

Maurice's Campground plan falters at crowded Wellfleet town meeting



Denise Coffey

Cape Cod Times

Updated May 12, 2026, 12:19 p.m. ET

- Wellfleet voters rejected a nonbinding article supporting a master plan for the Maurice's Campground development.
- Two additional petitioned articles regarding the campground, one on ownership requirements and another on final plan approval, also failed to pass.
- The town meeting drew a crowd of 566 voters, and continued the next night.

WELLFLEET — Voters at [Monday's town meeting](#) laser-focused on three articles about what to do about the now town-owned [Maurice's Campground](#) before rejecting the measures to loud applause.

After voters approved a fiscal 2027 operating budget of \$32,618,652 and \$1.44 million in capital borrowing, they dug into Articles 29, 30 and 31, which had been moved ahead of other articles by voter consent.

"The majority of people here are here for 29 through 31," said resident Michael Ford. "Let's get to it."

Overall, town meeting on Monday finished 10 articles, and 16 remained for a second night on Tuesday at the elementary school.

The meeting drew 566 people, about 18% of the town's 3,176 registered voters. So many people showed up that it required a room to handle the overflow. Voters and nonvoters were ushered to the second-floor cafeteria where another set of assistant moderators and counters worked to count the votes. Despite some early snafus with audio connections between the two rooms, and the need to get the counts correct, Moderator Daniel Silverman persevered.

Discussion of Article 29, an advisory article

It took more than an hour for voters to voice support for Article 29, a non-binding measure on the master plan for developing the campground. Even those opposed to the article said they support affordable housing in town, but insist 250 units on the 21-acre parcel would be too many.

Supporters said housing is needed now and that any pause would rob some people of the chance to live in town and threaten the loss of state money. They also argued the plan is only a framework; that the density is considered moderate in a rural community and that the development would eliminate the environmental threat from the 33 cesspools on the property;

Carl Sussman, chair of the Maurice's Campground Planning Committee, spoke in favor of the article. "It does three things," he said. "It makes the housing we need. It protects the character of Wellfleet. It addresses environmental challenges."

Opponents argued against supporting the master plan saying compromise is needed. They claim the scheme does not fit in with the rural character of town; that the Planning Board was not consulted during the plan's development and did not promise Wellfleet residents would be considered first for housing.

"When we voted to purchase Maurice's, we did it to meet local housing needs," said resident Chris Merl. "We didn't want to see it overdeveloped. It's being overdeveloped."

Just before a vote was called at 10:09 pm, Selectboard Chairman John Wolf reminded voters that the Article 29 was nonbinding, a measure to gauge public sentiment. Nonetheless loud cheering and clapping erupted when town meeting rejected the article on a 258-234 vote.

Discussion on Articles 30 and 31

Voters also tackled — and rejected — two articles on Maurice's Campground that had been submitted through citizen's petition. Article 30 was to set a requirement that no less than 50% of the units be set aside as year-round ownership housing. Wolf said setting proportions would hamstring the town. Some argued that more rental units should be available for those unable to afford home ownership. Town attorney Carolyn Murray with KP Law cleared up any confusion of the legal standing of the article.

"At its heart it's just another nonbinding vote," she said. Article 30 failed to pass.

Voters rejected the other petition, Article 31, which would give town meeting the final say on any development deal.

Attorney Murray reminded voters that in 2022 voters gave the Select Board the authority to purchase Maurice's, develop a request for proposals and negotiate agreements.

"With all due respect ... this would discourage potential bidders if they have to wait to 2028 town meeting." she said.

The motion failed by a majority vote.

Denise Coffey writes about real estate, commercial development, the grocery industry, tourism and covers the towns of Eastham and Wellfleet. Contact her at dcoffey@capecodonline.com.