



BOX 1447, OAK BLUFFS, MASSACHUSETTS, 02557, 508-693-3453
FAX 508-693-7894 INFO@MVCOMMISSION.ORG WWW.MVCOMMISSION.ORG

Minutes of the Meeting of the CIP Steering Committee

Held November 5, 2005

In the Stone Building, 33 New York Ave., Oak Bluffs, MA

IN ATTENDANCE (P = Present; - = Absent)

P John Abrams	P Ann Floyd	P Bret Stearns
- Clarissa Allen	P Ray LaPorte	P Henry Stephenson
P Marie Allen	P Ned Orleans	P Paul Strauss
P James Athearn	P Kerry Scott	P Richard Toole
P Prudence Burt	P Linda Sibley	P Susan Wasserman
P Tom Chase	P Elio Silva	P Durwood Vanderhoop
P Steve Ewing	P Russell Smith	

1 Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Christine Flynn (Affordable Housing & Economic
2 Planner), Jo-Ann Taylor (Coastal Planner), Bill Veno (Senior Planner)

3 In Attendance: Mimi Davisson (MVC commissioner)

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5 Committee chairman Jim Athearn opened the meeting at 5:00 PM

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7 **1. Logistics - Videotaping**

8 It was agreed that meetings would be organized with administrative matters (e.g. approval of
9 minutes, scheduling of meetings, etc.) first, and substantive issues after that. In order not to turn
10 members of the public off to the process, it was decided that – at least for the first few meetings
11 that would likely have a lot of arcane discussion about procedural issues – we would broadcast
12 only the substantive part of the meeting. MVC staff will perform the videotaping and this will play
13 on channel 13. As the process moves along, we might want “gavel-to-gavel” coverage as a
14 government meeting, which might be eligible to be taped by MVTV staff and play on channel 15.
15 All meetings are open to the public and complete minutes of all meetings are available, for those
16 curious about the administrative portion of the meeting.

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18 **2. Approval of Minutes**

19 The minutes of the October 26, 2005, meeting were approved as presented.

20

21 **3. Roundtable of Steering Committee Members**

22 Four members not present at the initial meeting in September each offered thoughts on why they
23 agreed to be part of the CIP process and what they would like to see come out of the process.

24 Among the remarks:

- 25 • It is easy to gripe, but the Vineyard should be proud of and try to replicate our considerable
26 successes such as the MVC, the Land Bank, the Housing Bank, and Edgartown’s dredging of
27 the harbor, which improved shellfishing.
- 28 • There should be better rapport between the public and boards, perhaps through less formal
29 forums than public hearings.
- 30 • There is a lot of misinformation about technical issues. The MVC forums were useful. We
31 could have workshops on specific topics, such as with engineers on erosion.
- 32 • We should strengthen the “public realm” on the Vineyard which is now very limited. There are
33 many No Trespassing and Keep Out signs; fences and vegetation are allowed to remove
34 vistas from being seen from the public roadways. These affect the way we and others
35 perceive our community.
- 36 • It is a concern that the once-lively town centers are now virtually closed in the off-season while
37 the main stores are on the outskirts of town.
- 38 • There are stark differences in the perception or image of Martha’s Vineyard versus the reality.
39 Many who come here to work and live are under the impression the Island is a gold mine. But
40 there are a lot of drugs and kids smoking, which reflect a lack of value for their surroundings
41 and community.
- 42 • There is an impression that ‘planning’ will just be regulations, which makes people cautious.
43 People need to realize the importance of this planning and how it contributes to the value of
44 their property.
- 45 • We should take an optimistic, long-term view to make some of our seemingly intractable
46 problems look more solvable. We can have appropriate development that enhances
47 community character and the economy at the same time.
- 48 • As we move to a post-oil economy, we should be looking for more self-sufficiency with respect
49 to food, energy, and shelter.
- 50 • We should make this plan something that is compelling, that captures the imagination.

51

52 **4. Meetings With Town Boards, etc.**

53 Committee members from the respective towns joined Mark in initial appearances before the
54 Tisbury and West Tisbury boards of selectmen. West Tisbury selectmen suggested looking at what
55 services are better delivered at the town level versus at an Island-wide level. They also suggested
56 that rules and regulations for affordable housing should be more uniform across the Island.

