) 28:1	face (2) 21:21;28:2	feel (4) 22:14;31:18;66:1; 71:21	folks (5) 9:5;21:10,14;46:3; 67:18
entirety (1) 24:11	evidence (5) 11:15;17:23;65:11, 11;74:22	facility (5) 29:23;62:1,1;68:8; 74:4	feet (11) 10:18;15:16;16:22; 17:7,8;30:12;38:21; 45:17;49:22;61:3,18	following (1) 53:7
environment (5) 31:2;49:1;72:4,7,14	evident (1) 74:1	fact (6) 15:9;19:9;26:24; 27:12;49:16;53:15	fell (1) 45:11	food (2) 49:6;63:17
environmental (4) 56:7,16;65:18;72:2	exactly (1) 38:22	facts (4) 34:12;38:15;39:6,9	fellow (4) 23:16;44:11,16; 60:10	force (1) 43:11
environmentally (1) 52:4	example (1) 51:6	failed (3) 10:8;52:5,9	felt (2) 51:13;65:1	former (3) 19:16;47:9;62:24
equal (1) 33:21	examples (1) 48:19	failure (2) 50:4;52:2	few (5) 9:22;14:24;31:15; 38:5;70:2	FORMISANO (3) 41:4,9,9
eroded (1) 61:12	exception (2) 40:19;45:16	fairway (5) 15:22;18:19,22; 29:15;40:7	fight (2) 35:16;70:7	F-O-R-M-I-S-A-N-O (1) 41:10
eroding (1) 19:4	Excuse (2) 6:14;62:18	fairways (1) 19:2	fighting (1) 56:15	forth (3) 15:3,5,23
erosion (11) 15:22;17:9;18:21; 38:20;39:11;42:17; 44:13;47:21;50:9; 65:15;73:23	executive (3) 12:5;48:5;66:23	faith (1) 31:5	filled (1) 40:15	forward (5) 4:22;16:1;47:8; 53:20;71:19
erosive (1) 19:6	exercise (5) 30:1,16;69:11,11, 13	fall (3) 18:23;24:13;45:20	Finally (4) 11:13,19;35:3; 59:12	founder (1) 42:9
err (1) 65:17	exist (2) 38:17,17	falls (1) 24:1	financial (1) 21:21	four (3) 19:2;53:8;68:16
especially (1) 10:12	exists (3) 18:8,12;74:18	familiar (1) 27:16	financially (1) 21:18	frame (1) 65:9
essentially (1) 40:16	exit (4) 9:2,2,8,8	families (5) 20:23;26:13;36:22; 49:7;61:5	find (1) 39:4	frankly (1) 27:23
estate (3) 44:5;45:10;71:23	expanding (1) 62:2	family (12) 12:8;26:9;41:11,14, 15;42:11;43:17;44:1; 60:11;61:14,16;70:3	finding (1) 39:9	Fred (3) 21:23;22:2;46:12
estates (1) 55:1	expect (1) 57:12	fan (1) 70:16	finest (1) 43:15	frequently (2) 64:19;66:14
etc (1) 45:22	expedited (1) 70:21	far (6) 9:3;56:23;57:1; 63:13;68:4,5	finish (1) 35:11	friend (3) 68:21;69:6;71:2
ethnicities (1) 69:18	expense (3) 45:21;59:19,21	Farm (2) 51:21;52:21	Fire (1) 52:3	friends (3) 49:17;68:24;70:1
evaluate (1) 37:9	experience (2) 42:17;58:20	farms (1) 55:13	first (9) 9:13;10:6;35:24; 45:8;46:9;49:18,20; 52:2;67:11	fruits (1) 70:10
Evan (2) 21:3,6	experienced (3) 40:9,11;50:10	fast (1) 55:18	firsthand (2) 42:11;43:17	fully (2) 62:5,15
even (10) 10:3;11:17;40:13; 41:1;46:21;47:14; 49:18;60:23;62:11; 67:24	experiencing (1) 18:21	fate (1) 43:15	fish (2) 33:8;69:4	functioning (1) 40:16
evening (5) 15:1;48:3,22;49:11, 12	expert (1) 36:12	fault (1) 28:6	fisherman (1) 69:4	functions (4) 11:1,6;68:5,6
event (1) 12:24	explanation (3) 6:4,4;7:20	favor (7) 5:10;8:17;35:8; 44:9;63:8;73:14;76:6	fishermen (1) 32:18	fundraising (1) 43:12
events (13) 12:15,18,18;13:7, 13;20:20;26:18;	extensive (1) 25:21	fear (1) 27:19	fishing (1) 30:7	funds (1) 67:22
	extraordinary (2) 59:19,20		fit (1)	further (3) 8:8;12:16;74:14
				future (5) 8:19,24;14:1;15:22; 74:15
				G

GAGNON (3) 5:6;14:13;76:4	26:16	guests (3) 42:16,19;43:19	59:21;75:2	12:17
gainful (1) 57:13	GOMEZ (1) 60:3	Gulino (3) 44:2,3,3	held (2) 44:6;68:8	hottest (1) 38:13
game (1) 26:6	Good (25) 4:7;21:5;22:1; 24:12;25:7;32:1;41:5, 22;48:3;49:11,12; 52:24;53:11;57:17; 60:9,13;63:19;65:6; 68:20,24;69:6,13; 71:14;72:5,6	G-U-L-I-N-O (1) 44:4	Hello (2) 20:11;23:13	hours (1) 73:1
garden (1) 34:24		guys (7) 24:17;44:20;45:23; 46:2;55:12;56:19; 57:22	help (5) 14:18;26:22;27:1; 40:13;63:22	House (2) 55:10;70:18
gather (3) 6:21;13:6;36:23	gorgeous (1) 59:3	H	helped (1) 72:14	households (1) 20:23
gathering (1) 7:5	Governor (1) 55:1	habitat (4) 10:16;11:2,7;33:8	helping (1) 14:18	housekeeping (2) 8:13;9:1
Gebhardt (3) 66:20,21,21	grandchildren (1) 56:10	half (2) 34:22;52:7	Hi (3) 12:3;64:15;68:13	houses (1) 55:2
G-E-B-H-A-R-D-T (1) 66:22	grandfathers (1) 64:6	hand (1) 59:10	high (7) 18:9,13;30:10;37:3; 55:21;56:2;58:21	huge (2) 44:23;67:14
Gendreau (5) 62:17;63:23;64:1,1, 12	Grandmothers (1) 64:6	handicap (1) 58:22	highlight (1) 9:21	hundred (2) 45:17;65:13
G-E-N-D-R-E-A-U (1) 64:2	grant (1) 41:19	handicapper (1) 58:21	highway (2) 47:10,13	hundreds (5) 30:12;41:12;43:8; 45:6;52:20
General (5) 6:22;7:24;33:16; 42:1;47:9	granted (4) 14:1;40:21;41:16; 74:10	handled (1) 75:23	Hill (1) 55:22	Hunters (2) 33:5,23
gentleman (2) 4:6;25:15	granting (1) 34:19	happen (4) 18:24;19:12;35:12; 50:1	hire (1) 70:6	Hurricane (1) 52:6
gentlemen (2) 58:11;59:18	grass (2) 32:20,20	happened (3) 26:19;34:13;71:22	historic (3) 29:5,6,11	hybrid (1) 4:17
Geoffrey (2) 24:5;25:14	grateful (1) 64:3	happening (3) 35:10;50:13,14	history (4) 32:16;39:3;45:13; 61:13	I
gets (2) 59:1;75:22	grave (1) 41:17	happy (3) 20:3;36:5;63:22	Hittinger (4) 46:6,7,8;68:22	icon (1) 26:1
given (3) 6:24;10:1;26:18	gravel (1) 57:3	Harbor (1) 65:1	H-I-T-T-I-N-G-E-R (1) 46:8	iconic (1) 73:16
giving (2) 31:22;35:11	great (17) 13:5,13;23:1;27:18; 45:24;46:20;49:17; 51:5;52:13;53:9;63:2, 2,5,6,6,7;69:20	hard (3) 20:22;55:15,15	hold (3) 26:2,2;37:5	identified (1) 34:5
Gladstone (5) 27:5,7,10;46:1; 69:19	green (7) 13:16;16:14;29:15, 17;32:7,19,20	hardened (1) 10:13	hole (12) 23:22;29:17,17; 40:7;42:18;43:3,13; 45:11;50:7;62:7; 72:13;73:17	identify (2) 9:15;58:15
global (1) 50:19	Green's (1) 17:2	harm (4) 10:2;36:13;39:12; 41:17	Holes (2) 13:18;23:21	ignore (2) 48:12;74:23
Globe (1) 12:19	Greenwich (5) 12:6,13,16;16:15; 27:14	hat (1) 69:19	holistic (1) 23:7	ignored (1) 59:9
Gloria (1) 52:6	Greg (2) 44:2,3	hate (1) 24:13	home (4) 51:13;61:1,4;72:16	II (14) 6:10;10:12;16:21; 17:1;20:24;21:8;30:2; 36:17;39:11;40:21; 53:14;60:8;63:12; 74:5
goal (3) 10:6;61:21;73:15	group (2) 22:4;64:5	hats (1) 27:11	Homes (3) 16:22;55:3;69:6	illegal (6) 10:23;34:11;35:8; 36:3;46:16,23
