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## **Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on August 4, 2005 In the Stone Building 33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA**

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

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Commissioners: (P = Present; A = Appointed; E = Elected)

P James Athearn (E – Edgartown)	P Ned Orleans (A – Tisbury)
P John Best (E – Tisbury)	P Megan Ottens-Sargent (E – Aquinnah)
P John Breckenridge (A – Oak Bluffs)	- Deborah Pigeon (E – Oak Bluffs)
P Christina Brown (E - Edgartown)	- Jim Powell (A – West Tisbury)
P Carlene Condon (A – Edgartown)	P Doug Sederholm (E – Chilmark)
P Mimi Davisson (E – Oak Bluffs)	P Linda Sibley (E – West Tisbury)
P Martin Crane (A – Governor Appointee)	P Paul Strauss (County Comm. Rep.)
P Chris Murphy (A – Chilmark)	P Andrew Woodruff (E – West Tisbury)
P Katherine Newman (A – Aquinnah)	

Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Bill Veno (Senior Planner), Paul Foley (DRI Coordinator), Srinivas Sattoor (Transportation Planner)

### **1. COZY HEARTH AFFORDABLE HOUSING: DRI 584 - PUBLIC HEARING (CON'T)**

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**Christina Brown** reopened the public hearing for procedural purposes only and without taking any testimony. She continued the hearing until September 1, 2005 at 7:30 pm. She said that the Commission welcomes written testimony and encouraged Commission members to read the written testimony received so far. She closed the session of the public meeting.

### **2. YMCA PROPOSAL - PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION**

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*Presenters: Michael Dutton (Board Member and Counsel), John Cleese (YMCA Executive Director), Janet Pogue (YMCA President)*

**Linda Sibley** introduced the presentation by saying that it was a preliminary presentation and not part of a formal application.

**John Cleese**, YMCA Executive Director, gave an overview of the YMCA's mission and programs.

- The YMCA's mission is dedicated to working for the improvement of the quality of life for all people by helping them realize their potential through the development of mind, body, and spirit. The YMCA responds to gaps in community services through collaboration with existing organizations.
- The proposed program intends to provide services to year-round and single-parent families.

- They want to build an indoor aquatic center to provide water safety education, swim lessons, and to provide a home for the high school swim team. Other goals are warm water therapy, creating a safe space for family recreation, and a larger teen center.
- The YMCA is responding to a serious shortage of safe supervised space, one of the highest poverty rates in the Commonwealth, a high incident of drug and alcohol use, a high suicide rate, the need to serve the senior population, a high percentage of deaths by drowning, and cultural differences that are dividing the Island.
- Services will include education, prevention, mixing of generations, swimming, and Portuguese/English classes.

**Michael Dutton**, Board Member and Counsel, said they are prepared to present where the YMCA is going and what they know about the community. They will be submitting a formal application in the next 18 months or so.

- Three separate studies have led them to propose building an island-wide community center for families that will help break down the barriers that separate towns and cultures.
- He outlined the plan for a 40,000 sq. ft. structure on 5 or so acres, adjacent to the Ice Arena, behind Skateboard Park.
- The content of the building is evolving but preliminary plans include:
  - a competition length pool,
  - a separate pool area with a hybrid "L"-shaped pool,
  - a small warm water therapy pool,
  - a lower level teen center with a separate entrance,
  - multi-use areas for a variety of community uses, possibly a joint venture with the Counsel on Aging housing its day programs,
  - space for the Creative Choices Program,
  - a wellness center,
  - locker room areas,,
  - family locker rooms
  - a child care area.
- The site's benefit is that it is accessible for young and old, and creates a campus atmosphere. The Y will have the opportunity to do a traffic plan, both vehicular and pedestrian, and will rely on MVC staff for help.
- They haven't determined what the building will look like, but he can say the Y is committed to building an appropriate building for the site and for the Vineyard. The Y is spending 5-8% more on the building to do an LED certified energy efficient design with the goal of saving 5-8% on future costs.
- They are still at a very early stage of design, having just committed to hiring an architect. He spoke about Commission areas of concern.
  - The landscaping objective is to maintain low maintenance natural vegetation. It is premature to discuss specifics of parking and infrastructure, septic, lighting and signage. They intend to minimize pavement.
  - They will be on town water.
  - They plan on minimal signage and exterior lighting.
  - They don't know yet what the environmental impact will be, but they believe it will be focused on groundwater impact.

