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

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

In Attendance:  Mimi Davison (MVC commissioner)

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

1. Logistics - Videotaping

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

2. Approval of Minutes

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

3. Roundtable of Steering Committee Members

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

Among the remarks:
It is easy to gripe, but the Vineyard should be proud of and try to replicate our considerable successes such as the MVC, the Land Bank, the Housing Bank, and Edgartown’s dredging of the harbor, which improved shellfishing.

There should be better rapport between the public and boards, perhaps through less formal forums than public hearings.

There is a lot of misinformation about technical issues. The MVC forums were useful. We could have workshops on specific topics, such as with engineers on erosion.

We should strengthen the “public realm” on the Vineyard which is now very limited. There are many No Trespassing and Keep Out signs; fences and vegetation are allowed to remove vistas from being seen from the public roadways. These affect the way we and others perceive our community.

It is a concern that the once-lively town centers are now virtually closed in the off-season while the main stores are on the outskirts of town.

There are stark differences in the perception or image of Martha’s Vineyard versus the reality. Many who come here to work and live are under the impression the Island is a gold mine. But there are a lot of drugs and kids smoking, which reflect a lack of value for their surroundings and community.

There is an impression that ‘planning’ will just be regulations, which makes people cautious. People need to realize the importance of this planning and how it contributes to the value of their property.

We should take an optimistic, long-term view to make some of our seemingly intractable problems look more solvable. We can have appropriate development that enhances community character and the economy at the same time.

As we move to a post-oil economy, we should be looking for more self-sufficiency with respect to food, energy, and shelter.

We should make this plan something that is compelling, that captures the imagination.

4. Meetings With Town Boards, etc.

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

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

- Aquinnah: November 15, 5:30
- Chilmark: November 15, 7:30
- Edgartown: November 14, 4:15
- Oak Bluffs: November 22, time to be determined
Bill Veno informed participants at the October 27 all-Island planning board meeting that the
Steering Committee would like to meet with them. The planning boards members suggested such
a meeting be held after the holidays.

5. Planning Background and Approach to the Planning Process

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

- He gave general information about growth and build-out. The population of the Vineyard
  has grown 157% since 1960, growing seven times faster than Massachusetts as a whole.
  If the whole Island were built out according to existing zoning, there could be an
  additional 40% increase. However if all seasonal homes became year-round, the
  population could almost quadruple. He showed a series of land use maps, including a
  projection of build-out.

- He described the Community Development plans that the MVC prepared for the six Island
towns last year. These analyze the most suitable uses for the “available” (i.e. undeveloped
and unprotected) land, based on a series of criteria. He showed the resulting maps of
open space, housing, and economic development suitability.

- He gave some background information and listed some of the issues for each of the
preliminary list of nine topics that the Comprehensive Island Plan could address, each of
which could be the focus of a task force, namely:

  1. Growth Management
  2. Housing
  3. Economic Development
  4. Open Space and Natural Resources
  5. Man-Made Features and Cultural Resources
  6. Water Resources
  7. Transportation
  8. Community/Public Facilities and Services
  9. Infrastructure

- He suggested that we not look at this as a linear process, attempting to finalize broad
goals and objectives before dealing with specific topic or geographic areas. In his
experience, it is better to look at this as a cyclical process, moving back and forth
between work on general issues and work on specific topics and areas. Dealing with
the specifics helps inform the work on the general.

The following are some comments and suggestions by Committee members:

- It would be useful to overlay maps on aerial photographs, when possible, to increase the
  public’s understanding of the information.
- Committee members should bring in examples of what has worked well in their respective
  fields of interest. Each meeting could include a 15-minute presentation on a specific topic.
- There was a discussion of whether there should be fewer topics and task forces,
  combining, say, housing and economic development. Various members suggested various
  combinations. Some suggested that it would be useful to have task forces do some work
focusing on specific, clearly defined topics, with the Steering Committee ensuring overall
coordination and integration.

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

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

6. Additional Committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Next Meeting

The committee will next meet Thursday, December 8, 2005 at 5:00 p.m.
The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Bill Veno and Mark London.