God (2) 56:23;57:1	grow (1) 26:5	Haughey (4) 49:10,11,13,13	Honorable (1) 39:4	illegally (4) 11:23;15:6;17:12; 48:16
Golf (54) 12:7,8,18,24;13:3, 14;19:12,16,19,20; 20:19,20;22:23;23:8, 15,16,20,21;24:1,2, 20,20;25:8,16,19,23; 26:2,3;27:2;29:1,2, 20;36:22;40:6;42:24; 43:3,10;44:14;45:12; 46:21;57:18,23; 58:21;63:4;65:8; 66:23;67:4,4,16,20, 21;69:9,16;74:9	growing (1) 61:22	H-A-U-G-H-E-Y (1) 49:14	hope (6) 20:18;23:6;27:2; 29:7;39:8;59:23	illegally-built (1) 48:9
golfers (1)	grown (3) 24:7;29:10;40:3	healthy (1) 60:19	Hopefully (3) 9:20;24:8;46:4	immediate (1) 43:6
	guarantee (2) 42:23;43:1	hear (4) 57:7;72:23;73:2,11	hoping (1) 28:9	immediately (1) 16:20
	guess (3) 25:19;45:8;70:22	heard (9) 28:16;33:10;45:4; 48:22;57:8;64:20; 67:6,17;72:11	horse (1) 46:19	impact (12) 27:22;29:8;30:13; 42:11;43:18;44:12; 67:4,6,15,20;68:10;
		Hearing (6) 5:10;6:17,23;7:2;	Hospital (2) 61:14,15	
			host (1)	

72:4 impacted (1) 29:21 impacting (2) 28:4,23 impacts (2) 56:17;68:2 implications (2) 34:21;35:2 importance (2) 12:21;37:10 important (14) 11:3;13:9;14:2; 20:14;21:9,15,16; 25:14;29:16;33:10; 36:15,19;53:23;74:7 importantly (1) 44:8 impossible (1) 28:24 improvement (1) 53:9 inappropriate (2) 10:2;11:13 incidents (1) 52:2 includes (1) 28:13 including (3) 11:23;12:18;51:24 income (1) 64:8 incorrect (1) 7:2 increasing (2) 38:6;73:18 incredibly (1) 11:10 incurred (1) 59:20 indeed (1) 16:21 independent (1) 62:3 indicated (1) 4:11 individual (2) 9:13;47:16 individuals (2) 4:5;58:3 industry (3) 53:22;67:5,21 inevitable (1) 43:13 influential (1) 47:6 initial (1) 65:15 initials (1) 41:8 initiative (1) 55:10 inland (4)	15:15,16;56:23; 74:12 input (2) 26:14;34:18 install (1) 66:17 installation (2) 65:22;66:14 installed (1) 65:23 instance (1) 52:18 Instead (1) 51:6 instructional (1) 26:4 integrity (1) 13:17 intelligent (1) 46:3 intended (1) 15:21 intensified (1) 74:4 intent (1) 43:24 intentionally (1) 48:15 intentions (1) 62:2 interest (7) 22:10;31:1;33:14, 21;39:1;66:11,11 interested (1) 33:6 interests (2) 30:23;33:11 into (14) 17:17;18:23;23:6, 10;24:1,9,13;27:3; 39:3;45:11,20;55:5; 71:10;74:5 intrusive (1) 11:5 investing (1) 51:16 involved (3) 37:22;42:4;52:8 irreparable (1) 39:12 irrespective (1) 18:3 Island (43) 4:8;12:22;13:2; 14:21;17:24;22:3,5,6; 26:1;28:1,8,12;31:8; 32:6;37:5;38:3;42:13; 43:8,9,24;44:14;45:1, 2;46:5,9,13;48:5,7,11; 50:14;51:10,12; 53:21;54:13,17,18; 55:11;56:9,16;59:4; 61:14,23;69:2	Islander (1) 27:15 Islanders (4) 31:1;41:13;49:5; 62:4 Island's (5) 33:15;43:15;49:2,4, 8 issue (5) 8:24;50:20;53:5,19; 75:22 issues (2) 9:22;68:11 Ives (1) 55:22	J James (2) 14:9,11 Jan (4) 41:10;42:1;44:4; 64:3 Janice (2) 42:7;63:9 Janikies (4) 41:11,14;42:7,10 Jarbeau (3) 9:13,16,17 J-A-R-B-E-A-U (1) 9:17 Jeff (3) 27:5;46:1;69:19 Jeffrey (3) 27:10;41:20,23 Joanne (2) 60:4,5 job (12) 19:21;20:15;23:18; 39:3;53:15,16;55:15, 16;56:19;59:7;65:21; 74:19 jobs (3) 13:10;53:19;67:12 Joe (3) 20:9,11;75:1 John (2) 58:6,17 joined (2) 49:20;68:16 JULY (2) 4:1,11 June (4) 6:13;7:6;14:22; 16:7 junior (1) 26:2 justify (1) 10:20	54:6 keep (3) 37:10;50:3;57:23 keeping (1) 24:19 keeps (1) 68:3 Ken (2) 68:12,13 Kenney (3) 21:3,4,6 K-E-N-N-E-Y (1) 21:7 Kevin (9) 22:21,22;23:17; 24:16;25:12;36:7,9; 49:10,13 key (2) 9:22;57:6 kid (1) 24:8 kids (3) 26:3;49:16,17 kind (2) 46:18;59:15 kinds (1) 72:1 Kingstown (10) 6:2;54:11;61:4; 63:17;64:16,17,21; 66:9;73:12;74:11 knew (2) 34:14;46:24 knowing (3) 15:8;34:16;48:16 knowingly (1) 15:7 knowledge (1) 25:20 known (1) 15:9	31:16;41:13;66:21 Lastly (3) 18:18;66:13;67:19 late (1) 47:3 later (2) 6:8;70:18 lateral (1) 18:9 law (5) 47:16;48:12,20,20; 69:24 Laws (3) 6:22;7:24;55:18 lawyer (1) 27:17 least (2) 15:10;68:19 led (1) 46:16 left (2) 9:3;73:24 legacy (1) 43:16 legal (3) 7:19;14:13;41:11 legitimized (1) 35:9 legs (1) 53:2 leniency (1) 43:21 less (2) 11:5;19:6 letter (5) 12:20;14:22,23; 66:8;69:23 letters (1) 66:8 level (2) 27:24;55:10 levels (1) 38:15 licensed (2) 22:6;61:1 life (2) 54:11,24 lifelong (1) 27:15 lightening (1) 70:19 likely (1) 11:6 limit (2) 47:13,15 limited (1) 29:1 line (2) 25:13;55:5 link (1) 4:18 Links (2) 19:15,19
		K Karl (1)	L ladies (3) 44:20;58:11;59:17 land (4) 36:15;57:20;61:13; 74:9 landmark (2) 29:5,7 landowners (3) 28:4,5;65:3 lands (1) 33:7 Langseth (3) 51:19,20,20 L-A-N-G-S-E-T-H (1) 51:22 large (1) 64:5 last (6) 18:11;24:23;26:19;		

<p>Lisa (2) 4:13;8:21</p> <p>list (2) 8:19;9:12</p> <p>listen (1) 74:21</p> <p>litigation (1) 35:16</p> <p>little (5) 23:16;29:13;30:17; 69:24;75:23</p> <p>live (5) 19:12;27:14;54:23; 56:23;65:5</p> <p>lived (3) 27:14;54:11,24</p> <p>livelihood (1) 20:16</p> <p>lives (2) 23:9;37:7</p> <p>living (6) 29:23;62:3,3;72:2, 9,14</p> <p>loan (1) 49:19</p> <p>locally (1) 49:6</p> <p>logically (1) 37:9</p> <p>Lombardi (4) 12:2,3,4;14:5</p> <p>L-O-M-B-A-R-D-I (1) 12:5</p> <p>long (6) 12:10;45:15,17; 46:23;47:4;58:22</p> <p>longer (4) 24:14;35:18;54:19; 59:13</p> <p>long-term (1) 62:1</p> <p>longtime (1) 32:3</p> <p>long-time (3) 12:12;73:13,18</p> <p>look (8) 17:18;23:7;30:5; 34:9;50:15,18;51:18; 59:18</p> <p>looking (5) 30:20;32:19,20; 59:4;62:11</p> <p>looks (3) 17:20;39:19;41:7</p> <p>lose (1) 26:24</p> <p>Losing (1) 43:13</p> <p>loss (1) 11:6</p> <p>lost (3) 29:20,20;53:19</p> <p>lot (23)</p>	<p>24:18;26:11;28:2,2; 40:2;44:6,8;45:24; 53:18;56:6,7,8,8,20; 59:22;63:15;69:4,20; 70:5,23;72:7,11,22</p> <p>lots (1) 63:19</p> <p>Lou (1) 71:20</p> <p>loud (3) 72:19;73:5,12</p> <p>love (13) 28:11;29:10;32:5,6, 6,7;45:1,23;54:19; 55:7;56:10,11;62:6</p> <p>lover (1) 44:23</p> <p>low (1) 56:2</p>	<p>6:1</p> <p>Mark (2) 