

THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION

BOX 1447 • OAK BLUFFS
MASSACHUSETTS 02557
(508) 693-3453
FAX (508) 693-7894

MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 1992

MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION MEETING

The Martha's Vineyard Commission held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 19, 1992, in the Commission Offices, Olde Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA. John Mullin PhD, a principal in Land Use, Inc. and Chairman of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning was the guest speaker.

Jennie Greene, Chairman of the Martha's Vineyard Commission opened the meeting at 7:45 p.m. and invited those members of the Economic Task Force who were present to move up to the table. She then introduced John Mullin to those present.

Dr. Mullin discussed his background and familiarity with the Vineyard having worked on a number of economic issues in the past. He indicated that he would like to see the meeting as an open forum and that he would begin by mentioning a few ideas. He indicated the need to understand the issue and have a sense of scale. - was the discussion to be about jobs or tax revenue. He explained the reasons why this was important. He also felt that it was necessary to decide if the issue were jobs, were they the "big bang" jobs or not. He then discussed the fantacizing needed to create something beneficial. He then noted that marketing was a major part of the thinking needed. He explained what he meant using a hypothetical example. He discussed necessary trade-offs and whether there was a comfortable feeling about this situation. He then discussed the need to determine what was unique about the Vineyard.

He then posed the question of how can the Vineyard tap into various markets at a scale that is suitable to the Vineyard. He discussed several hypothetical options. He then raised the question of what types of jobs may be suitable to the Vineyard given its unique quality and what endeavors would be least harmful and then again cited several hypothetical examples.

Dr. Mullin then discussed potential agriculture activities that may be compatible with the Vineyard.

He then discussed the point of marketing the name of the Island. The name always gives one the feeling of quality and up scale. He asked all to participate in an exercise by indicating the first color that came to mind. Of the colors mentioned there were 4 green, 5 blue, 5 purple, 1 tan. Dr. Mullin then explained the reasoning for the exercise and what the color meant. He felt the group was fairly neutral or middle of the road. A discussion of this matter followed.

He then discussed further the agricultural and fishing potential of

the area. A discussion of this matter followed.

He discussed the type of data that was available by specific categories and what was available. He felt that such data could be useful in indicating what was and what was not being done right on the Vineyard.

Mr. Early discussed his feeling on the issue and what was palatable for the Vineyard. He was asked to indicate a growth policy and felt there was a leveling off of the extremes toward the mean; 12 month employment, traffic patterns, transit patterns - or possible for 9 months.

Mr. Colaneri discussed the historic trends of the Vineyard and did not feel that there would be a significant change.

Dr. Mullin discussed the future work to be done in reviewing the feasibility of the Airport Business Park. A discussion of this matter followed. Dr. Mullin asked for an idea for a number of those Islanders who were seeking work. Ms. Bryant felt around 25% were underemployed. A discussion of this issue followed.

A discussion of the seasonal nature of certain jobs and whether workers prefer to change jobs seasonally followed.

A discussion of various types of off-seasonal employment followed. Dr. Mullin noted that anything being considered for the Vineyard needed to be environmentally sound.

A discussion of whether there was a constant, solid, year-round labor force available followed.

Ms. Marinelli indicated that benefit packages were very important to potential workers. A discussion of whether there had been an attitude change since 1988 followed.

Dr. Mullin then discussed the potential of Eco-tourism here and the possibility of exploring the same. A discussion of the issue followed. Ms. Greene discussed the natural resources of the Island and the potential of seminars. A further discussion of Eco-related tourism followed.

Mr. Chapin discussed the mystique of the Vineyard and felt that the image should be marketed using seminars, meetings, etc. He felt it was a great asset and discussed his feelings. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Early discussed the hostile environment that is often presented to visitors. Dr. Mullin discussed this issue further.

Mr. Filley discussed the various things that were being conducted on the Island now; he then discussed the growing retired population.

A discussion of the sizes of businesses followed.

Dr. Mullin discussed a geographically free zone as Nantucket. A

discussion of this matter followed. A discussion of jobs vs. tax base enhancement followed.

A discussion of numbers of persons not covered by medical benefits followed.

Ms. Sibley discussed the issue of expanding home businesses and the lack of affordable properties. A discussion of this matter followed.

Ms. Bryant discussed the issue of shipping off-Island for butchering of livestock. She then discussed the business park at the Airport and those firms who had expressed interest in the site.

Dr. Mullin asked all present to state what instructions would be given to staff - what would focus be?

Ms. Bryant - off-season income. A discussion of these questions followed.

Mr. Friedman discussed the ideal economy for the Island and the reason why it didn't happen. He discussed the need to create a reason for people to want to come here. He felt the Island was more people-oriented than manufacturing-oriented and explained why he felt that way. A discussion of this issue followed.

