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Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on December 3, 2009 In the Stone Building 33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA

IN ATTENDANCE

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

P James Athearn (A – Edgartown)	P Ned Orleans (A – Tisbury)
P Bill Bennett (A- Chilmark)	- Jim Powell (A – West Tisbury)
P John Breckenridge (E – Oak Bluffs)	P Camille Rose (A - Aquinnah)
P Christina Brown (E - Edgartown)	P Doug Sederholm (E – Chilmark)
P Peter Cabana (E – Tisbury)	- Casey Sharpe (A – Oak Bluffs)
- Martin Crane (A – Governor Appointee)	- Linda Sibley (E – West Tisbury)
P Carlene Gatting (County Appointee)	- Holly Stephenson (E – Tisbury)
P Chris Murphy (E- Chilmark)	P Andrew Woodruff (E – West Tisbury)
P Katherine Newman (E –Aquinnah)	

Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Bill Veno (Senior Planner), Paul Foley (DRI Analyst/Planner), Christine Flynn (Economic Development and Affordable Housing Planner)

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

1. ISLAND PLAN – PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioners present: J. Athearn, B. Bennett, J. Breckenridge, C. Brown, P. Cabana, C. Gatting, C. Murphy, K. Newman, N. Orleans, C. Rose, D. Sederholm, A. Woodruff

Christina Brown opened the public hearing, explaining that the meeting's purpose is to hear public input on the draft plan. Commissioner discussion will take place on December 10th.

Jim Athearn, chair of the Steering Committee of the Island Plan, gave a brief overview of the process.

- He explained that there's been a lot of good planning on the Island over the last forty years; the committee digested and analyzed past plans, looking for areas of consistency.
- The Steering Committee developed a process for expressing and digesting ideas.
- All Islanders had the opportunity to participate in the Island Plan through surveys, public forums, internet notices.
- The process took three and a half years. The product truly reflects the spirit of the Island and the hopes we have for the Island.
- The plan is divided into several categories such as housing and commerce. Each section was addressed by a work group of citizens.

- Everyone learned a lot through the process and will continue to learn as the information is disseminated and ideas are implemented.
- He is proud of how the staff put the information and ideas together. The staff also did research and developed maps so we could see things clearly.

Christina Brown said that Edgartown Selectmen have comments but are not able to attend the meeting.

Carlene Gating outlined the response from the Edgartown Selectmen as expressed at the Edgartown Board of Selectmen meeting that she, Jim Athearn, and Mark London attended.

- They had concerns about the sheer volume of the plan because it's hard to present it in a meaningful way to the public.
- It seemed to be the consensus of the Selectmen and Planning Board that the plan needs further vetting. It needs to be broken down into segments or chapters that could be presented in forums, aired on MVTV and debated.
- Issues need to be discussed and debated. For instance, if energy efficiency is pursued, would the cost of new housing be prohibitive for young people. There could be some interesting panels that could come out of what the Selectmen suggest.
- She could see the Commission accepting the plan wholeheartedly and continue the discussion by having forums and discussions with input from planning boards and other boards on the Island.
- The Selectmen would be interested in participating in the forums and debates.
- The consensus was that it's an amazing document but needs to be broken down.

Jim Athearn explained the plan is a list of goal and objectives.

- The plan has no power to create legislation and no power to affect any of the goals. Action might take place in non-profits, or town meetings, or at the Commission.
- Some of the goals and objectives in the plan are about finding what people want and understanding that, if people want specific things, they'll have to be willing to take specific actions. The plan delineates the choices.

Kerry Scott said she was very proud to serve as a member of Island Plan Steering Committee. She is an Oak Bluffs Selectman, but is not speaking on behalf of the Board of Selectmen. Working on the plan was one of the most satisfying things she's done politically. It is a staggeringly well-done document filled with data and hope.

- The Oak Bluffs Selectmen were interested, intrigued and saw the hope. The one reservation they had was on implementation. We're all realizing that the next step is figuring out how to implement some of these suggestions.
- She was proud of the Selectmen because it was clear that the document was taken very seriously. It's so comprehensive.

There was a discussion of beach access.

- **Eric Albert**, Oak Bluffs Planning Board, said that the board has been going over and appreciates the plan. For him, the main thing is the beach access. The main offender is Lambert's Cove. The public should be able to access it. Oak Bluffs feels like it's always giving. But he doesn't see anyone from up-Island wanting to open the beaches. It's at the heart of this – if you can't even walk to the beach.