58:5,5</p> <p>Massachusetts (1) 46:13</p> <p>massive (1) 40:14</p> <p>Mathews (6) 39:20,23,23;40:1; 42:7;63:9</p> <p>M-A-T-H-E-W-S (1) 40:1</p> <p>Matt (1) 22:19</p> <p>matter (8) 8:18,20;9:1,20; 27:12;49:9;53:4;75:8</p> <p>matters (2) 8:13;21:9</p> <p>Matunuck (2) 54:23;56:1</p> <p>May (11) 5:2;6:6,12;7:6; 20:13;21:14,22; 24:19;27:21;51:17; 66:4</p> <p>maybe (6) 17:22;37:24;45:16; 53:22;56:24;57:16</p> <p>mayhem (1) 52:4</p> <p>McCann (3) 44:18,19,22</p> <p>McNeill (1) 19:21</p> <p>mean (9) 24:6,7;45:19;46:2; 61:13;63:1,13,15,19</p> <p>means (2) 23:19;24:18</p> <p>measures (2) 21:13,17</p> <p>media (1) 38:11</p> <p>medium (1) 16:21</p> <p>MEETING (13) 4:2,17;5:1,2;7:4,21, 22,8;22:9;7;12:14; 26:15;75:7;76:11</p> <p>meetings (2) 8:19;9:4</p> <p>member (17) 12:7,12;27:12,13; 31:15;32:3;37:18; 40:1;45:4;49:14; 54:12;58:12;60:24; 64:16;67:1;73:13,18</p> <p>members (28) 7:16;12:17,17; 14:12;20:5;24:11; 25:6;26:6,7,16;27:9; 32:17;33:3;37:17;</p>	<p>42:16,19;43:18; 46:13;48:3;49:23; 54:8;59:6;60:13;63:5; 64:22,24;74:20;75:1</p> <p>membership (1) 40:3</p> <p>Memorial (1) 61:15</p> <p>mentioned (1) 25:15</p> <p>mercy (1) 70:20</p> <p>mere (1) 55:8</p> <p>Met (4) 19:15,19;49:16; 63:5</p> <p>Metacomet (1) 19:16</p> <p>methods (1) 19:7</p> <p>Michael (3) 33:1,3;73:10</p> <p>microphone (2) 72:20,21</p> <p>middle (1) 68:23</p> <p>Mike (4) 9:13,17;31:24;32:2</p> <p>mile (2) 34:22;52:7</p> <p>military (1) 53:22</p> <p>million (2) 67:8,16</p> <p>millions (1) 53:24</p> <p>mind (2) 37:11;39:6</p> <p>mine (3) 36:23;52:18;68:21</p> <p>minimum (1) 66:15</p> <p>minor (1) 10:19</p> <p>minutes (1) 5:1</p> <p>missions (1) 54:3</p> <p>MLB (1) 67:23</p> <p>mons (1) 64:6</p> <p>money (3) 48:24;51:5;70:8</p> <p>month (1) 19:18</p> <p>more (20) 6:23;7:1;9:1;10:18; 14:17;15:9;23:7; 36:19;50:5;57:21; 58:1;59:20;63:22; 65:14;67:23,24;</p>	<p>69:15;72:4,6;73:23</p> <p>Most (5) 19:15;44:7;46:4; 59:3;73:16</p> <p>mostly (2) 17:21;37:13</p> <p>motion (9) 4:24;5:7,15,16; 44:9;75:19;76:1,5,10</p> <p>Motion's (1) 5:4</p> <p>motive (2) 74:16,17</p> <p>Mount (1) 16:19</p> <p>mouth (1) 16:14</p> <p>move (1) 31:7</p> <p>moved (5) 5:3;19:4;55:1,2; 76:3</p> <p>much (11) 23:19;27:8;47:24; 48:1;54:4,5;61:13; 62:3;64:7;69:10; 72:16</p> <p>multiple (1) 50:7</p> <p>multiuse (1) 19:17</p> <p>Murphy (3) 31:24;32:1,2</p> <p>M-U-R-P-H-Y (1) 32:2</p> <p>must (2) 14:14;47:18</p> <p>myself (5) 24:9;32:4;37:21; 65:4;69:12</p>
	M			
<p>machinery (1) 17:22</p> <p>madam (1) 39:7</p> <p>maintain (6) 11:20;28:24;29:18, 19;32:14,14</p> <p>maintained (2) 54:20,22</p> <p>maintaining (1) 30:23</p> <p>major (7) 34:20,20;35:1,2; 36:20;50:9,19</p> <p>makes (2) 32:13;46:4</p> <p>making (4) 7:10;40:17;51:6; 66:10</p> <p>malice (1) 43:23</p> <p>man (2) 24:10;56:7</p> <p>Management (5) 4:9;7:13;31:6; 33:17;49:3</p> <p>manager (3) 42:2;62:23;64:4</p> <p>manner (1) 30:19</p> <p>mansion (1) 54:21</p> <p>manufacturing (1) 56:22</p> <p>many (14) 10:14;12:9,16; 13:12;16:23;26:2; 28:7;32:17;37:3;44:7; 48:22;50:13;61:6; 64:22</p> <p>map (1)</p>		<p>Matunuck (2) 54:23;56:1</p> <p>May (11) 5:2;6:6,12;7:6; 20:13;21:14,22; 24:19;27:21;51:17; 66:4</p> <p>maybe (6) 17:22;37:24;45:16; 53:22;56:24;57:16</p> <p>mayhem (1) 52:4</p> <p>McCann (3) 44:18,19,22</p> <p>McNeill (1) 19:21</p> <p>mean (9) 24:6,7;45:19;46:2; 61:13;63:1,13,15,19</p> <p>means (2) 23:19;24:18</p> <p>measures (2) 21:13,17</p> <p>media (1) 38:11</p> <p>medium (1) 16:21</p> <p>MEETING (13) 4:2,17;5:1,2;7:4,21, 22,8;22:9;7;12:14; 26:15;75:7;76:11</p> <p>meetings (2) 8:19;9:4</p> <p>member (17) 12:7,12;27:12,13; 31:15;32:3;37:18; 40:1;45:4;49:14; 54:12;58:12;60:24; 64:16;67:1;73:13,18</p> <p>members (28) 7:16;12:17,17; 14:12;20:5;24:11; 25:6;26:6,7,16;27:9; 32:17;33:3;37:17;</p>	<p>42:16,19;43:18; 46:13;48:3;49:23; 54:8;59:6;60:13;63:5; 64:22,24;74:20;75:1</p> <p>membership (1) 40:3</p> <p>Memorial (1) 61:15</p> <p>mentioned (1) 25:15</p> <p>mercy (1) 70:20</p> <p>mere (1) 55:8</p> <p>Met (4) 19:15,19;49:16; 63:5</p> <p>Metacomet (1) 19:16</p> <p>methods (1) 19:7</p> <p>Michael (3) 33:1,3;73:10</p> <p>microphone (2) 72:20,21</p> <p>middle (1) 68:23</p> <p>Mike (4) 9:13,17;31:24;32:2</p> <p>mile (2) 34:22;52:7</p> <p>military (1) 53:22</p> <p>million (2) 67:8,16</p> <p>millions (1) 53:24</p> <p>mind (2) 37:11;39:6</p> <p>mine (3) 36:23;52:18;68:21</p> <p>minimum (1) 66:15</p> <p>minor (1) 10:19</p> <p>minutes (1) 5:1</p> <p>missions (1) 54:3</p> <p>MLB (1) 67:23</p> <p>mons (1) 64:6</p> <p>money (3) 48:24;51:5;70:8</p> <p>month (1) 19:18</p> <p>more (20) 6:23;7:1;9:1;10:18; 14:17;15:9;23:7; 36:19;50:5;57:21; 58:1;59:20;63:22; 65:14;67:23,24;</p>	<p>69:15;72:4,6;73:23</p> <p>Most (5) 19:15;44:7;46:4; 59:3;73:16</p> <p>mostly (2) 17:21;37:13</p> <p>motion (9) 4:24;5:7,15,16; 44:9;75:19;76:1,5,10</p> <p>Motion's (1) 5:4</p> <p>motive (2) 74:16,17</p> <p>Mount (1) 16:19</p> <p>mouth (1) 16:14</p> <p>move (1) 31:7</p> <p>moved (5) 5:3;19:4;55:1,2; 76:3</p> <p>much (11) 23:19;27:8;47:24; 48:1;54:4,5;61:13; 62:3;64:7;69:10; 72:16</p> <p>multiple (1) 50:7</p> <p>multiuse (1) 19:17</p> <p>Murphy (3) 31:24;32:1,2</p> <p>M-U-R-P-H-Y (1) 32:2</p> <p>must (2) 14:14;47:18</p> <p>myself (5) 24:9;32:4;37:21; 65:4;69:12</p>
				N
<p>name (28) 4:22;9:17;12:4; 14:11;20:11;22:22; 23:13;24:23;25:7; 27:10;31:13;32:2; 33:3;36:8;37:17;41:2, 9,23;44:3;46:8;49:13; 60:5;62:21;66:21; 68:13,22;71:20;73:10</p> <p>Narragansett (3) 55:6,8;73:17</p> <p>narrow (2) 28:21;55:6</p> <p>National (1) 42:3</p> <p>natural (4) 11:6;14:20;29:9; 72:4</p> <p>nature (1) 26:23</p>				

