Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 29, 2003

Held in the Olde Stone Building,
33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Christine Flynn (Regional Planner), Jennifer Rand (DRI Coordinator), Bill Wilcox (Water Resources Planner), David Wessling (Transportation Planner).

1. BRIDGE HOUSING (DRI No. 560) – CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND VOTE


There being a quorum present, James A. Athearn, Chair, opened the Commission Meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Mark London summarized recommendations and possible conditions from last week’s LUPC discussion with respect to Bridge Housing Corporation.

Richard Toole commented that he would like the Commission to decide on the project this evening.

1.1 Screening and Setbacks

Alan Schweikert said that the Commission is perceived as and is an advocate for Affordable Housing. He felt that this project had several problems but many of the project’s problems had been resolved. He was still concerned about the density and the impact on abutters. He then proposed additional screening along the property line of the abutters.
Mark London read a draft possible condition concerning additional screening, calling on the applicant to plant thirty additional white pines.

Katherine Newman suggested that there be a dollar amount for landscaping.

Linda Sibley said that specifying the number of trees would be a good approach and that plantings would need to be maintained in order for the trees to grow properly to create an effective buffer.

Tristan Israel suggested a plan be presented to the Commission, or that it impose a clear condition.

Alan Schweikert suggested that the condition indicate a specific amount of trees “unless mutually agreed upon by Bridge Housing and the immediate abutters” and let them plant what they want.

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded that there be a condition requiring the applicant to plant a combination of 30 small and large white pines or the equivalent, in addition to the vegetation already offered, to be located along the front portion of the property and facing the abutters, in order to increase the screening from State Road and the abutters, with the placement to be determined in cooperation with the Executive Director of the Martha’s Vineyard Commission and the abutters.

- Megan Ottens-Sargent asked whether they should be specified as 8-12’ as the ones already promised.
- Linda Sibley said that white pines grow quickly and some trees under 8’ would be alright. She also thought it might be better to plant some of the trees on the abutters property, provided they approved.

John Best moved and it was duly seconded that an amendment be added to the motion saying that dead trees will be replaced annually for the first five years. There was no objection and the amendment was added to the motion.

- Andrew Woodruff said that it was important to have a good maintenance program for the trees, including maintenance of existing trees around the plantings, to ensure enough light for maximum growth.
- Linda Sibley commented that as they grew, it might be desirable to take some out.

Tristan Israel moved and it was duly seconded that an amendment be added to the motion saying that Bridge Commons Association’s regulations include the requirement to maintain the screening in perpetuity. Voice vote on the motion and amendments: In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion and amendments passed.

Andrew Woodruff asked whether the Commission would entertain the possibility of requiring greater setbacks along State Road and next to abutters.

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded that the Commission accept the applicant’s offer that the 200’ buffer would be left untouched, with the exception of the road, one house, and the addition of the white pines.

- Andrew Woodruff discussed at the possibility of moving the one house out of the 200’ buffer, but concluded that the move would require changing the entire layout, and decided it best to leave the plan as it was.


Andrew Woodruff moved and it was duly seconded that there be a 50’ setback no-cut zone along the west and east sides of the property.
• Bill Wilcox reminded the Commissioners that the leaching fields would be along the western property line. Jennifer Rand said that there is an easement for the Land Bank. Both the leaching field and easement would make it impossible to have a no-cut zone. **Andrew Woodruff amended the motion to apply only 50' to the east side of the property.**

• Katherine Newman suggested that the houses be more clustered in order for the parking spaces to be less of an obstruction, keeping neighbors from being neighborly. She felt that this reconfiguration would be difficult to do at this time, but could be dealt with in the final design.

• Tristan Israel commented that this should be the final design. There could be modifications but they should come back to the Commission.

• Christina Brown said that minor modifications, within a condition’s stipulations, could be dealt with easily and would not require a public hearing.

• Megan Ottens-Sargent asked whether staff had given Katherine Newman’s parking concerns any consideration.

• Mark London noted that one of the possible conditions distributed to Commissioners suggested that there be some flexibility in the adjustment of parking spaces, paths and possibly the houses. Also he was concerned about squeezing the parking and central area even more in order to enlarge the side setbacks.

• Megan Ottens-Sargent suggested that if some of the more rigid setbacks could be a constraint for the applicant, perhaps there could be some flexibility.

• Richard Toole said that it appeared that there were no houses within 50’ of the east side property line.

• Linda Sibley started to propose a motion about providing the flexibility to move houses, parking spaces, paths and vegetation, provided that nothing be moved closer to State Road, the west side property line or 50’ from east side property line.