- **Jim Athearn** said the goal regarding public access is a short statement, but if someone actually convened a group to trade rights and privileges, there could be initiatives.
- **Kathy Newman** responded that this is a template for further discussion. The discussion would take place during the implementation.
- **Eric Albert** said he wants specifics. He wants names. He wants some teeth in it.
- **Kathy Newman** clarified that he's looking for reciprocity between towns that have infrastructure and towns with beaches.
- **Henry Stephenson**, Tisbury Planning Board, commented that it would be helpful in the drafting of this text to be specific and name the beaches in the text. We don't need to change the whole law to deal with public beaches and get a little more public access.
- **Kerry Scott** said, as a member of the Island Plan and as a resident, Oak Bluffs has many public beaches and the only private beach has a public area.

Kerry Scott said that taxpayers have a voice at the Commission, including through the Island Plan. Constantly she was told that non-residents appreciated having a voice at the Island Plan meetings. At some forums there were three generations talking about what they wanted for the Island and the participation included many summer people.

Henry Stephenson said he's confident that this plan will go forward.

- The Commission and Tisbury Planning Board are already coordinating plans and studies. It won't be that difficult to work with the Planning Board on issues.
- They're already working on the connector road and downtown.
- Another huge component of this plan is the synthesis and coordination of different interests and points of view. For instance, energy efficiency and affordable housing overlap and involve many constituents.
- He believes there's a lot of energy to make the plan go forward.

Chris Fried said that as a whole he's very impressed by the plan and it's a wonderful tool if we decide to use it well. His comments have to do with challenges.

- According to the news reports, most or a great many experts say that our number one challenge is stabilizing our climate. He suggested that stabilizing our climate should be the number one challenge so it's not overlooked or buried and he would like it to be much more strongly stated. He suggested wording for a stronger statement.
- He suggested that there are some errors in tense, particularly that the time frame for deterioration should be in present tense.
- He suggested we are growing too much, public access is diminishing, energy is becoming more expensive and scarce
- The comprehensive goal in Section 1.3 should be revised and shortened. He made suggestions for language changes.
- He concluded by saying that Islanders don't contribute largely to the forward motion of climate change, but we should do all that we can here and make decisions. When we're reviewing our energy generating options, we should remain fully aware of the impacts of our energy consumption throughout the world. We should have those things in mind when we make decisions here.

Christina Brown thanked him for his thoughtful reading of the plan.

Jim Osborn spoke about the sections on Livelihood and Commerce. He appreciates that the Island Plan is trying to reach a compromise. We want to preserve our open spaces but we want a stronger, more diverse year-round economy.

- He responded to the comment that the Island should be considering regulating chain businesses. Stop and Shop, NAPA, and the UPS Store already exist on the Island and he asked whether these are impacting the Island in a deleterious manner.
- We have to make sure we're not going to discourage businesses with over-regulation. We could even outreach to businesses we would like to have on the Island so we could set a precedent for good job creation.
- We need more housing near town centers. There are so few apartment buildings. We have to increase the number of apartments in town centers.

Tad Crawford made comments on behalf of himself and Judy Crawford. Three points are important to them: appreciation, ownership, and steering.

- Both Judy and Tad so appreciate the extraordinary work that went into The Plan. They've never seen anything of this quality. The story that's told of what will happen if we continue as is is very compelling.
- Steering relates to how the effort is moved from here. As good as the front end of the document is, the section on implementation needs more work. The Steering Committee needs to ask if that section does what it needs to.
- There ought to be a reconstituted successor organization, particularly people who are going to have some say in implementation. There may be a number of elected officials who would like to be part of the implementation. There's so much interconnection between the initiatives that if there isn't an implementation or steering group, there's a risk of some great initiatives being undertaken but far more isolated than we may wish.
- Regarding ownership, adoption does not require legislation. Adopting this effort is going to require groups to sign on and recognize that there is a lot of work to be done. Some things are well thought-out and documented; others are more like suggestions. The adopters will have to take these great initiatives and ask how to get them to happen. Many batons will have to be handed out.
- They're worried that town initiatives may get dropped. Town committees should be exposed to sections that are relevant to them. There can't be cookie cutter solutions.
- Implementation is the one place that needs work.

Richard Toole, Island resident for 35 years, former member of the Commission, and member of the Steering Committee, spoke about the plan.

- It was a long, drawn-out process, and frustrating at times. There are some people who carried more than their load.
- This plan can be wordsmithed to death. It already has been. The point is we don't have time for that. It's going to be a work in progress. It's a plan for the next fifty years.
- He would like to see the Commission adopt this plan and then figure out how to implement the individual items in towns.
- The best thing about this plan is that it shows what will happen if we don't do anything, particularly through zoning and climate change.

- His big interest is energy. For a house to be built that's not as energy efficient as it can be is ridiculous.
- Please adopt this plan.

Henry Stephenson said he agrees with what Tad and Richard said. There has to be a place that's a home base for this. Ideally the Commission, through staff, should be the home base. There has to be a component that follows up. Without the Commission, we wouldn't have had the plan. He hopes the Commission does create something to monitor what goes forward.