<p>navigate (1) 43:21 NBA (1) 67:23 near (2) 35:1;59:5 nearby (1) 46:14 nearest (1) 17:6 neat (1) 25:3 necessary (3) 15:8;19:24;62:10 neck-deep (1) 56:4 need (11) 9:9;11:17;27:1; 34:9;53:20;54:1,16; 56:15;57:21;64:7; 70:6 needed (6) 7:4;25:10;31:18,19; 34:14;62:4 needs (4) 18:4;51:1;53:15; 68:18 negotiated (1) 66:2 neighbor (2) 52:18;65:6 neighborhood (2) 16:19;52:1 neighbors (1) 40:4 Neither (2) 17:9;48:10 nesting (1) 72:3 networking (1) 13:11 New (10) 12:7;16:5;19:19; 33:5;42:13;50:18; 63:5;66:23;75:12,13 Newport (1) 54:21 news (1) 50:22 Next (8) 5:17,21;12:1;14:6; 20:9;29:22;61:2;75:8 NFL (1) 67:23 nice (5) 14:14;58:10;67:10; 72:8,12 Nicholas (1) 42:10 nights (1) 37:3 nine-hole (1) 19:19</p>	<p>none (2) 5:10;75:14 nonexistent (1) 30:14 nonmembers (1) 49:24 nonprofit (1) 56:14 nonprofits (1) 20:21 nonstructural (2) 16:2;19:7 nor (3) 30:8;48:10;61:18 north (14) 6:2,2;16:13;17:2; 18:16,16;61:4;63:17; 64:16,17,21;66:9; 73:12;74:11 northeast (2) 19:2,20 Norton (1) 42:2 note (1) 29:22 noted (1) 8:5 Notice (6) 5:22;6:10,11,20,20; 7:6 notifications (1) 8:24 noting (1) 65:12 number (7) 8:15;27:11,11;40:4; 42:5;53:22;67:6 nursing (1) 61:1</p>	<p>odd (1) 14:14 off (6) 4:14;35:11;38:5; 53:3;55:22;62:7 offer (1) 62:2 offers (1) 6:23 offices (1) 9:5 often (2) 12:14;51:2 old (5) 5:17;29:6;61:17; 70:9;72:22 oldest (1) 61:23 once (1) 50:5 one (33) 4:16,16;6:23;9:1,9, 9:18;19:23;20:27;1,6, 18;28:8;34:21;37:6; 41:2;43:15,24,24; 48:13;53:17,22;54:3; 56:24;61:7;62:2;65:2; 67:1,3,24,24;70:4; 71:21;73:16 one-on-one (1) 63:6 one-time (1) 59:19 ongoing (1) 10:1 only (18) 4:18;7:8;9:3;15:4; 20:15;23:18;26:15; 27:24;28:19;29:8,21; 30:24;42:18;50:12, 23;51:8;70:17;73:21 open (1) 74:10 opened (3) 19:15,20;61:15 operate (1) 61:24 operating (1) 59:15 operators (1) 42:15 opinion (1) 49:22 opponents (1) 27:18 opportunities (2) 13:11;44:7 opportunity (3) 12:4;13:7;51:7 opposed (8) 5:13;14:16;15:2; 29:15;46:14;47:24; 54:4;76:8</p>	<p>opposing (1) 8:17 order (5) 4:8,10;29:18;43:6; 50:7 organization (3) 13:7;26:12;46:22 organizations (1) 13:12 original (1) 42:21 others (1) 50:13 other's (1) 69:6 otherwise (4) 7:9;20:5;47:24; 50:1 out (17) 6:10;7:5;8:6;9:6; 17:16,17;24:8;30:4,5; 35:16;36:2;49:23; 57:1;59:4;62:10;68:6; 72:15 outcome (1) 32:10 outdoor (2) 26:21;27:1 outing (1) 43:2 outside (4) 34:17;48:20;51:8; 62:6 over (24) 4:5,6;7:19;9:2,5; 14:16;17:18;22:5; 28:21;40:2;41:13; 49:15,18;50:2,6,9,14; 51:16;61:12;63:3; 65:13;67:21;68:24; 72:22 overlook (1) 40:6 overparked (1) 58:9 oversight (1) 65:24 own (4) 22:13;34:12;44:24; 64:17 owner (4) 56:22;57:19;59:10; 66:13 Owners (6) 12:7;42:15;56:21; 57:12;66:24;74:24 ownership (2) 24:12;70:3 owns (1) 33:20 oysters (1) 72:1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P</p> <p>paddling (1) 30:8 painstaking (1) 22:8 Palmer (1) 12:23 pantry (2) 63:17,18 Parente (3) 23:12,13,14 P-A-R-E-N-T-E (1) 23:14 parents (1) 36:24 Parrillo (3) 20:9,10,11 P-A-R-R-I-L-L-O (1) 20:12 part (5) 10:12;23:20;54:15; 59:1;75:6 participants (1) 42:20 participated (1) 43:1 particular (7) 7:9;17:10;22:11; 23:22;45:17;59:2; 68:10 particulars (1) 70:24 parties (2) 39:2;51:4 parts (1) 58:23 pass (2) 14:8;22:20 PASSED (1) 5:16 passing (1) 42:10 past (5) 12:7;53:7,8;65:13, 16 Pasture (2) 16:13;17:3 path (4) 11:14;35:14,17,21 patrons (1) 43:19 pending (1) 36:4 people (41) 6:23;24:9;26:20,20; 29:10;30:7,7;31:2,5, 22;35:15;37:4;41:18; 45:6;48:22;49:22; 52:12;53:18;54:16, 17;56:20;57:6,7,9,9, 11,18;61:6;62:7;64:5;</p>
<p>Min-U-Script®</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">O</p>	<p>Rebecca J. Forte Court Reporters (401)474-8441 stenorf@gmail.com</p>	<p>(86) navigate - people</p>	<p></p>

<p>67:16;69:17,18;70:2,4;71:3,14;72:21,22;73:4,7</p> <p>per (1) 12:15</p> <p>perception (1) 26:9</p> <p>period (3) 6:13,15;8:4</p> <p>permit (7) 15:8;34:15,19; 35:19;46:18;52:11,20</p> <p>permits (1) 65:23</p> <p>permitted (1) 52:5</p> <p>permitting (3) 35:17;48:17;71:1</p> <p>person (1) 47:6</p> <p>personal (1) 12:11</p> <p>personnel (1) 71:6</p> <p>perspective (2) 9:23;36:19</p> <p>Peter (6) 24:21;25:8;62:17, 18;63:23;64:1</p> <p>Petition (21) 5:23;6:1,8;7:10; 9:24;10:3,4;11:9,20; 13:17,22;15:3,5; 16:16;41:16,19;60:7; 61:11;62:6;65:2; 66:10</p> <p>petitioners (1) 53:2</p> <p>PGA (1) 42:24</p> <p>Phillip (3) 31:9,10,14</p> <p>photographs (2) 17:13;18:10</p> <p>piece (2) 33:12;71:23</p> <p>pillar (1) 20:17</p> <p>pit (1) 74:24</p> <p>place (24) 11:15;13:5;17:21; 23:2;26:1,10;28:16, 21;30:22;31:17;32:5; 36:22;37:2,4,6,11; 46:20;50:13;55:7; 60:9;63:7;67:21; 69:20;75:1</p> <p>placed (3) 17:22;42:18,19</p> <p>places (3) 49:4;54:16,17</p> <p>plane (1)</p>	<p>55:14</p> <p>Planning (1) 4:9</p> <p>plans (2) 18:1;35:19</p> <p>planted (1) 19:7</p> <p>play (4) 19:12;42:24;67:16; 69:9</p> <p>played (4) 28:18;31:16;46:21; 58:22</p> <p>playing (4) 30:4,5;58:20,24</p> <p>plead (1) 59:17</p> <p>please (6) 8:20;23:9;25:5; 26:24;57:24;58:16</p> <p>pleasurable (1) 42:17</p> <p>pleasant (2) 30:4;42:9</p> <p>plenty (1) 48:19</p> <p>PM (2) 4:2;76:11</p> <p>Point (7) 16:13,15;17:3;43:5; 53:17;59:13;74:7</p> <p>points (1) 14:24</p> <p>policy (1) 14:18</p> <p>political (1) 74:23</p> <p>politician (1) 71:13</p> <p>Pond (1) 56:1</p> <p>pool (1) 36:24</p> <p>pop (1) 57:8</p> <p>popular (1) 38:11</p> <p>portion (2) 73:22;74:12</p> <p>portions (1) 74:2</p> <p>position (5) 29:23;30:21;37:21; 44:5;64:3</p> <p>positive (3) 32:10,12;42:11</p> <p>possible (1) 13:24</p> <p>possibly (1) 59:18</p> <p>potential (3) 11:14;36:13;65:15</p> <p>potentially (1)</p>	<p>50:23</p> <p>Potter's (1) 56:1</p> <p>practical (1) 30:21</p> <p>practicing (1) 27:17</p> <p>precede (1) 10:14</p> <p>precedent (3) 11:10;48:10;65:3</p> <p>preeminent (1) 44:14</p> <p>preexisting (1) 16:23</p> <p>prepared (1) 18:1</p> <p>PRESENT (1) 60:3</p> <p>presented (1) 