

THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 1992

MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION MEETING

The Martha's Vineyard Commission held a Special Meeting on Thursday, February 6, 1992 at 7:30 p.m. at the Martha's Vineyard Commission Offices, Olde Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA.

Jennie Greene, Chairman of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. She introduced Angeljean Chiaramida of the Chamber of Commerce and noted that one of the charges of the Commission was to be concerned with the economic vitality of the Island.

Angeljean Chiaramida explained the anomalies of the Island economy; seasonal in nature due to location and outside of the normal flow of money. She then compared the length of seasons here as opposed to Bermuda or Puerto Rico. She also discussed sovereign nation status.

Ms. Chiaramida then discussed the length of the selling season on the Island - Memorial Day to Labor Day as a major season and a Fall season which is minor. She compared the Island to the Berkshires with respect to lengths of seasons. She discussed the amount of dollars provided by tourism and the need to think of money as a commodity. She then elaborated on this concept.

She felt that most of the money came to the Island between April 15 and October 15 and that there were only 100 days within that time to make maximum dollars. She then described the various populations that live here on the Island and where their money comes from. She then discussed the money circulation of the Island.

Ms. Chiaramida then discussed the economic base of the Island and felt that the major part of the Island economic base is related to the visitor industry - up to 90% of the base. She then discussed the portion of the economy that she felt was left out - real estate and the money that was generated through this vehicle. She discussed the problem of today's economy and the real estate market. She discussed other areas that needed to be reviewed further - government workers, teachers, etc. She then discussed "transfer payments" or money coming in from retirement programs.

Ms. Chiaramida then discussed the economic history of the Island and the state. She then discussed the advances in marketing and the fact that travel becomes restrictive in recessions. She discussed the stock market and its impact on the tourist economy. She discussed the trend in the economy over the past five years.

She noted that she could not predict what the future held. She

discussed the demographics of visitors who come to the Island. She discussed the type of visitors - day visitor and hotel visitor. She indicated roughly 2,000 licensed rooms on the Island. She discussed the transient renter in private homes and felt that those persons were needed to make the economy work.

She discussed the vacation patterns of the American public and how the pattern has changed.

Mr. Briggs asked what the components of the economic base were. Ms. Chiaramida explained the base with 70% visitor oriented and explained the parts; 20% construction related; 3% agriculture; 6% office/public sector. She then discussed what she felt had been missed in the 1985 plan. She then discussed a 1973 plan that was done for the County.

Mr. Schweikert questioned what the numbers written on the board referred to. Ms. Chiaramida indicated that it was the GIP or gross Island product. A discussion of this matter followed. Mr. Schweikert asked for some thoughts in terms of recommendations. Ms. Chiaramida discussed a number. She felt the Island needed to make peace with the way Islanders make their living. She discussed this matter further. She felt that the Island needed to accept the tourist industry as the reason for the economy. She felt the Island always made its living from one industry and discussed this matter further. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Early discussed the nature of the tourist industry and felt it was the changes that caused people not to come to the Island and that not all changes were good. He felt the conflicts within the tourist business needed to be addressed and not whether it was an important business. Ms. Chiaramida again repeated that the Islanders should be proud of being in the tourist business. She felt that there are certain things that could be done to lessen unemployment such as business incubators. She felt that there was a need to be realistic as to what could happen on the Island.

Mr. Schilling noted the Department of Employment & Training (DET) indicated 1,000 unemployed in the unemployment line in January of 1992. He discussed the amount of money expended by DET during January for unemployment benefits. Ms. Chiaramida discussed the work force on the Island and the unemployment factors. A discussion of this matter followed.

She then discussed the times when businesses stayed open during the winter but did not when the summers were flatter.

Mr. Hall asked for specific recommendations; he asked what could the Island do and what could the MVC do.

She discussed pride in the Vineyard product and her hospitality workshops on how to better deal with people. She further discussed this issue.