57 Members were encouraged to attend the appearances scheduled for the other towns:

- 58 Aquinnah November 15, 5:30
- 59 Chilmark November 15, 7:30
- 60 Edgartown November 14, 4:15
- 61 Oak Bluffs November 22, time to be determined

62

63 Bill Veno informed participants at the October 27 all-Island planning board meeting that the
64 Steering Committee would like to meet with them. The planning boards members suggested such
65 a meeting be held after the holidays.

66

67 **5. Planning Background and Approach to the Planning Process**

68 Mark gave a PowerPoint presentation of background information on the various issues that could
69 be addressed in the CIP.

- 70 • He gave general information about growth and build-out. The population of the Vineyard
71 has grown 157% since 1960, growing seven times faster than Massachusetts as a whole.
72 If the whole Island were built out according to existing zoning, there could be an
73 additional 40% increase. However if all seasonal homes became year-round, the
74 population could almost quadruple. He showed a series of land use maps, including a
75 projection of build-out.
- 76 • He described the Community Development plans that the MVC prepared for the six Island
77 towns last year. These analyze the most suitable uses for the "available" (i.e. undeveloped
78 and unprotected) land, based on a series of criteria. He showed the resulting maps of
79 open space, housing, and economic development suitability.
- 80 • He gave some background information and listed some of the issues for each of the
81 preliminary list of nine topics that the Comprehensive Island Plan could address, each of
82 which could be the focus of a task force, namely:
 - 83 1. Growth Management
 - 84 2. Housing
 - 85 3. Economic Development
 - 86 4. Open Space and Natural Resources
 - 87 5. Man-Made Features and Cultural Resources
 - 88 6. Water Resources
 - 89 7. Transportation
 - 90 8. Community/Public Facilities and Services
 - 91 9. Infrastructure
- 92 • He suggested that we not look at this as a linear process, attempting to finalize broad
93 goals and objectives before dealing with specific topic or geographic areas. In his
94 experience, it is better to look at this as a cyclical process, moving back and forth
95 between work on general issues and work on specific topics and areas. Dealing with
96 the specifics helps inform the work on the general.

97 The following are some comments and suggestions by Committee members:

- 98 • It would be useful to overlay maps on aerial photographs, when possible, to increase the
99 public's understanding of the information.
- 100 • Committee members should bring in examples of what has worked well in their respective
101 fields of interest. Each meeting could include a 15-minute presentation on a specific topic.
- 102 • There was a discussion of whether there should be fewer topics and task forces,
103 combining, say, housing and economic development. Various members suggested various
104 combinations. Some suggested that it would be useful to have task forces do some work

105 focusing on specific, clearly defined topics, with the Steering Committee ensuring overall
106 coordination and integration.

- 107 • There was a discussion of the identity of the Vineyard. What are we: a tourist resort, a
108 summer community, a bedroom community? Why are we here?
- 109 • It would be useful to create a mission statement for the planning process.

110 Mark suggested that the Steering Committee hold an extended facilitated brainstorming session,
111 perhaps on a Saturday morning, to start grappling with the big issues of the plan. It was agreed
112 to do this in January.

113

114 **6. Additional Committees**

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116 It was not possible that the Steering Committee represent all groups on the Vineyard. Many of the
117 members were chosen because they have a track record of achievement in a committee context.
118 However, its role is to work together and be sure that all segments of the community are heard
119 from and represented in the plan.

120

121 It was clarified that the committee members, while purposely selected for the diverse perspectives
122 they represent, are not representatives of their boards or affiliations but, rather, are to provide
123 their individual thinking to the planning effort.

124

125 It was agreed to set up two small subcommittees to perform specific tasks for presentation to the
126 full committee:

- 127 • A Process Committee – made up of John, Susan, Ann, and Jim, as well as Mimi Davisson
128 – to work with staff on fleshing out the planning process;
- 129 • A Naming Committee – made up of Linda, Tom, Richard and Russell – to identify members
130 of the Advisory Committee and task forces.

131

132 The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to have a broader sampling of the community that
133 would be actively involved in the process. Advisory Committee members could receive all written
134 materials and be invited to provide comment, could be drawn on for task force members, and
135 could be used as a sounding board at critical stages of the planning process.

136

137 Mark will send to all members the list of the hundred or so people who expressed interest in
138 participating in the planning or were otherwise considered for participation. Members were
139 invited to forward their recommendations, or new names, to Mark or one of the Naming
140 Committee members.

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142 **6. Next Meeting**

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144 The committee will next meet Thursday, December 8, 2005 at 5:00 p.m.

145 The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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147 Minutes prepared by Bill Venio and Mark London.