74:22</p> <p>presently (1) 13:15</p> <p>preservation (1) 13:18</p> <p>preserve (7) 10:7;36:15;48:7,8; 49:8;61:9;74:17</p> <p>preserves (1) 48:10</p> <p>president (7) 13:1;22:3;42:6,7; 46:9;56:22;63:10</p> <p>pressed (1) 13:4</p> <p>pretty (2) 7:3;36:11</p> <p>prevent (1) 47:21</p> <p>prevents (1) 74:14</p> <p>previous (7) 5:1,2;12:20;13:23; 34:21;46:24;47:1</p> <p>previously (2) 9:19;11:5</p> <p>Primarily (1) 15:2</p> <p>primary (1) 67:14</p> <p>prior (6) 8:8;10:23;18:11; 42:10;43:14;66:16</p> <p>pristine (2) 53:14;57:20</p> <p>private (3) 28:5;56:13;66:11</p> <p>privilege (1) 30:5</p> <p>privileged (1) 26:10</p> <p>probably (2) 53:21;68:5</p>	<p>problem (5) 18:21;32:8;41:16; 57:14;70:17</p> <p>problems (1) 70:15</p> <p>procedure (1) 7:21</p> <p>Procedures (2) 4:9;59:8</p> <p>proceed (3) 11:22;34:2;36:2</p> <p>proceeded (2) 34:15,19</p> <p>proceedings (1) 4:19</p> <p>proceeds (1) 35:13</p> <p>process (4) 11:18;47:3;51:5; 65:4</p> <p>processes (1) 36:12</p> <p>professional (6) 17:24;18:1;22:23; 23:15,17;25:8</p> <p>professionalism (1) 75:20</p> <p>profit (1) 56:13</p> <p>progress (1) 5:18</p> <p>prohibited (1) 16:11</p> <p>project (6) 11:5,6;34:20;35:20, 21;55:24</p> <p>projects (1) 42:4</p> <p>proms (1) 37:3</p> <p>promulgated (1) 55:19</p> <p>Promulgation (1) 5:23</p> <p>pronouncing (1) 39:21</p> <p>proper (1) 48:17</p> <p>properly (2) 47:22;74:5</p> <p>properties (2) 43:15;50:17</p> <p>property (19) 10:19;15:7;17:5; 19:17;31:19;33:12; 42:18;44:24;51:15, 17;55:4;59:11;61:18; 66:6;72:6;73:22;74:3, 5,15</p> <p>proposal (1) 42:21</p> <p>Proposed (3) 5:22;8:4;11:5</p>	<p>protect (21) 10:7;15:21;18:19; 21:15;23:24;26:23; 29:14;30:22,24;31:8, 19;33:11;43:6;48:7,8; 49:2,8;50:7;51:17; 73:16;74:17</p> <p>protected (3) 55:3;57:2;71:23</p> <p>protecting (5) 27:1;33:6;48:23; 49:1;72:13</p> <p>protection (4) 14:20;15:21;16:10; 54:2</p> <p>protects (2) 43:7;48:11</p> <p>provable (1) 36:13</p> <p>provide (7) 10:15;26:6,8,13; 33:17;38:7;42:16</p> <p>provided (2) 11:1;34:4</p> <p>Providence (2) 19:13,14</p> <p>provides (1) 13:10</p> <p>proximity (1) 18:20</p> <p>public (17) 4:18,18;6:11,12,17; 7:5,8;8:2;11:2;18:9; 22:10;33:7,19;34:18; 35:19;56:13;61:19</p> <p>public's (3) 33:14,21;66:11</p> <p>punitive (1) 21:13</p> <p>purpose (2) 15:21;41:5</p> <p>pursuant (1) 7:23</p> <p>pursuit (1) 21:12</p> <p>put (8) 6:10;7:5;15:3,5; 31:5;37:21;58:3; 61:10</p> <p>putting (3) 46:2,19;62:8</p>
				Q
				<p>QCC (2) 73:22;74:11</p> <p>quahoggers (1) 30:7</p> <p>quahogs (1) 49:24</p> <p>qualified (1) 21:8</p> <p>quality (1)</p>

<p>47:19 quantity (1) 38:6 Quidnessett (65) 5:24;12:11,12,14, 15,17,21;13:4,8,9,14; 14:1;19:24;20:17,21; 22:24;23:15,19;24:3, 4;25:9,24;27:13;28:4, 14,15;29:6,21;31:15; 32:3,5,15,16;36:21; 37:11,19;39:12; 40:12;42:5;44:13; 45:3;46:20;49:15,20; 50:2,12;51:8;58:13; 60:6,24;61:2;62:23; 63:1,16;64:4;66:3,3, 24;67:7;68:4;69:14; 70:2,11;73:13;74:2 Quidnessett's (4) 13:19,22;43:10; 67:18 quite (2) 27:23;51:2 Quote (8) 38:12,12,14;39:4,5, 6,7;71:13 quoted (1) 12:19</p>	<p>real (3) 44:5;45:10;71:23 realigned (1) 19:4 realigning (1) 19:22 reality (1) 38:7 realize (2) 24:17;51:1 realized (1) 12:20 really (27) 17:19;22:10;26:21; 28:18;29:13,14; 30:10,11;32:10,12,18; 47:11;55:9,9,15;56:5, 5;58:21;59:1;61:8; 62:10;68:15;69:5,6, 10,12,14 reason (4) 13:16;15:4;35:23; 37:8 reasonable (2) 21:18;32:22 reasons (3) 10:5;44:10;61:7 rebuilt (1) 52:23 recall (1) 15:11 receding (1) 65:12 receive (1) 7:8 received (4) 6:8,15;7:1;69:22 recent (1) 66:16 recently (2) 19:15;40:9 receptions (1) 37:5 reclass (1) 73:21 reclassification (5) 46:15,17;47:3,20; 48:1 recognition (1) 37:3 recommend (1) 53:9 recommendation (1) 8:7 recommendations (3) 8:2;53:7;70:5 record (5) 4:23;9:14;14:23; 24:3;58:16 recording (2) 4:19;8:21 records (2) 38:14,21</p>	<p>recreation (1) 37:1 recreational (3) 16:17;30:3;31:5 redesign (3) 25:16,22;28:17 redesigned (2) 19:3;45:9 redesigning (1) 19:21 redeveloped (1) 19:17 reduced (1) 11:7 referencing (1) 25:13 regarding (1) 48:23 Regardless (1) 13:23 registered (1) 17:24 regulated (2) 15:18;65:10 regulation (4) 22:13;33:18;52:14; 53:4 regulations (15) 7:13;11:11;14:18, 19;15:19;16:5,7;18:3; 27:23;28:20,20;51:1, 3,24;59:8 reiterate (2) 25:15;34:4 rejection (1) 42:21 related (1) 11:4 relationship (1) 49:19 relative (1) 7:11 relatively (2) 24:10;70:14 relevance (1) 10:21 relevant (1) 74:21 relief (1) 31:23 relies (1) 10:17 rely (3) 26:8,12;43:10 remain (1) 11:15 remarks (1) 58:10 remember (2) 55:21;68:1 remind (2) 33:13;53:20 removal (1)</p>	<p>11:23 removed (6) 11:17;18:5,6;20:1; 47:19;66:15 renewable (1) 38:7 report (2) 11:4;75:16 reports (1) 75:15 repose (1) 19:5 represent (2) 35:16;46:12 representing (1) 9:18 represents (1) 22:4 request (8) 6:23;7:12;37:12; 41:18;46:17;73:15, 15;74:20 requesting (1) 64:10 requests (1) 7:2 require (1) 22:8 required (4) 40:10;42:15;43:6; 50:3 requirement (1) 18:2 requires (2) 21:17;50:22 research (1) 51:5 reside (1) 73:12 residences (1) 17:4 resident (3) 54:10;64:16;66:13 residential (3) 16:17,21;19:17 residents (5) 43:9;61:4;62:6,12, 12 resolution (2) 68:3,9 Resource (1) 49:2 Resources (12) 4:9;7:13;10:2; 14:21;29:9;33:17,19; 56:6;64:19;66:2; 69:23;70:20 respect (3) 28:10;57:17;65:6 respectfully (4) 13:21;39:10;41:18; 64:9 RESPONSE (4)</p>	<p>5:9,14;75:5;76:9 rest (1) 24:19 restoration (2) 11:24;21:13 restored (3) 18:7;20:1;66:16 retire (1) 67:13 retired (1) 17:15 retirees (1) 67:13 retrieve (1) 4:13 retroactively (1) 47:14 revegetation (1) 16:3 revenue (1) 43:7 revetment (3) 17:12;18:14;19:24 re-visit (1) 51:7 REYNOLDS (4) 5:3;7:17;14:12; 76:3 rhetoric (1) 74:23 Rhode (51) 4:8;12:22;13:2; 14:21;17:24;22:3,5,6; 26:1;27:15;28:1,8,12; 31:1,8;32:6;33:15; 37:5;38:3;41:13; 42:13;43:8,9,15,24; 44:14;45:1,2;46:5,9, 13;48:5,7,11;49:2,4,5, 8;50:14;51:10,12; 53:21;54:13;55:11; 56:9,16;59:4;61:14, 23;62:4;69:2 Rich (5) 46:6,8;68:22;71:2; 74:24 Richard (2) 51:19,20 Richmond (1) 56:24 right (21) 4:6;5:21;9:3;14:9; 18:8;21:24;23:20; 31:7;36:17;39:24; 40:22,23;57:5,17; 61:2,7,24;62:11; 64:13;68:23;73:9 riprap (1) 31:20 Rising (2) 38:12,14 risk (3) 17:9;42:19,20</p>