Ms. Sibley questioned how many persons working in the hospitality

industry were really Islanders. Ms. Chiaramida felt between 50-70%. A discussion of this matter followed. Ms. Chiaramida discussed the type of labor used in summers. A discussion of the behavior of owners toward employees followed.

A discussion of the attitudes of visitors followed.

Ms. Chiaramida felt the Island needed to determine what would survive here as a business. She discussed the costs associated with establishing a business. She felt the Island needed to be creative in seeking new businesses.

Mr. Friedman questioned who was meant by the term "we". Ms. Chiaramida felt it was "all of us" - the MVC, the Chamber, the Airport and others. A discussion of this issue followed. She then discussed the Airport Business Park and her hopes for this issue. She felt there were environmental handicaps there.

Mr. Lee disagreed.

Ms. Chiaramida further discussed this issue with respect to water quality and other matters. A discussion of this issue followed.

She discussed the competition of off-Island areas. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Colaneri questioned what the feelings were of local towns with respect to starting small businesses. A discussion of this matter followed.

Ms. Chiaramida then discussed business incubators at the Airport business park. She discussed needed capital for starting businesses and the need to provide a sliding scale to allow people to begin. She then discussed how the system would work.

Mrs. Marinelli discussed past businesses at the Airport.

Mr. Clarke discussed the issue of green tourism and asked what the Chamber was doing to promote this. Ms. Chiaramida felt the Chamber was doing little to promote this matter further. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Lee discussed this issue and the dissatisfaction of tour riders and felt that there was a market out there for green tourism.

Ms. Chiaramida explained the role of the Chamber. She felt she could not promote outside businesses.

Ms. Sibley discussed the changes that have occurred on the Island and the dependency on numbers and less on quality.

Ms. Chiaramida discussed Anguilla and how they deal with tourism and felt that seeking the top 3% of the travelling public would be the persons that should be sought when dealing with green tourism.

She discussed seeking the top 2% of the European market who may wish to visit the area. She also discussed seeking the Japanese market. She noted how expensive it would be to develop such markets.

Mr. Early further discussed Anguilla and the day visitors that go there and the problems that exist.

Ms. Chiaramida discussed how to face and deal with change.

ITEM #3 - Minutes of January 16, 1992

It was moved and seconded to approve as drafted. There being no discussion or changes the Commission voted to approve the minutes with 3 abstentions (Briggs, Lee, ?).

ITEM #4 - Reports
Chairman's Report -

Ms. Greene noted that the Finance Committee had met with several local boards on the FY92-93 assessment.

LUPC - no report

PED - no report

Legislative Liaison -

Mr. Clarke discussed the Rivers Protection Act and its status.

Mr. Colaneri asked about the State agency meeting on January 31. A discussion of this issue followed.

Mr. Friedman asked about the CZM budget and better funding for the MVC. Mr. Clarke felt a letter to Jeff Benoit would be appropriate. A discussion of this matter followed.

ITEM #5 - Discussion - there was none

ITEM #6 - Possible Vote - there was none

ITEM #7 - Old Business - there was none

ITEM #8 - New Business -

Ms. Greene announced to all that Tom Simmons had resigned.

Mr. Colaneri discussed the possible correction facility at the Airport and questioned whether there had been any referral from Tisbury regarding the Boch property.

Mr. Briggs discussed other potential DRIs. - the solid waste proposal, the high school expansion.

A discussion of all of these matters followed.

Mr. Hall raised the issue of the Tisbury dump road being on the Special Town Meeting warrant. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Rooney discussed the TRENDS report and asked all to read the document.

ITEM #9 - Correspondence - there was none

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

ATTEST

Jane A. Greene 2/20/92
Jane A. Greene, Chairman Date

Thomas Sullivan 2/20/92
Thomas Sullivan, Date
Clerk/Treasurer

Attendance

Present: Best, Briggs, Bryant, Colaneri, Alley, Donaroma, Early, Greene, Hall, Lee, Schweikert, Sibley, Sullivan, Marinelli, Clarke, Chapin

Absent: Vanderhoop, Jason, Benoit, Allen, Bolling, Gallagher