Ned Orleans said there are over 200 strategies in this document, more than half of which will require town action to be implemented.

- The Steering Committee did not try to establish priorities. Priorities will have to be established by the towns. And they'll have to decide what's important to them.
- The Commission will have to help the towns. To work towards implementation, we have to help the towns set priorities on what's important to them.

Christina Brown closed the public hearing.

2. MINUTES

Commissioners present: J. Athearn, B. Bennett, J. Breckenridge, C. Brown, P. Cabana, C. Murphy, K. Newman, N. Orleans, C. Rose, D. Sederholm, A. Woodruff

2.1 Minutes of June 4, 2009

Doug Sederholm moved, and it was duly seconded, to approve the minutes of June 4, 2009, as written. A voice vote was taken. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.

2.2 Minutes of September 17, 2009

Line 169 add *Carlene Gatting* how other agencies in the state are reacting to the Ocean Plan

Ned Orleans moved, and it was duly seconded, to approve the minutes of September 17, 2009, as amended. A voice vote was taken. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.

2.3 Minutes of May 21, 2009

John Breckenridge moved, and it was duly seconded, to approve the minutes of May 21, 2009, as written. A voice vote was taken. In favor: 10. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 1. The motion passed.

3. OTHER

3.1 Polly Hill Donation

Mark London thanked Tim Boland for facilitating the Polly Hill donation of an American Elm to the Commission for the front lawn. The tree is a clone from the one on the Washington Mall and is the first effort in what will be an in-town sustainable yard.

3.2 Land Wind Power DCPC

Doug Sederholm reported that the subcommittee has made progress in developing guidelines for the Land DCPC which will not include Edgartown or school properties, and starts at 150 feet above the ground.

- Because these are on land, the subcommittee tried to be more specific, particularly in regard to noise and setbacks from residences and property lines.
- The Commission should be giving towns guidance, but it's not yet at the point of plugging in the numbers.
- The subcommittee has had good participation.

3.3 Finance Committee

John Breckenridge reported that the finance committee has been meeting regularly and the committee is ready to approve the draft budget for 2011. It will be forwarded to chair persons of each town's finance committee.

- The Commission needs to vote on it by the third week in January.
- He thanked everyone on the committee for working so hard on the draft.
- They've met with the Island FinCom group.
- The overall town share will be smaller, but there is a shift in the assessments that might change the percentage for each town.

3.4 Nominating Committee

Bill Bennett reported that the nominating committee will have a recommendation on December 10, 2009.

3.5 Site Visits

Morning Glory Farm Site Visit: Thursday, December 10, 2009, at 8:30 a.m.

YMCA Interior Site Visit: Friday, December 11, 2009, at 8:30 a.m.

3.6 Minerals Management Service Task Force

Christina Brown reported that the task force met. She has a copy of the draft request for interest, for review. A large offshore area off the coast of Massachusetts is being developed. The MMS has invited comment on the draft request for interest.

3.7 Island Plan

Mark London said staff is working on the main document and is fine-tuning the overview document. They are working to finalize the text and graphics of a summary document in pamphlet form to send out to residents. Electronic and PDF versions will be available, as well as copies on disc. He invited final comments from Commissioners on the text.

Ned Orleans asked how the Commission will proceed regarding Chris Fried's comments. The Steering Committee and Commission will have to evaluate the comments and decide if they want to make some adjustments.

John Breckenridge said Tad Crawford's comments were hitting some really sharp notes. There's so much information and so little detail on implementation.

Doug Sederholm wanted to note that what struck him was Richard Toole's comment that the document could be wordsmithed to death. If there's something that really jumps out at Commissioners, it should be changed, but he doubts that the document that's submitted next week will require any significant wordsmithing.

Bill Veno said staff has worked with Chris Fried for the last month. They added an eleventh goal based on his suggestion, adjusting the language to be specific to the Vineyard.

Mark London said that comments that come by e-mail are generally responded to.

Peter Cabana said Chris Fried's comments could be moved to number one because there will be trade-offs.

Ned Orleans said moving the goal changes the structure of how the committee set the goals up in four categories.

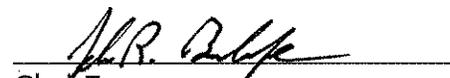
Chris Murphy said that Doug Sederholm's comments regarding wordsmithing are on the money. The document is good. The trick is how the Commission accepts the document and under what premise. The words used in accepting the plan are going to be key. That's the important piece of this.

Doug Sederholm said he's impressed that the first challenge is that growth is unsustainable for the Vineyard, which may be the priority challenge.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.


Chairman

5/20/10
Date


Clerk-Treasurer

5/20/10
Date