• Jim Athearn reminded Commissioners that the motion on the floor was for a 50’ no cut buffer zone on the east side of the property line and he called for a vote.

**Voice vote. In favor: 10. Opposed: 1. Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.**

Christina Brown said that would have preferred Linda Sibley’s motion that allowed for more flexibility.

Linda Sibley commented that she would like to make her motion because she wanted the applicant to have the flexibility to redesign within the prescribed parameters which would now include the 50’ no cut buffer zone, as well as the present house setbacks shown on the Bridge Housing Corp. plan with regard to State Road, the west side of the property and Red Coat Hill Road. She stated the she would not like them to move closer to the perimeters of the property, other than moving closer to the 50’ buffer on the east.

Jim Athearn asked whether Commissioners would be comfortable with allowing enough flexibility that there was a totally new scheme.

Tristan Israel said that he would be uncomfortable if the motion is left too open. They could come back to the Commission if the plan is changed. The public has a right to expect what was actually approved.

Jim Athearn stated that it was appropriate to have a distinct plan approved, with some degree of flexibility.

Mark London read a draft possible motion dealing with flexibility to adjust the location of parking spaces, paths and vegetation, and houses.
Andrew Woodruff suggested setbacks on Red Coat Hill Road. Building Nos. 8 and 9 (A2 and C2) could be pushed back 20'. Building No. 5 could be pushed back some.

John Best agreed with the intention but felt that setbacks would compromise the site for people living here year round in favor of some people passing through. He also stated that on nearby parts of Red Coat Hill Road, there were houses very close to the road.

Katherine Newman wondered whether it would be better to rotate some of these houses in a north to south direction.

Alan Schweikert asked whether the Commissioners were trying to redesign the plan. He suggested that if the buffers and restrictions are in place, the applicants could come back to the Commission to make further adjustments.

Andrew Woodruff said that Red Coat Hill Road is part of the ancient way system of the Island and should be protected. When a plan comes before the Commission we should consider doing what we can to mitigate the impacts. The buildings are within 60 feet of the property line; by the time you install a building that is delivered on a semi truck, there is a lot of destruction. There is ample room north of Building 5, 8, 9 to moved into the hill without a hardship on the applicant. There is always the possibility of backfill in the pit.

Andrew Woodruff moved that there be a 50' no cut zone along both sides of Red Coat Hill Road, with the exception of bicycle paths and roads.

- Christina Brown noted that the applicant had already moved the houses back from Red Coat Hill Road. With the construction zone around each building, it would make construction difficult.

Andrew Woodruff amended the motion to apply to the north side of Red Coat Hill Road only.


Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded that a condition be added to the effect that the sitting of the houses can be adjusted by a maximum of 15', and the specific location of parking pads, vegetation and other site features can be adjusted, subject to the approval of the MVC Executive Director, provided that:

- no house be closer than 50' to Deer Hill Road and no house north of Red Coat Hill Road be closer than 50' to that road, and that
- no house be closer than the presently proposed houses along the western property line and along State Road, and that no house south of Red Coat Hill Road be closer than the presently proposed houses.

Any other change would have to be submitted to the Commission. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.2 Wastewater

Linda DeWitt was concerned about health issues related to wastewater. She stated that other similar projects have treatment on site, and wanted to know whether the DEP had comments on septic. She had read about the relation between nitrites and cancer and wanted to know the cost of biological treatment.

Bill Wilcox responded that in the Zone 2 area, the applicant met the DEP requirement for 10,000 square feet per bedroom for nitrogen loading. For bacteria in wastewater, 4 feet is determined adequate vertically and horizontally, the distance to down-gradient wells is more than 300'. Bacteria and viruses should not be a problem in these soils. The cost of a self-contained 7,000-gallon/day denitrifying and biological treatment system would be...
approximately $150,000. Five Bio-clere units, at 1,500 gallons each/day, plus septic tanks and pumps would be approximately $200,000. The septic system meets all Title 5 and the Tisbury Board of Health requirements for wastewater loading, so it would not be involved in further review for this project.

Megan Ottens-Sargent asked what the cost was for acquiring additional land needed for septic usage.

Tristan Israel noted that under the draft possible conditions, the Applicant would be required to have liability insurance to address wastewater problems. If there is monitoring and a way to deal with the problems, this addresses the concerns.

Jim Athearn suggested they look at the draft possible conditions.

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded to adopt the two conditions concerning wastewater disposal as follows:

1) The leaching trench shall be situated as close to the up-gradient property boundary (i.e., the western side unless demonstrated otherwise) as is permitted within Title 5 and the local Health Code of the Town.

