Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on May 17, 2005
At the Offices of the Martha’s Vineyard Commission

Present: Melinda Loberg, Chair; Bob Ford, Richard Combra, Jr., Steve Berlucci, Fred Lapiana, Tristan Israel, Derek Cimeno, Harriet Barrow, Jay Wilbur, Angie Grant, Dan Greenbaum

Observers: Jo-Ann Taylor, Kerry Scott, Chris Fried, Srinivas Sattoor

Minutes

The minutes of the May 4, 2005 meeting were approved as amended.

Existing Bridge

Information from MassHighway

• Mark just received the three most recent inspection reports from Steve McLaughlin of MassHighway. He distributed a copy to Fred Lapiana for Tisbury, Richard Combra Jr. for Oak Bluffs, Steve Berlucchi for the County, and Dan Greenbaum;

• An explanatory covering letter from MassHighway’s Chief Engineer should be coming within the next few days.

• Steve’s understanding is that John Cogliano, the new Secretary of Transportation, is presently reviewing the situation in order to reply to Senator O’Leary and to the Committee.

Bridge Condition

• Steve Berlucchi said that the inspection report indicates that the bridge deck is one integrated element that is in very poor condition. It cannot be partially repaired but the whole deck would have to be replaced which doesn’t make sense on the unstable substructure.

• The engineer who was on-Island as part of the RFP process for the permanent bridge and talked to Fred thought the bascule abutments could be stabilized by installing some new temporary pilings on both sides of the bridge with temporary beams under draw span.

• The cost of repairs would probably have to be funded exclusively with State funds, but might be able to be financed with federal funds if they are part of the larger construction project for the permanent bridge.
• Mark suggested that it would be useful to have a direct discussion of technical issues between some members of the Committee and MassHighway engineers.

• Bob Maciel, bridge tender, is very familiar with the bridge and has considerable historical information about the bridge operation, although he does not have engineering expertise.

**Contingency Plan**

• This is needed regardless of whether the one-bridge or two-bridge approach is taken.

• The bridge was closed last Friday because of electrical problems with the barrier. The back-up on the Edgartown - Vineyard Haven Road extended beyond the town line (124 vehicles) by lunch time.

• The Committee will ask MassHighway in writing to prepare a contingency plan for the bridge itself. This could include monitoring of deflection to anticipate problems, preparedness to make emergency repairs, and a good system of notification of the Vineyard community about temporary bridge closures. (Mark)

• The Vineyard community should prepare an emergency management plan for the possibility that the bridge would be inoperable or impassible. This could include public information and alternate plans for boating and for vehicular traffic. Melinda and Steve still have to contact the emergency managers and police/fire officials. This will be the main topic for the next meeting.

**Recommendation to Boards of Selectmen re Independent Evaluation**

• Melinda, Richard, Fred, Steve and Mark will draft a recommendation to the Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Boards of Selectmen suggesting hiring an engineering firm to give an independent professional opinion, and to subsequently monitor deflections if the engineers recommend this. (Melinda, Richard, Fred, Steve, Mark)

• They will outline the scope of services to include the following.

  1. Review recent and older inspection reports. Visit the bridge. Speak to various interested parties (including MassHighway, town and county officials, etc.).

  2. Give an opinion about the feasibility of continuing to use the existing bridge (with or without the draw portion operating) until a temporary bridge could be built (2-3 years) and/or until a permanent bridge is built (6-8 years). This should include the possibility of implementing preventative measures as well as possible approaches to contingency plans of emergency response measures that could be implemented should the monitoring or other factors indicate that the safe continuing operation of the bridge is jeopardized.

  3. Give an opinion about the utility of installing accurate measuring equipment on the bridge and setting up an ongoing monitoring program to measure movement, in order to help provide advance warning of imminent settlement or collapse.

• Steve will seek an estimate for the contract budget for about a week’s work. (Steve)

• The recommendation will be brought to the Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen by the Highway Superintendent, and to the Tisbury Board of Selectmen by the DPW Director.
• After the opinion has been received, the group will suggest that it be discussed at a joint meeting of the two Boards of Selectmen.

**Temporary/Permanent Bridges**

**Permitting**

• The Committee will ask MassHighway to clarify in writing what permitting is required and to give us regular updates of the status, for both the temporary and the permanent bridges. Are certain permits not required because a bridge is temporary? Because it is funded through a bond bill? Because it is a footprint bridge?  
  (Mark)

• Harriet will ask Senator O’Leary’s aide for an update on the permitting.  
  (Harriet)

• Steve will bring in the language of bond bill.  
  (Steve)

• Steve will show plans for the temporary bridge and options for the permanent bridge to the Oak Bluffs and Tisbury conservation commissions. He will bring comments back to the Committee for forwarding to MassHighway. Tristan and Derek will accompany him for the meeting in Tisbury and Bob Ford in Oak Bluffs.  
  (Steve, Tristan, Derek, Bob)

• Gary Kassof, U.S. Coast Guard, will visit on May 25 with respect to permitting the temporary bridge and to the Committee’s request about a ruling that the bridge could remain in the down position in case of failure. Jay, Melinda, Harriet, Dave Grunden and Jo-Ann will meet him.  
  (Jay, Melinda, Harriet, Dave, Jo-Ann)

**Other**

• Next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 1.

Minutes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor and Mark London.