- They want to improve the character and identity of the area.
- If the YMCA does its job right, it will be alleviating the burden on municipal services and the impact on taxpayers.
- The YMCA has signed a lease for 5 acres. The School District gets 360 hours of pool time. No taxpayer money is being expended.
- The plan will be consistent with town zoning, regional plans and objectives as well as with Oak Bluffs and the high school's plans.

**Ned Orleans** asked about housing. **Michael Dutton** said they aren't sure what the deed restrictions are but his understanding is there are some; the YMCA sees its mission as not necessarily housing based; the YMCA will leave the door open for some sort of joint affordable housing project.

**Kathy Newman** asked if the YMCA knows what fees would be. **Michael Dutton** said that operating expenses would affect fees. The YMCA's goal is to make the facilities and services as accessible as possible. The YMCA has not-for-profit status because there is a commitment that anyone who wants to join, can.

**Christina Brown** asked whether the national YMCA organization would have a role in the Vineyard facility. **Michael Dutton** responded that the national YMCA would provide advice, not money.

**Jim Athearn** spoke about character identity and the Vineyard community and how to make this YMCA unique to Martha's Vineyard. **Michael Dutton** said there would be multi-use spaces.

**James Athearn** encouraged gardening and horticulture programs. **Michael Dutton** said that those are natural things to do.

**Paul Strauss** raised the question of competition with local fitness businesses; it would be useful to hear about the cooperative regional nature of the Y, why the Y would be good for the Vineyard, and how the Y is going to add value to the community in which it sits. **Michael Dutton** said the Y's goals are not to replace or compete; the Y's is a charitable mission, not a competitive one.

**Paul Strauss** said he believes that nobody has a bad sense of the Y; he said that personally it has a positive family aura for him. If it doesn't overlap or compete with existing facilities, it's good.

**Mark London** said that in looking at the plan of the area, it doesn't seem to hang together as a "campus" and he believed it would be desirable to take a bigger look at the whole area in terms of traffic, parking, pedestrian traffic, and paths.

- There will be sites for future housing in the general area. However, it would be desirable that the Y explore the possibility of housing in the Y project itself.
- He would encourage the YMCA planners to do a detailed site analysis of existing features to be aware of issues such as habitat preservation before they get deep into the plan

**Linda Sibley** said that one of the hallmarks of the YMCA has been providing a safe, healthy place for people to live. Because of the national organization's past, it might be uniquely qualified to provide dormitory housing for workers on the Vineyard. She then asked how the Y calculated the value of the pool time. **Michael Dutton** said the going rate off-Island is about \$120 – 140 per session; they are using \$150 per hour.

**Chris Murphy** said that people have been pushing for the creation of the YMCA for many years. He is concerned with the potential exclusiveness of the project and its "Christian" label. He asked the

project planners to help him feel comfortable around that issue. **Michael Dutton** said that when the YMCA was originally founded was for young Christian men.

**Jan Pogue**, YMCA president, said the YMCA was set up to support Christian principles but it supports everyone.

- The YMCA is putting together a video. Included is an interview with an Oak Bluffs couple who is Jewish who told the story about the woman's father, a Polish Jew who came to Brockton, didn't speak English, and had nowhere to stay. The Y gave him a place to live for four years. He left a sizable contribution to the Y and his family still contributes to the Y.
- The Y is the third most recognizable trademark symbol in the world.
- Nancy Aronie, in her interview, described the Y as a community organization that supported her, a Jewish female, as she was growing up and provided a community center. Nancy also said that it would be wonderful if the six towns of the Vineyard, with their different personalities, had one central place where they could find out about each other.
- She concluded by saying the Y is a totally non-exclusive organization.

**Judy Pisano** has started working with the committee and wished the Y had been around for her kids. She's become involved because she thinks it's good for the community. The Y is broad-based. She wondered how to make this Y unique to the Vineyard.

**Sarah Doyle** has a 16½-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter and she is excited to have the program. It will be a huge benefit for the Island to have a place where kids can learn to swim and a community center with a place for kids to work out. She doesn't feel the Y will be in competition with other health clubs because it will be reaching a different market. It would be wonderful to have a place like the Y for the community and for youth supervision. She compared the Y's community benefits to that of the Ag Hall, saying that it is an incredible resource.

**Jan Pogue** said that in their research, they found that Martha's Vineyard is in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in drownings according to the CVC.

**Michael Dutton** thanked Commissioners for letting the Y come and asked that anyone should please contact them with questions/comments.

**Linda Sibley** thanked the representatives from the YMCA for presenting information.

The Commission took a brief recess.