2) The Applicant shall acquire liability insurance adequate to finance an upgrade of the wastewater system to denitrifying capability or provision of Town water to abutting affected lots should Bridge Housing or the Co-op Association be held liable as a result of a failure of the wastewater disposal system.

Bill Wilcox said he was reasonably secure that the septic system will work as proposed. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.3 Groundwater

Tristan Israel moved and it was duly seconded to adopt the six conditions concerning groundwater monitoring as follows:

1) Wells will be sampled twice prior to wastewater disposal start up and analyze the samples for TKN, nitrate, ammonium and specific conductivity.

2) Proposed locations and depths of monitoring wells shall be provided to MVC Staff for review and approval before installation. The wells shall be fitted with 10-foot screens placed at a depth that will bracket the average water table depth as indicated by MVC records. The wells shall be surveyed in to NGV Datum (1929) and the slope and direction of the water table determined after placement of three wells. The final two wells shall be placed between the proposed location of the leach trench and the nearest, known abutting private wells.

3) Sample acquisition shall follow the QA protocol available from the MVC. Prior to starting well monitoring the QA shall be reviewed and approved by the Tisbury Board of Health and the MV Commission. A laboratory certified by the Commonwealth for these parameters shall conduct sample analyses.

4) The wells shall be sampled annually in the fall for a period of five years which period may be extended by the Board of Health should the data indicate a concern. Certified lab analyses and field data sheets as required by the QA shall be provided to the Board of Health and the MVC within 21 days of completion of the sampling.

5) Should the total nitrogen content of the down-gradient monitoring wells exceed 9 milligrams per liter while the up-gradient wells indicate no causative, off-site source, the Applicant shall notify the Tisbury Board of Health, the MVC and the abutters. The results shall be confirmed by a second sample as described in the QA.
6) Should down-gradient private wells on abutting lots that previously tested at acceptable nitrogen levels exceed 10 mg/l while the up-gradient wells indicate no causative, off-site source, the Applicant’s wastewater system will be considered to have failed and shall either be upgraded to provide denitrifying capability within the segments that are up-gradient of the problem well[s] or the Applicant shall finance the extension of Town water to the problem dwellings or some other solution agreeable to the Board of Health and the MVC.

- Megan Ottens-Sargent asked who would do the groundwater monitoring. Bill Wilcox answered that the Applicant would hire consultants and install observation wells to protect their own liability.
- John Best requested that in the fourth bullet after the words "...five years" that the words "after occupancy" be inserted.
- Jim Athearn asked that in the fifth and sixth bullets, after the words "... the Applicant" that the words "or its successors" be inserted.
- Mark London asked for clarification of the sixth condition.
John Best moved and it was duly seconded that the sixth condition be amended to require that any initial sampling requested by abutters within a 500' limit of the property, should be at the applicants expense. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

John Best moved and it was duly seconded that the wording for the sixth condition read: ‘Should down-gradient private wells within 500’ of the leaching field that previously tested at 5ppm or less of nitrate exceed 10ppm while the up-gradient wells indicate no causative, off-site source, the Applicant’s or its successor’s wastewater system will be considered to have failed and shall either be upgraded to provide denitrifying capability within the segments that are up-gradient of the problem well[s] or the Applicant or its successors shall finance the extension of Town water to the problem dwellings or some other solution agreeable to the Board of Health and the MVC.”

- Linda Sibley questioned if the nitrogen concentration at the property line is up to 9.5ppm, how could it not raise the ppm in a well, which is currently at 5 ppm. Is there sufficient distance between the property line and the well? Bill Wilcox answered that the additional depth and distance should adequately dilute the nitrogen.

Voice vote on the motion to adopt the six groundwater conditions including the amendments. In Favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.4 Drinking Water

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded to accept the applicant’s offer that no trees are to be removed resulting from the installation of the water main, and that the installation be engineered to minimize the damage to the root systems of adjacent trees. In addition, a condition should added specifying that along the line of the extended water main, trees exceeding 4-inch DBH within those areas requiring fill shall be protected by tree wells no less than 3 feet in diameter; for trees exceeding 8 inch DBH the tree wells shall be no less than 4 feet in diameter.

- Andrew Woodruff said that the motion should also prohibit cutting the asphalt for the installation, as uneven asphalt patching on a road in this area led to a death of a bicycle rider 15 years ago.
- John Best said that this should be up to the State.
- Andrew Woodruff reiterated that cutting the asphalt should be minimized.
• Linda Sibley stated that the State would stay out of the asphalt as much as possible to minimize the costs.

