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**Minutes of the Commission Meeting  
Held on January 26, 2017  
In the Stone Building  
33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

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| P Trip Barnes (E-Tisbury)                | - James Joyce (A-Edgartown)       |
| P Gail Barmakian (A-Oak Bluffs)          | - Michael Kim (A-Governor)        |
| - Yvonne Boyle (A-Governor)              | P Joan Malkin (A-Chilmark)        |
| P Christina Brown (E-Edgartown)          | P Katherine Newman (A-Aquinnah)   |
| - Peter Connell (A-Governor; non-voting) | P Ben Robinson (A-Tisbury)        |
| P Robert Doyle (E-Chilmark)              | P Doug Sederholm (E-West Tisbury) |
| - Josh Goldstein (E-Tisbury)             | P Linda Sibley (E-West Tisbury)   |
| P Fred Hancock (E-Oak Bluffs)            | P Ernie Thomas (A-West Tisbury)   |
| P Leonard Jason (A-County)               | P Richard Toole (E-Oak Bluffs)    |
|  | P James Vercruysse (e-Aquinnah)   |

Staff: Adam Turner (Executive Director), Bill Veno (Senior Planner), Priscilla Leclerc (Senior Transportation Planner), Dan Doyle (Transportation Planner), Christine Flynn (Economic Development and Affordable Housing Planner), Sheri Caseau (Water Resources Planner).

**Chairman James Vercruysse** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**James Vercruysse** welcomed everyone to the first of the commission's periodic meetings devoted solely to planning issues rather than its regulatory responsibilities reviewing Developments of Regional Impact or creation and review of Districts of Critical Planning Concern. These "planning" meetings will help keep commissioners informed of planning that commission staff and others are involved with.

**1. VINEYARD REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

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**Angela (Angie) Grant**, Executive Director of the Island's public bus transportation system (VTA) reviewed the history of the VTA and trends in ridership. While the rapid growth of the past two decades is slowing, ridership continues to grow. The bus routes are fairly set except for season needs on Chappy and for a park-and-ride in Oak Bluffs. The VTA is focusing more attention to improving year round service for Vineyard residents. The VTA is also taking steps to transition to all electric buses.

The transition to electric vehicles will initially cost more, but the vehicles last longer, save on fuel and lubricants, require less maintenance, have zero emissions, and run quietly. She visited California to see several cities and corporate campuses with electric buses and saw a variety of available technologies. Her preference is BYD (Build Your Dreams Co.) buses for the smaller width buses it offers and the 15-year battery warranty. They are used in Vancouver, so there is experience with cold weather. The interiors are customizable for the luggage storage needed by many of the VTA users.

The VTA is looking to place solar panels at its business park location to provide electricity for the building and trickle feed the buses. The buses can also feed back to the chargers. Because of the length of some of the VTA routes, the batteries will need some recharging during the course of the day. For this, the buses use an induction charger imbedded in the roadway that activates while the bus is parked over it while unloading and loading passengers. She anticipated needing induction chargers at Edgartown, West Tisbury, Aquinnah, and Tisbury. While these induction charges are only several minutes long, they provide enough additional electricity for the bus to complete the day. The induction chargers require an energy storage center the size of a 20 or 40 foot long cargo container. The centers themselves can be solar powered and can also feed into town lines and act as emergency power sources. The siting of the units will require creative thinking, which is underway for the Edgartown site.

The VTA is going out to bid for three or four initial buses for delivery in the spring of 2018. The distributive charging locations do not have to be in place for these to be put in service, as there are several routes that are short enough or return to the VTA garage mid-day. Working on their normal rotation of vehicle replacement, the VTA could have 20 electric buses within the next five years and its complete fleet of 30 buses could be by 2025. Angie added that she is speaking with the schools about possible applications.

**Adam Turner** thanked Angie for her presentation and observed how fortunate the Island is to have such a capable manager of the VTA.

**Commissioners** also thanked Angie, stating her presentation was very impressive and asked if the MVC could be of assistance to the VTA. She replied that when reviewing developments, the MVC could promote accommodation and use of transit. Some areas may be appropriate for bus pull-offs or shelters, but the towns are not uniform.

## **2. COMMUNITY COMPACT GRANT – TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER**

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**Adam Turner** informed the commissioners that several members of the Joint Transportation Committee have been discussing the need for engineering services to design local transportation projects for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Vineyard is often dependent upon MassDOT to conduct the engineering design for proposed TIP projects and is subject to timing and ideas of off-island engineers. A decade ago, Dukes County commissioners hired a transportation engineer on a part-time base for several years, but the arrangement did not last. Adam has confirmed with people in Boston about using a Community Compact grant to fund the position at least for the first year. The concept is that the grant will cover the costs for the first year and – based on the towns’ perceived value from the first year – there would be discussion for whether and how to continue with the engineering services. Continuing beyond the first year will involve towns partially, if not fully, funding the position.

Staff has drafted an application for the Community Compact grant program with the input of JTC members. If awarded, a RFP would be placed that anticipates obtaining the services of an engineer from an engineering firm that can spend at least a few days a week on-island.

***Being duly moved and seconded, commissioners voted unanimously in favor of the Executive Director submitting the Community Compact grant application.***

## **3. DEMOGRAPHICS OF MARTHA’S VINEYARD AND ITS TOWNS**

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**Adam Turner** presented a PowerPoint presentation he gave to the Chamber of Commerce last fall touching on variables that included population, age, job type, housing, land value, transportation and land development. Figures were presented by town and then for the entire Island.

Several commissioners expressed alarm and suspicion of the projections that Aquinnah and Chilmark populations will decline in coming decades. Staff explained that the projections were prepared by the UMass Donahue Institute for the entire Commonwealth. The projection model was tweaked somewhat for regional differences, but there were no further adjustments at the town level. Commissioners were reminded that it is a long-term projection whose methodology is not capable of fine tuning at a small geographic scale, and the projections are routinely updated.

#### 4. OTHER BUSINESS

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**Fred Hancock**, Chairman of the Planning and Economic Development (PED) Committee, mentioned that copies of the 4-page Affordable Housing DRI policy from 1998 have been handed out. He asked commissioners to review the policy and that he would be calling a meeting of the PED.

**Linda Sibley** thanked Christine Flynn for providing her copies of all six towns' Housing Production Plans (HPP). **Adam Turner** said they all are now available on the commission's website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

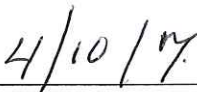
#### DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO DURING THE MEETING

- PowerPoint presentation of Angela Grant re VTA
- PowerPoint presentation of Adam Turner re demographics of the Vineyard towns

  
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Chairman

  
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Date

  
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Clerk-Treasurer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date