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Cape Seashore Park Hearings Due March 6, 7 in Washington

Selectmen Dislike Dates

Town Meeting Conflicts Cited

Hearings on proposed Cape Cod National Seashore Park bills will be held in Washington March 6 and 7 by the newly-formed Subcommittee on National Parks, Representative Wayne Aspinall (D.-Colo.), chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, said yesterday.

Dates for the hearings met with immediate disfavor among officials of the six towns on Cape Cod affected by the park proposal. Representative Hastings Keith (R.-Mass.) informed Cape officials yesterday that he was unable to arrange for postponement of the hearings because of the extent of the agenda before the subcommittee.

Cape officials voiced dissatisfaction with the hearing dates because they conflict with annual town meetings, elections and other annual town business.

Meanwhile, the subcommittee, headed by Representative J. T. Rutherford (D.-Texas), will consider bills to create the National Seashore Park filed this session by Mr. Keith and two other Massachusetts congressmen, Thomas J. Lane and Edward P. Boland, both Democrats.

Hearing Arrangements

On March 6 statements will be heard from congressmen, officials of the Interior Department, and experts from the National Park Service, Representative Aspinall said. Officials from the six Cape towns affected by the proposal will be heard March 7.

The complete transcript of the park hearings held last December on Cape Cod will be made part of the record of the new subcommittee.

Chatham Selectman Robert A. McNeece, who was notified of the new hearings in a telephone call yesterday from Congressman Keith in Washington, immediately set out to see if the hearings could be postponed because of the press of municipal affairs during March. He pointed out that all but three Cape towns hold their annual town meetings and elections in March.

'A Busy Time'

"It is unfortunate that the hearings have been scheduled for next month because that is the busiest time of year for all Cape selectmen. We are all tied up with annual reports, town meetings, elections, assessing, and setting of new tax rates."

Mr. McNeece said he had received very little encouragement in his attempts to secure a postponement of the hearing. Congressman Keith had promised to make an effort in Washington, but called Mr. McNeece later yesterday to say that there appeared to be no possibility of a postponement.

Mr. Keith said he had tried unsuccessfully to secure a postponement from the chairman of the subcommittee but had been informed that there were some 78 bills on which the committee would have to hold hearings.

Probably Won't Attend

The Chatham selectman said it would be virtually impossible for any of the officials from his town to go to Washington for the hearings because of the town meeting and election.

John C. Snow, Provincetown selectman, was the only other Cape official contacted who was aware of the new hearings. He had been called earlier in the afternoon by Mr. McNeece and had promised the support of Provincetown officials in the attempts to seek a postponement of the hearings.

Mr. Snow said he would attend the hearings on both days but said he was disturbed by the fact that the hearings had been scheduled at a time when every Cape town is faced with a crowded municipal calendar.

In Eastham, Selectman Prince J. Hurd Jr. said his board had not been informed of the new hearing date. He said the Eastham town meeting will be over by the time the hearings are held and that in all probability all three Eastham selectmen will go to Washington. He said he felt the town's planning board also would send a representative to the capital.

Were Unaware

Orleans Selectman Richard Adams said he and the other members of his board were unaware of the new hearings. He said he doubted that any of the town officials of Orleans would go to Washington.

"We did not go to the hearings held there last June," he said, "and I doubt if we would go this time. We could only lend our support to the position taken by the other five towns inasmuch as we
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Park Hearings Due in March

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in Orleans have requested no boundary revisions."

Leonard Pierce, new chairman of the Wellfleet Board of Selectmen, said he was unaware the new hearings were to be held on March 6 and 7. He said the selectmen would meet Monday night and the question of sending someone to Washington probably would be discussed at that time. He said he was certain, however, that someone from Wellfleet would represent the town.

In Truro, Selectman John R. Dyer Jr. also said his board had not been notified of the hearings. He said the question of sending someone to Washington to represent the town would be entirely up to the townspeople when they meet for their annual town meeting Monday night.

He said selectmen had requested about \$500 for expenses in connection with the proposed Cape Cod National Park, but that the finance committee has recommended against the appropriation.

It will be squarely up to the voters. If they want the town to be represented in Washington they will have to appropriate the money at the town meeting.

"They probably could not have set any two days more inopportune to Cape towns," Victor F. Adams, chairman of Barnstable selectmen, said.

He pointed out that only three towns will have had their meetings finished and thus able to send representatives to Washington.

In his annual report to the town, Mr. Adams labeled establishment of the proposed park as "an ill-conceived, nebulous and visionary scheme cleverly concocted and sold to key senators and congressmen under the guise of conservation."

Norman H. Cook, executive secretary of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, said he felt the Federal Government had not made adequate provisions to protect the finances of the town affected.

He said he was not sure at this point whether he would attend the Washington sessions.

"I haven't seen the final draft of the bill yet. If, after reading it, I feel I can be helpful, I certainly will go," he said.

He said he believed it should be the Federal Government's responsibility to assume all costs for constructing a double-barrel highway the full length of Route 6 if the park is established.