R				
<p>races (1) 30:6 raise (1) 55:20 raised (2) 45:1;67:22 raises (1) 52:11 raising (2) 49:17;68:7 ramifications (1) 20:13 randomly (1) 45:18 rapidly (1) 56:6 rarely (1) 10:15 rather (1) 57:20 rationale (1) 34:5 reach (1) 39:3 reactive (1) 62:9 read (4) 9:21;14:23;41:3; 74:21 reading (1) 36:16</p>				

<p>River (3) 16:14;17:2;55:6</p> <p>road (5) 35:24;51:21;52:21; 53:1;55:22</p> <p>Robert (1) 19:21</p> <p>rocks (6) 18:15;36:14;38:22; 40:17,24;52:6</p> <p>Rocky (1) 55:22</p> <p>role (2) 13:20;26:22</p> <p>room (4) 70:23;71:7,12;75:2</p> <p>Ross (1) 24:5</p> <p>Ross-designed (3) 19:10,14,22</p> <p>Route (1) 47:7</p> <p>Rudman (3) 68:12,13,13</p> <p>R-U-D-M-A-N (1) 68:14</p> <p>Ruffasto (5) 58:7;60:17;62:19, 21,22</p> <p>R-U-F-F-A-S-T-O (1) 62:22</p> <p>rule (3) 39:11;52:15;59:23</p> <p>Rulemaking (11) 5:23;6:11,19,19; 7:1;8:4;22:17;34:2; 35:12;36:2;37:22</p> <p>Rules (6) 5:23;14:19;35:8; 37:23;51:1,2</p> <p>run (1) 41:12</p> <p>Russell (6) 58:6,9,17,17,20; 60:2</p> <p>R-U-S-S-E-L-L (1) 58:18</p>	<p>12:23</p> <p>same (5) 8:9;38:18;40:16,21; 65:4</p> <p>Sand (3) 16:15;30:12;40:16</p> <p>sandbags (2) 40:14,22</p> <p>sandy (1) 10:15</p> <p>sarcastic (1) 51:12</p> <p>Save (6) 9:18,22;11:19;44:1; 55:3;73:15</p> <p>saw (2) 68:20;69:18</p> <p>saying (6) 9:14;30:21;47:8; 53:12;70:22;71:3</p> <p>Scalabrini (3) 61:2,21;74:3</p> <p>school (1) 37:3</p> <p>science (3) 50:19,22;55:23</p> <p>Scott (5) 46:10,11;48:2,4; 58:5</p> <p>sea (4) 27:24;38:14;72:3, 15</p> <p>seacoast (2) 28:12,13</p> <p>seal (1) 43:14</p> <p>seashore (1) 32:7</p> <p>seawall (13) 16:3;43:14;52:2,3, 4,9,10,19,22,22,23,24; 57:16</p> <p>seawalls (2) 16:23;52:1</p> <p>second (6) 5:5,6;10:23;22:2; 52:18;76:4</p> <p>seconded (2) 5:7;76:5</p> <p>secondly (1) 26:18</p> <p>secretary (1) 8:21</p> <p>section (4) 6:17,22;7:23;47:13</p> <p>secured (1) 49:18</p> <p>sediment (1) 11:8</p> <p>seek (1) 48:20</p> <p>seeking (1) 13:13</p>	<p>seem (3) 36:16;46:3;66:5</p> <p>seems (1) 74:1</p> <p>senior (2) 29:22;55:24</p> <p>sense (2) 32:13;46:5</p> <p>sensitive (2) 65:19;73:23</p> <p>sent (1) 8:6</p> <p>Sepe (3) 60:18,18,22</p> <p>S-E-P-E (1) 60:23</p> <p>serious (2) 26:15;53:5</p> <p>serves (1) 13:11</p> <p>service (1) 26:6</p> <p>set (4) 11:10;14:7;15:15; 65:2</p> <p>setback (2) 15:18;16:9</p> <p>settled (1) 71:8</p> <p>several (3) 6:16;10:4;44:10</p> <p>severe (1) 73:19</p> <p>shadow (1) 55:8</p> <p>shall (1) 6:24</p> <p>share (1) 67:3</p> <p>sheet (2) 4:4,12</p> <p>sheet-pile (2) 15:14;16:8</p> <p>shoot (1) 51:14</p> <p>shore (1) 49:6</p> <p>shoreline (33) 10:18,24;11:1,7,24; 15:20;16:2,10,12,16; 17:1,7,8,10,19;18:4,6, 9,13,17;20:1;28:7; 38:22;50:11;55:23; 56:3;61:3,8,12,18; 65:13,15,18</p> <p>shorelines (2) 10:15;16:11</p> <p>shoreline's (1) 55:2</p> <p>short (1) 70:14</p> <p>shortsightedness (1) 57:19</p>	<p>short-term (1) 58:12</p> <p>shot (1) 25:4</p> <p>show (2) 11:16;35:18</p> <p>showcase (1) 20:19</p> <p>showed (1) 68:20</p> <p>showing (1) 50:19</p> <p>side (4) 14:15;65:17;68:22; 69:1</p> <p>sides (2) 71:15;75:22</p> <p>sight (1) 26:24</p> <p>sign (6) 4:15,15;9:2;44:19; 58:5;71:18</p> <p>signature (1) 40:7</p> <p>signed (7) 4:3;8:16,17;9:13; 41:2;58:3;71:17</p> <p>significant (1) 67:9</p> <p>significantly (1) 40:3</p> <p>sign-in (2) 4:4,11</p> <p>similar (2) 16:8;44:10</p> <p>Simonson (10) 37:15,16,17;39:14, 15,18,19,20;41:2;42:8</p> <p>S-I-M-O-N-S-O-N (1) 37:18</p> <p>simple (2) 71:5;74:17</p> <p>simply (1) 48:9</p> <p>sit (3) 32:11;70:15;74:12</p> <p>site (2) 10:16;13:13</p> <p>sits (1) 74:9</p> <p>sitting (4) 14:15;36:14;68:22, 23</p> <p>situation (10) 28:6;29:13;32:10, 11,12;53:13;67:11, 18;72:8,13</p> <p>six (2) 26:20;58:13</p> <p>size (1) 74:4</p> <p>skill (1) 37:2</p>	<p>skilled-nursing (1) 61:24</p> <p>small (1) 64:18</p> <p>snails (1) 72:1</p> <p>Snead (1) 12:24</p> <p>sociable (1) 69:12</p> <p>social (3) 13:10;69:9,11</p> <p>society (2) 51:2;63:20</p> <p>solicit (1) 8:1</p> <p>solution (2) 44:22;45:14</p> <p>solutions (1) 45:24</p> <p>somebody (4) 27:22;34:23;69:11; 70:11</p> <p>someone (2) 46:17;51:13</p> <p>sometimes (1) 75:22</p> <p>somewhat (1) 64:22</p> <p>Somewhere (1) 15:16</p> <p>son (1) 68:18</p> <p>Sonder (3) 64:14,15,15</p> <p>sorry (1) 41:5</p> <p>sort (3) 21:21;47:21;69:7</p> <p>sounds (2) 25:18;40:20</p> <p>source (1) 11:8</p> <p>sources (1) 49:6</p> <p>south (6) 16:20;17:2;18:16, 16;54:11;65:19</p> <p>space (4) 13:16;29:1;32:7; 74:10</p> <p>spaces (2) 26:21;27:1</p> <p>speak (24) 4:4,5,12,21,23; 8:16;12:4;20:12; 44:19;46:11;48:22; 51:23;58:4,5;62:18; 63:24;65:20;68:14, 21;70:12;71:17,18; 72:22;75:4</p> <p>SPEAKER (4) 14:7;72:18;73:4,7</p>
S				
<p>sacrifices (1) 66:5</p> <p>sad (2) 55:9;56:5</p> <p>safe (2) 42:17;47:11</p> <p>safely (1) 61:17</p> <p>safety (1) 52:12</p> <p>Saltwater (5) 22:3,5,6;46:10;48:6</p> <p>Sam (1)</p>				