Mr. Schweikert felt the Island should focus on the educational aspect or potential of the Island. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Donaroma discussed the possibility of extended shoulder seasons and explained why. Dr. Mullin discussed this matter and the various points that had been raised previously during some of the brainstorming. Mr. Filley discussed examining of the facets of vacationing; what are people doing here, etc. He also discussed developing techniques to assist those persons who wish to get started.

Mr. Colaneri discussed cooperation between local boards and the business communities. Dr. Mullin discussed items of a related nature that he had recently been involved with.

Mr. Best questioned whether the in-season could be made more livable.

Dr. Mullin discussed a very hypothetical situation and discussed the impact thereof. A discussion of this matter followed. A discussion of keeping the dollar on-island and recirculating it followed.

Dr. Mullin discussed the "disconnect" between the upscale image and yet the marketing to the masses. A discussion of this matter followed.

Mr. Schilling discussed the impact upon local residents of such a hypothetical situation as discussed previously. A discussion of this issue followed.

Ms. Sibley discussed the persons who own homes here and visit on weekends. She felt there was a change this year in the amount of time they were spending here. She discussed the potential of creating a reason for those people to return more often. Mr. Briggs discussed

the relationship to the college intersessions and further discussed other events that used to be available here.

Mr. Best discussed the availability of facilities and their expense. A discussion of this matter followed.

A discussion of the issue of seminars here followed.

Ms. Bryant discussed how Nantucket presented their events during the year. She felt the M.V. Ice Rink was a great value and had provided a reason to come here. A discussion of the other sports facilities here followed.

Mr. Athern discussed the lack of things for tourists to do on the Island when the weather prevents the use of the beaches. He discussed the possibility of creating things such as a "Sturbridge" type area or draw. A discussion of the potential of museums followed.

Dr. Mullin asked what would be the guidance to be sought. He discussed this matter further. He asked all present the same question:

- Mr. Briggs: contact all universities to determine interest
- Mr. Colaneri: survey communities to determine what was acceptable and what was not
- Ms. Sibley: no idea
- Ms. Donaroma: new ways to sell ideas - market
- Ms. Bryant: gather ideas from cross-section of island and apply to business park.
- Ms. Marinelli: find product and market it
- Mr. Dadato: find facilitator
- Mr. Durawa: find theme; create theme
- Mr. Athern: Get slaughterhouse to raise livestock
- Mr. Early: get financing from private sector
- Mr. Schweikert: regionalize codes and encourage loan pools
- Mr. Best: get all Selectmen and Police Chiefs to enforce laws to make area more pedestrian-friendly, like Falmouth
- Mr. Chapin: market the Vineyard
- Mr. Sullivan: saw sea monster off South Beach
- Ms. Vega: consortium of business community to work on idea
- Mr. Rooney: advertise more broadly
- Mr. Friedman: get good P.R. man right away
- Ms. Birtwell: convince couples to marry on Vineyard in winter
- Ms. Taylor: list industries that would bring most dollars to area

Dr. Mullin discussed ideas that had been expressed and explained how there needed to be a focus on the short-term solutions. He further discussed various ideas on how to "market" the Vineyard in a short term. He also discussed one option on how to go "up-scale" in thinking.

Ms. Sibley discussed a designing of a "seal of approval".

Ms. Bryant discussed one point regarding the removal of "tee-shirt"

shops. A discussion of this matter and the mismatch of thinking followed.

Ms. Vega discussed the time needed to gain the "Vineyard experience". A discussion of this matter followed. Dr. Mullin discussed the limits of growth, resources and the preserving of assets.

Mr. Schilling discussed the problem of tour groups bringing their own buses over and the reasons therefore. A discussion of this issue followed. Mr. Early discussed the issue of "business as usual". Mr. Durawa did not think so. Ms. Sibley disagreed. A discussion of this issue followed. A discussion of how some of the hotels had upgraded their rentals to attract a different cliental followed. Ms. Marinelli discussed the problem of loss of dollars from tourists when they are taken out of town so rapidly. A discussion of how each of the down-island towns deal with tourists followed.

Dr. Mullin discussed what needs to be done to help out the off-season as first steps. He discussed short, moderate and long-term solutions. He indicated a need to start with the short-term and move onward.

There being no immediate pressing business the Commission voted to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.

ATTEST

Jane A. Greene
Jane A. Greene, Chairman

4/09/92
Date

Thomas Sullivan
Thomas Sullivan,
Clerk/Treasurer

4/09/92
Date

Attendance

Present: Best, Briggs, Bryant, Colaneri, Donaroma, Early, Greene, Schweikert, Sibley, Sullivan, Marinelli, Chapin

Absent: Alley, Hall, Vanderhoop, Jason, Lee, Benoit, Clarke, Allen, Bolling, Gallagher