### 3. VINEYARD HOUSE: DRI 582 - WRITTEN DECISION

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Commissioners present: J. Athearn, J. Best, J. Breckenridge, C. Brown, C. Condon, M. Crane, M. Davisson, C. Murphy, K. Newman, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, P. Strauss

**Christina Brown moved, and it was duly seconded, to approve the written decision as written.**

Commissioners approved, in voice votes, the following changes to the written decision:

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|--------------------|--|
| Page 2, line 8-9   | They presently have three separate houses in Oak Bluffs housing 24 resident and they would like to consolidate in Tisbury in order . . . |
| Page 2, line 39-40 | the proposed development is appropriate  |
| Page 3, line 35-36 | and the project is well-designed and will be visually acceptable to traffic that passes it.  |
| Page 4, line 2     | and will not be negatively impacted by this development.   |
| Page 4, lines 10   | to 38 residents, an increase of 14 residents over current housing,   |
| Page 4, line 8     | and affordable transitional housing  |
| Page 4, line 40    | add blank line before "In sum"   |
| Page 6, line 18    | All maintenance contracts shall be filed with the MVC for the life of the facility.  |
| Page 6, line 24    | shall be filed   |
| Page 6, line 5-6   | The Commission discussed the definition of satisfactory and the correct language to include in the decision and agreed on the following: |
| Page 6, line 3     | for the entire wastewater flow so that the nitrogen loading on the property shall not exceed 12.9 kgs per acre per year                  |
| Page 6, line 7     | and an annual test that meets the same standard  |
| Page 6, line 16    | the life of the facility   |
| Page 6, line 10    | meet the offered nitrogen loading limit  |
| Page 7, line 7-8   | The proposed split-rail fence with wire grid mesh running  |
| Page 7, line 10    | to promote safety including but not limited to the first lot to the northwest  |

**Doug Sederholm moved, and it was duly seconded, to approve the written decision with revisions as approved. A roll call vote was taken. In favor: J. Athearn, J. Best, J. Breckenridge, C. Brown, C. Condon, M. Davisson, C. Murphy, K. Newman, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, P. Strauss. Opposed: None. Abstentions: M. Crane.**

### 4. MINUTES OF JULY 7, 2005

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Commissioners Present: J. Athearn, J. Best, J. Breckenridge, C. Brown, C. Condon, M. Crane, M. Davisson, C. Murphy, K. Newman, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, P. Strauss

**Christina Brown** said her name on page 1 be followed by an 'E' for Elected rather 'A' for Appointed.

**Doug Sederholm moved, and it was duly seconded, that the minutes of July 7<sup>th</sup> be approved as amended. A voice vote was taken. In favor: 12. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.**

**5. OTHER**

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**5.1 August 11, 2005 Commission Meeting**

**Mark London** said the meeting on August 11<sup>th</sup> would focus on planning issues. Summer interns will be doing five short presentations on their work. **Christina Brown** encouraged people to attend.

**5.2 August 25, 2005 Commission Meeting**

The August 25<sup>th</sup> meeting will begin at 8:00 p.m. Hospital consultants will be on the Island and the majority of the meeting is to be an informational session on the hospital plan.

**5.3 August 25, 2005 Drawbridge Meeting**

On August 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Tisbury Senior Center, there will be a meeting on the design of the permanent drawbridge with Steve Berlucchi, Mark London and representatives from each town.

- **Chris Murphy**, on behalf of the Chilmark Board of Selectmen, asked the Commission how the subject of the drawbridge could be more of an Island-wide discussion.
- **Mark London** noted that the Drawbridge Committee sent design and aesthetic suggestions to MassHighway. It was suggested that the Committee could come in the fall to present information on the bridge.
- **Christina Brown** suggested that invitations be sent from the Drawbridge Committee to town Selectmen and/or Highway Departments.
- **Linda Sibley** said the State doesn't consider this a regional project but a town project. Even if MassHighway is not subject to MVC regulations, State or Federal agencies often do courtesy presentations.
- **Mark London** said the drawbridge is always on the agenda of the Joint Transportation Committee, which includes representatives of all towns. The Drawbridge Committee recommended and the Tisbury and Oak Bluffs Boards of Selectmen endorsed the construction of a temporary drawbridge (the "two-bridge solution"), albeit reluctantly, given the enormous consequences that a possible failure of the existing bridge would have. An independent consultant will be hired to look at extending the life of the existing bridge.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Linda B. Sibley  
Chairman

2/2/2006  
Date

Nathaniel J. Stearns  
Clerk-Treasurer

Feb. 2, 2006  
Date