<p>speaking (3) 54:14;73:5,14</p> <p>speaks (1) 72:19</p> <p>special (6) 20:20;26:1;37:5; 42:4;49:4;68:18</p> <p>spectacular (1) 23:22</p> <p>speed (2) 47:12,15</p> <p>Spell (2) 4:23;25:2</p> <p>spelled (3) 25:9,11;66:22</p> <p>spend (1) 70:7</p> <p>spends (1) 53:24</p> <p>spent (3) 14:17;50:6;51:4</p> <p>spewing (1) 52:6</p> <p>spoke (4) 46:11,12;70:6,13</p> <p>spot (2) 63:2,5</p> <p>spring (1) 6:8</p> <p>stability (1) 44:8</p> <p>stacked (1) 40:16</p> <p>staff (15) 8:6,6;11:4;14:13, 16:15;12:37;22; 42:19;51:23;52:14; 53:3,7;63:5;75:15,16</p> <p>staff's (1) 52:17</p> <p>stand (2) 47:18;59:13</p> <p>standards (1) 11:17</p> <p>standing (1) 27:20</p> <p>standpoint (1) 62:15</p> <p>started (2) 24:8;62:24</p> <p>State (18) 4:8;9:5;12:22; 13:20;14:2;23:21; 42:13;43:8;51:9; 55:10,11;56:9,10,16, 17;61:23;62:4;66:16</p> <p>stated (3) 10:6;34:22;50:13</p> <p>status (1) 22:18</p> <p>statute (2) 6:18;8:9</p> <p>statutory (1)</p>	<p>7:3</p> <p>stay (2) 35:13,22</p> <p>step (1) 35:24</p> <p>Sterling (1) 42:3</p> <p>Steven (2) 12:2,4</p> <p>stewards (1) 33:13</p> <p>still (1) 47:15</p> <p>stole (1) 25:13</p> <p>stone (1) 17:21</p> <p>stop (1) 48:13</p> <p>Storms (2) 50:8;73:19</p> <p>straight (1) 47:11</p> <p>stress (1) 27:21</p> <p>stretch (1) 47:10</p> <p>strong (1) 52:16</p> <p>strongest (1) 13:24</p> <p>strongly (4) 37:12;65:1,17;66:7</p> <p>struck (1) 70:19</p> <p>structural (2) 15:20;16:10</p> <p>structure (10) 16:8;17:11,18,20; 29:19;30:24;46:16; 47:21;48:9,16</p> <p>structures (2) 10:13;17:6</p> <p>student (1) 55:21</p> <p>students (1) 64:7</p> <p>stuff (2) 45:13;63:19</p> <p>Subcommittee (4) 4:10;8:1;11:20; 34:1</p> <p>subject (3) 37:22;53:6;74:10</p> <p>submit (1) 33:24</p> <p>submitted (4) 9:19;14:22;46:18; 47:23</p> <p>Subsection (2) 7:23,24</p> <p>subsequent (1) 13:6</p>	<p>subset (1) 22:5</p> <p>substantial (2) 52:11,19</p> <p>substantially (1) 65:9</p> <p>substantive (1) 10:10</p> <p>success (2) 13:19;21:1</p> <p>successful (1) 63:4</p> <p>suggest (5) 28:23;29:12;30:23; 52:15;65:17</p> <p>suggested (4) 52:21;53:2;59:22; 70:11</p> <p>suggesting (3) 16:17;18:22;53:18</p> <p>suggestion (4) 28:17;72:20,24; 73:8</p> <p>summarize (1) 15:1</p> <p>support (12) 20:22,24;24:15; 48:9;56:15;60:7;62:5, 15;63:20;67:2,18; 68:15</p> <p>supported (3) 11:1;48:18;53:16</p> <p>supporting (1) 39:9</p> <p>supportive (1) 68:17</p> <p>Sure (11) 6:7;8:23;19:11; 21:16,19;32:13;54:1; 55:11;57:13,22;71:4</p> <p>surf (1) 55:7</p> <p>surpass (1) 38:13</p> <p>survey (1) 64:18</p> <p>survive (1) 57:9</p> <p>sustainable (1) 49:6</p> <p>swap (1) 60:19</p> <p>swim (1) 69:4</p> <p>sympathetic (1) 64:23</p> <p>system (1) 11:9</p>	<p>talk (3) 30:20;57:7;72:11</p> <p>talking (1) 38:9</p> <p>tee (2) 29:16;62:7</p> <p>teenagers (1) 67:12</p> <p>tells (1) 48:11</p> <p>Temperatures (1) 38:12</p> <p>ten-plus (1) 62:13</p> <p>tens (1) 16:22</p> <p>terminal (1) 42:22</p> <p>terms (2) 13:24;28:22</p> <p>terrible (1) 48:10</p> <p>terrific (1) 58:10</p> <p>testimony (1) 74:21</p> <p>Thanks (1) 37:14</p> <p>therefore (3) 22:16;43:3;53:12</p> <p>third (1) 67:24</p> <p>though (2) 17:21;40:13</p> <p>thought (3) 13:5;55:20;68:19</p> <p>thoughtful (1) 74:22</p> <p>thousand (2) 61:3,18</p> <p>thousands (3) 26:3;41:13;52:20</p> <p>threatened (1) 51:14</p> <p>three (4) 23:1;38:15;53:8; 69:22</p> <p>thrive (1) 20:18</p> <p>Tibbets (1) 65:20</p> <p>ticket (2) 47:7,15</p> <p>ticketed (1) 47:11</p> <p>tide (4) 18:10,13;30:10; 56:2</p> <p>Tim (1) 37:17</p> <p>timing (1) 30:18</p> <p>Today (33)</p>	<p>4:10;7:21;8:3; 10:16;12:19;18:12, 13;20:12;32:11;33:4; 37:14,20;38:4,22; 41:21;44:10;46:1; 50:14,18;54:10;56:4; 60:23;66:22;67:2; 68:14,20;69:8;71:7; 72:16;73:15,21; 74:18;75:7</p> <p>together (6) 31:7;32:21,22; 56:14;69:4,5</p> <p>tonight (6) 6:21;7:7,11;8:16; 9:21;75:16</p> <p>took (2) 52:22;63:3</p> <p>top (1) 23:21</p> <p>topic (2) 37:24;50:21</p> <p>tourism (3) 53:21;54:1,2</p> <p>tournament (2) 13:3;42:20</p> <p>tournaments (1) 20:21</p> <p>touts (1) 19:9</p> <p>Town (3) 66:8,9;74:11</p> <p>townhouse (1) 17:7</p> <p>townhouses (2) 17:4,5</p> <p>transgressed (1) 69:24</p> <p>Travers (3) 48:2,3,4</p> <p>T-R-A-V-E-R-S (1) 48:4</p> <p>treasurer (1) 42:8</p> <p>treated (1) 15:20</p> <p>tributary (1) 65:19</p> <p>tried (4) 26:21;37:20;41:15; 55:3</p> <p>truly (2) 30:3,24</p> <p>trust (3) 31:5;37:8;46:2</p> <p>try (6) 24:23;36:15;37:10; 56:3;59:18;73:11</p> <p>trying (8) 26:5,5;44:1;52:14; 60:8,12,12;61:8</p> <p>TUESDAY (2) 4:1,10</p>
		T		
		table (1) 14:15		

<p>turbines (1) 38:5</p> <p>turn (2) 7:19;43:7</p> <p>turned (2) 24:9;61:16</p> <p>Turner (1) 8:21</p> <p>twice (3) 50:6;55:1,2</p> <p>two (6) 12:14;14:17;41:7; 52:2;70:18;73:1</p> <p>type (52) 6:1,9,10,10;7:4; 10:7,8,9,12,12,20,21; 11:3,14,18,21,21; 13:22;15:2,13;16:11, 12,15,21;17:1,3;18:4; 20:24;21:7,8;23:23; 24:16;30:2,2;34:3,6; 36:17;37:13;40:13, 19,21;45:7;48:9;53:4, 14;54:2;60:8;63:11; 65:3,5,10;71:4</p>	<p>unnecessary (1) 34:7</p> <p>unreasonable (1) 21:21</p> <p>unrestricted (1) 11:2</p> <p>unusual (1) 30:15</p> <p>up (21) 9:13;15:6;16:14; 17:2;18:14;19:15; 29:3;30:10;44:19,20; 45:23;57:8,11;58:7; 61:15;68:3,20;69:19; 71:17,18;72:18</p> <p>updating (1) 50:23</p> <p>upland (1) 10:20</p> <p>upon (3) 33:9;36:18;40:5</p> <p>upper (1) 17:17</p> <p>upstanding (1) 24:10</p> <p>urge (5) 22:16;33:20,24; 36:1;49:7</p> <p>urgencies (1) 56:18</p> <p>URI (1) 64:7</p> <p>USA (1) 12:19</p> <p>use (2) 52:12;74:4</p> <p>used (5) 9:3;49:23;50:5; 55:9;62:24</p> <p>uses (2) 66:14;74:1</p> <p>using (1) 72:15</p>	<p>22:2;42:6;46:9; 63:9</p> <p>victory (1) 70:10</p> <p>View (4) 16:19;18:4;23:8; 59:3</p> <p>viewing (1) 4:18</p> <p>violated (1) 47:16</p> <p>violation (1) 10:1</p> <p>vistas (1) 73:17</p> <p>vital (1) 71:23</p> <p>VOICE (2) 5:12;76:7</p> <p>VOTE (2) 5:12;76:7</p> <p>voting (1) 66:9</p>	<p>water (33) 6:1,9;10:8,20,21; 11:14,18,21;13:22; 15:2;17:14;22:8; 23:23;24:15;28:23; 34:3;36:17;37:13; 38:9;47:19;48:8; 50:15;53:4;54:2,11; 55:5,20;56:4,12;59:4; 61:11;63:11;71:4</p> <p>waterfront (7) 48:13;56:24;57:21; 73:16,22,24;74:8</p> <p>waters (22) 10:7,12;11:4;21:8; 