• Tristan Israel said that the installation of a water main on State Road will be completed by the Water Department, and if they end up cutting a tree there is not much that can be done. The MVC Commission should adopt this motion to express our intent to attempt to preserve the trees.

• Linda Sibley said the MVC should clearly say the trees should not be cut. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.5 Exterior Lighting

John Best moved and it was duly seconded to adopt a lighting condition requiring that all exterior lighting be shielded to prevent up-lighting. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.6 Distribution of Units among Income Levels

John Best stated that the draft possible condition 1 – There shall be at least eight (8) units sold at or under the eighty percent (80%) of median level; and further that there shall be no less than four (4) units sold in each of the other affordability ranges (80%-100%, 100%-120%, 120%-140%) – would allow up to 14 units sold in the affordability range of 120%-140%. Christina Brown said that this amount would give the Applicant some flexibility while ensuring an even distribution in income ranges. It was a reasonable compromise.

John Best moved and it was duly seconded that the number of units sold in the affordability range of 120%-140% be capped at 4-units.

• Christina Brown commented that amount might not give the Applicant the necessary flexibility.

• Tristan Israel commented that if the finances didn’t work for the Applicant at the capped limit of 4, the Applicant could come back to the MVC to change the limit.


Richard Toole moved and it was duly seconded that the number of units sold in the affordability range of 120%-140% be capped at 6 units. Voice vote. In favor: 4. Opposed: 1. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.7 Additions to Buildings

John Best moved and it was duly seconded to accept the Applicant’s offer that there would be no additions or outbuildings other than porches and decks with the clarification that the reference be to unwinterized porches. Voice vote. In favor: 3 Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

1.8 Applicant’s Offers

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded to accept the “Selected Project Specifics” submitted by Bridge Housing Corp. as follows:

1) Wastewater: Wastewater effluent will be evenly distributed to a system of no less than 1500 linear feet of leaching trench.

2) Monitoring: Applicants will install 5 monitoring wells with two sited along the up-gradient boundary and three along the down-gradient boundary.

3) Drinking Water: Town Water will be brought to the site subject to the conditions and approval of the Tisbury Water Commissioners.

4) Lighting: The only exterior lighting shall be porch lights.

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5) **Co-op Association**: A consultant will be hired to assist with the start-up of the Co-op Association.

6) **Home Businesses**: The only home-based businesses allowed will be those designed to serve the neighborhood and not generate off-site traffic, such as a day-care center for the Association.

7) **Resident Selection**: Residents will be chosen on a point system including, but not limited to, income, Tisbury residency, length of residence on Island, etc.


### 1.9 Building Siting

Andrew Woodruff moved and it was duly seconded that the Applicant relocate Building No. 4 north of Red Coat Hill Road between Building Nos. 5 and 6, and that there be a 50’ no cut zone south of Red Coat Hill Road, requiring Building No. 10 to be moved in to meet this setback.

- John Best commented that the applicant has always expressed an extreme aversion for going into the pit. This would be a major redesign for a project that had been redesigned several times. He agreed with adjusting it to the south but was uncomfortable about doing this redesign without the participation of the Applicant.

- Andrew Woodruff said that building basements in the units would create a lot of fill and the Applicant might be happy to have a place to place the fill. Building No. 4 is where the biggest stand of Pitch Pines on the site are located.

- Megan Ottens-Sargent asked whether the Commission would consider cutting out this unit completely.

- Richard Tooze said that he would vote for it if it were a suggestion but not a requirement.

- Tristan Israel also said that this could be a possibility but should not be a condition.

Andrew Woodruff amended the motion to say that the wording be changed to “the Applicant is encouraged to relocate Building No. 4...”.

Voice vote: In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion carried.

### 1.10 Overall Project

Linda Sibley moved and it was duly seconded to approve the Bridge Housing Corp. project, DRI No. 560, as amended.

Tristan Israel commented that he had wrestled with the project, which had been difficult. He is in favor of affordable housing and that Bridge Housing Corp. has worked hard to achieve their goals. He is concerned about the density and the impact on the abutters, which he believed to be due to the high cost of land. He suggested there be other affordable housing projects with less impact. He said it was unfortunate that the Applicant had to pay for the water line since that fee would have to be applied to housing costs. The project has been improved and he would vote for this project.

Megan Ottens-Sargent said she would vote for the project also. The Island needs different housing models. There were problems with the plan. She would have liked to have lots set off that people could buy at affordable prices. She was concerned about the extension of the water line that far up State Road, in that it would contribute to the extension of suburbia (it would be easier to develop property by tying into town water). She thought it would have been better if all parties involved had worked more closely together for a better plan. She hoped that in the future, we could learn from this experience.