30:3;33:7;34:6;48:8, 11;49:2,4,5,8;53:14, 14;57:2;65:4,5,7,10; 74:1,6</p> <p>waterway (6) 22:11,17;40:14; 50:23;51:7;60:7</p> <p>waterways (1) 40:20</p> <p>way (22) 12:10;16:14;29:3, 15;30:8,12,24;32:9; 38:24;39:8,8;40:5,17; 41:1;46:19;47:3,5; 48:18;67:12;71:8; 72:5,5</p> <p>weakening (1) 11:10</p> <p>wealthy (1) 47:6</p> <p>wearing (1) 27:11</p> <p>wedding (1) 37:5</p> <p>weddings (1) 20:20</p> <p>welcome (3) 7:11;20:8;58:1</p> <p>West (3) 60:4,5,5</p> <p>W-E-S-T (1) 60:6</p> <p>wetland (1) 11:9</p> <p>wetlands (1) 28:21</p> <p>what's (2) 35:9;67:24</p> <p>Whitman (1) 61:16</p> <p>whole (7) 42:14;54:11,24; 55:23;56:1,3;57:4</p> <p>who's (1) 69:12</p> <p>Wickford (1) 65:5</p> <p>wife (2) 26:8;49:16</p>	<p>wildlife (2) 33:7,8</p> <p>William (1) 42:7</p> <p>willing (1) 66:5</p> <p>Willis (11) 5:19,20;6:3,7;7:16; 8:11,12,15;75:10,13, 16</p> <p>wind (2) 38:5;55:12</p> <p>Winston (1) 39:4</p> <p>winter (1) 73:19</p> <p>win-win (2) 32:23;57:23</p> <p>wish (6) 4:5;31:22;58:4,5; 62:18;75:4</p> <p>wishes (4) 4:4,12,21;71:18</p> <p>Within (5) 6:15;15:17;16:9,22; 35:5</p> <p>without (6) 28:22;43:2;48:17; 52:10,19;65:23</p> <p>WITNESS (1) 60:22</p> <p>witnessed (1) 73:18</p> <p>witnesses (1) 34:21</p> <p>won (1) 70:10</p> <p>wonderful (3) 14:20;41:14;60:9</p> <p>wonderfully (1) 41:12</p> <p>Woods (3) 33:1,2,3</p> <p>W-O-O-D-S (1) 33:4</p> <p>work (20) 4:14;19:7;20:22; 21:9;23:3,5;25:12; 26:12;35:5;41:11; 42:6;52:17;53:11; 57:10,12;60:9;63:5,7; 64:6;66:18</p> <p>worked (2) 23:17;63:9</p> <p>working (4) 14:17;32:21;42:9; 67:13</p> <p>works (4) 21:2;44:23;64:18; 68:10</p> <p>world (1) 38:2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">U</p> <p>ulterior (1) 74:16</p> <p>ultimately (1) 34:1</p> <p>unchecked (1) 11:11</p> <p>under (5) 6:17;7:2;8:9;10:11; 23:23</p> <p>undermine (1) 22:14</p> <p>underneath (2) 4:16;9:2</p> <p>understands (1) 27:22</p> <p>undertaking (1) 35:2</p> <p>undeveloped (1) 74:9</p> <p>unforeseen (1) 21:22</p> <p>unfortunate (1) 32:11</p> <p>Unfortunately (2) 23:4;50:5</p> <p>UNIDENTIFIED (4) 14:7;72:18;73:4,7</p> <p>unique (2) 28:15;29:23</p> <p>University (2) 13:2,6</p> <p>unless (1) 39:21</p> <p>unlikely (1) 70:10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <p>valid (1) 47:16</p> <p>valuable (1) 13:19</p> <p>value (1) 10:16</p> <p>venue (1) 43:9</p> <p>verbatim (1) 14:24</p> <p>versus (2) 12:23;53:14</p> <p>Veteran's (1) 63:18</p> <p>viable (1) 68:4</p> <p>vice (4)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p>Wadensten (3) 54:6,7,8</p> <p>W-A-D-E-N-S-T-E-N (1) 54:9</p> <p>waist-deep (1) 56:4</p> <p>walk (5) 18:12;49:23;56:1,3; 61:17</p> <p>walking (4) 18:14,15;30:9; 55:22</p> <p>walks (2) 54:18,21</p> <p>wall (34) 10:24;11:15,16,23; 15:6,7,13,14,14,14; 16:8;17:16;18:6,11; 22:12,31;18,21; 35:13;44:12;45:15, 16,18;46:24;47:18; 65:23;66:17;70:24; 71:22,24;72:2,8,10, 12,16</p> <p>wants (2) 4:15;18:24</p> <p>warming (1) 50:19</p> <p>Warwick (2) 27:15;51:21</p> <p>watch (5) 30:6,7;50:17;51:15; 62:7</p> <p>watched (2) 54:24;57:4</p> <p>watching (1) 59:11</p>	<p>water (33) 6:1,9;10:8,20,21; 11:14,18,21;13:22; 15:2;17:14;22:8; 23:23;24:15;28:23; 34:3;36:17;37:13; 38:9;47:19;48:8; 50:15;53:4;54:2,11; 55:5,20;56:4,12;59:4; 61:11;63:11;71:4</p> <p>waterfront (7) 48:13;56:24;57:21; 73:16,22,24;74:8</p> <p>waters (22) 10:7,12;11:4;21:8; 30:3;33:7;34:6;48:8, 11;49:2,4,5,8;53:14, 14;57:2;65:4,5,7,10; 74:1,6</p> <p>waterway (6) 22:11,17;40:14; 50:23;51:7;60:7</p> <p>waterways (1) 40:20</p> <p>way (22) 12:10;16:14;29:3, 15;30:8,12,24;32:9; 38:24;39:8,8;40:5,17; 41:1;46:19;47:3,5; 48:18;67:12;71:8; 72:5,5</p> <p>weakening (1) 11:10</p> <p>wealthy (1) 47:6</p> <p>wearing (1) 27:11</p> <p>wedding (1) 37:5</p> <p>weddings (1) 20:20</p> <p>welcome (3) 7:11;20:8;58:1</p> <p>West (3) 60:4,5,5</p> <p>W-E-S-T (1) 60:6</p> <p>wetland (1) 11:9</p> <p>wetlands (1) 28:21</p> <p>what's (2) 35:9;67:24</p> <p>Whitman (1) 61:16</p> <p>whole (7) 42:14;54:11,24; 55:23;56:1,3;57:4</p> <p>who's (1) 69:12</p> <p>Wickford (1) 65:5</p> <p>wife (2)</p>	

<p>write (1) 14:18</p> <p>writing (1) 39:22</p> <p>written (4) 9:19;25:3;33:24; 34:3</p> <p>wrong (1) 39:21</p> <p>wrote (1) 16:5</p>	<p>18 (2) 13:18;23:21</p> <p>18-hole (3) 13:14;28:24;40:6</p> <p>1980s (3) 17:1;37:24;38:3</p>	<p>38:21</p> <p>42-35-2.5 (1) 7:23</p> <p>44 (1) 70:8</p> <p>45,000 (1) 22:6</p> <p>47 (2) 17:5;40:4</p>		
	2		5	
Y	<p>2,000 (1) 22:4</p> <p>200 (1) 17:14</p> <p>2012 (4) 11:4;15:10;16:7; 42:22</p> <p>2019 (1) 63:1</p> <p>2023 (1) 38:13</p> <p>2024 (4) 4:1,11;5:2;38:13</p> <p>2024-04-071 (1) 5:24</p> <p>21st (1) 6:12</p> <p>22nd (1) 6:13</p> <p>23 (2) 4:1,11</p> <p>25 (5) 6:23;7:2;15:16; 31:16;45:4</p> <p>26th (1) 14:22</p> <p>28th (1) 6:13</p>	<p>50 (3) 41:13;49:22;65:16</p> <p>500 (1) 17:7</p> <p>50-foot (2) 15:17;16:9</p> <p>55 (1) 47:7</p> <p>57 (1) 38:21</p>		
		6		
		<p>60s (1) 12:24</p> <p>64-year-old (1) 43:16</p>		
1		7		
<p>1,000 (1) 17:8</p> <p>1,500 (1) 10:18</p> <p>1.6 (1) 67:7</p> <p>10 (1) 18:13</p> <p>115 (1) 61:5</p> <p>12 (2) 23:18;44:6</p> <p>120 (1) 61:4</p> <p>13 (1) 42:1</p> <p>14 (1) 5:2</p> <p>14th (13) 15:22;18:19,22; 23:22;29:17;40:7; 42:18;43:3,13;50:7; 62:8;72:13;73:17</p> <p>15th (2) 29:17;62:7</p> <p>17 (1) 17:6</p> <p>17-hole (2) 42:24;43:2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3:15 (1) 4:2</p> <p>30 (8) 27:14;30:9;37:24; 38:19;40:2,3;55:19; 61:17</p> <p>300 (1) 61:5</p> <p>30-plus-year (1) 64:2</p>	<p>7,500 (1) 46:12</p> <p>75 (3) 47:7,12,13</p>	8	
	3			
	<p>4</p> <p>4 (1) 5:22</p> <p>4:58 (1) 76:11</p> <p>40 (5) 38:19;49:15;50:9; 55:19;65:16</p> <p>41 (1) 67:16</p> <p>42 (1)</p>	<p>80s (1) 27:17</p> <p>9</p> <p>95 (1) 47:7</p>		