Richard Tooze said that this project showed why it is difficult to achieve affordable housing on the Island. The MVC and Bridge Housing Corp. have worked very hard to resolve many issues.
The completion of this review demonstrates to the State that the MVC can review 40B projects.

Linda Sibley stated this is hands down better than a 40B where only 25% are affordable, but the community has to work hard on looking at other solutions for affordable housing. The need is so desperate that we need all kinds of projects.

John Best said that it is extremely difficult to achieve affordable housing in the private sector. Ideally it should be more integrated. This is the biggest project that we've seen so far and it only goes a very small way to achieve the goal. Even on free land, it is hard to achieve affordable housing.

Christina Brown commented that Bridge Housing Corp. should be commended for hanging in and working through this new model for housing.

Katherine Newman supported the other comments, and stated the process had taken so long to review due to the struggle to integrate the many components into a workable plan for all concerned. She respected the work Bridge Housing Corp. had done, as well as the concerns of the neighbors.

Alan Schweikert stated he had always been an advocate for affordable housing, which is a very complex issue, and that there would be more projects like Bridge Housing Corp. Ideally there would be an intricate weave of projects on the Island, but he was concerned that it was not likely. He hoped the Commission became better in doing its job, just as Applicants are getting better at theirs. He stated he was in favor of the project, that it had come a long way and evolved.

Andrew Woodruff applauded Bridge Housing Corp. and the community for the first of its kind of housing on the Vineyard. During the process, he had been quite critical because there were a lot of things that were not good about the plan, and to some degree he felt there had been a little inflexibility. He felt that there should have been some site improvements, and was concerned about the high-density impact in the area. Overall, he believed it was not right to support the project.

Linda DeWitt said that the Bridge Housing Corp. hearing was difficult and she respected everyone who worked on resolving the complexity of issues involved in this project. She thanked Tristan Israel for his comments, and felt that the Town of Tisbury has to be behind this project. She said she would be voting yes.

Linda Sibley commented that a major plus of this project is that two-thirds of the site will remain in conservation.

Jim Athearn said that the project was a major plus, notwithstanding his general philosophy that he didn’t want to see large rural areas on the Island converted to affordable housing, preferring to convert existing buildings into affordable housing.


Jim Athearn congratulated Bridge Housing Corp. on their persistence and good planning.

Barbara Schiber said that the Bridge Housing Corp. Directors appreciated the efforts of the Commission in helping to improve the project.
Bob Chidsey said he appreciated the vote. He had wondered at times whether the Commission truly favored affordable housing, but has changed his mind. Now I just thank you very much.

Paul Strauss commented that he could not participate in the discussion because he had missed a meeting. He was pleased that the project was approved and the conditions are good. He realized that this is a dense project, but believed that it will work.

Doug Sederholm said he also missed one meeting and was eliminated from voting, but attended all other meetings. He said that this is a good project, but not perfect, primarily because of the cost of the land. It will forever change the impact on the neighbors such as the Bilzerians, but the Commission must weigh this against the need for affordable housing and the fact that there will be a large area of conservation land. He said that he hopes the neighbors realize that their concerns have been taken into consideration, and that the Commission has done its best to deal with them.

2. UPCOMING LUPC MEETINGS

June 2 – Pre-Public Hearing Review of Woodside Village VI (DRI No. 568), and Pre-Public Hearing Review of Aidylberg II, (DRI No. 569), both projects in the Town of Oak Bluffs.

June 9 – Concurrence review and Pre-Public Hearing of Humphrey's (DRI No. 570), and Pre-Public Hearing of Robert H. Goldborough, Jr. Trustee of Starj Realty Trust (DRI No. 489-3), both projects of the Town of Tisbury; and a Concurrence review and Pre-Public Hearing of Badlands Cantina, LLC (DRI No. 571) of the Town of Edgartown.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Jim Atherearn noted that reports to the Ethics Commission were due. Linda Sibley stated that they could be filed electronically.

There will be a Process & Procedures Meeting at the Howes House, State Road, West Tisbury, on Wednesday, June 11, 2003, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Christine Flynn noted that there was an Affordable Housing Workshop on Friday, May 30, 2003, and encouraged all Commissioners to attend.

Mark London advised that outstanding minutes will be reviewed at the June 19, 2003 Regular Commission Meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

[Signatures]
Chairman

[Signatures]
Clerk-Treasurer

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