

**Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on June 1, 2005**  
**At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission**

Present: Melinda Loberg, Chair: Bob Ford, Steve Berlucchi, Fred LaPiana, Tristan Israel, Derek Cimeno, Harriet Barrow, Jay Wilbur, Dan Greenbaum, Mark London

Observers: Jo-Ann Taylor, Chris Fried, Mimi Davisson, Bob Ford, Bill Veno, Bob Maciel, Lois Craine (VTA)

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### **Minutes**

The minutes of the May 17, 2005 meeting were approved with amendments.

### **Existing Bridge**

- Condition
  - The bridge tender reported that, in his opinion, the bridge is stable, since the extensive repairs carried out two years ago.
  - Chris Fried noted that the inspection reports have several mentions of inadequate maintenance and do not show any indication of concern about settlement.
  - Others expressed continuing concern for failure of the deck as well as possible settlement, noting that the repairs stabilized lateral movement only.
  - It was noted that the three recent inspection reports sent to the committee by Mass Highways were prepared by reputable, independent consultants.
  - Bob Ford pointed out that, in his letter dated 5/17/05, the MassHighway Chief Engineer said: "The existing bridge is structurally deficient. . . . Further deterioration may require closing." and "The design of the permanent bridge is a priority for Mass Highway and will be constructed as soon as it is designed and permitted."
- Scope of Services for Consultant Review
  - Some Committee members questioned the towns paying for a peer review, since the cost of this review will apparently be much greater than originally discussed and the inspections were done by independent consultants; they agreed that there was a need for a contingency plan but thought that MassHighway should prepare it. Other Committee members noted that it took MassHighway more than half a year to do a five-day repair and felt that the towns would be in a better position to work with MassHighway to move ahead with a contingency plan if it had independent recommendations as to possible approaches.
  - Fred LaPiana distributed a draft, based on a discussion by the sub-committee.
  - It was agreed to make the following changes.

- Include review of the maintenance history for the past 5 years and assess its impact on the bridge stability.
- Stress the need for improved maintenance and monitoring, rather than duplication of the technical review previously done by the independent consultants for MassHighway
- The consultant should contact District 5.
- The consultant should suggest some approaches to contingency planning, rather than try to produce a contingency plan
- o The subcommittee will reconvene to edit the draft scope, and will then send it out.  
*(Melinda, Richard, Fred, Steve, Mark)*
- US Coast Guard Site Visit
  - o Several members reported on the USCG site visit on May 25, 2005 which took place during a Nor'easter and where they were shown a video taken by Phil Hale of the impact of the height of the storm on boats moored in the inner harbor. (see addendum – preliminary notes).
  - o The Coast Guard was told that MassHighway has not properly informed them about bridge closures and changes to the times of openings over the past five years including the closure for the past winter. Jay Wilbur said that some USCG officials were aware, even if Gary Kassof was not.
  - o In light of USCG's representatives' stated position that the bridge would have to remain open to boats in the event of failure, the Committee determined to:
    - Write to USCG, requesting again a public hearing to determine a contingency ruling that would allow vehicular traffic in the event of a bridge failure prior to the opening of a new bridge. *(Melinda, Mark)*
    - Work on securing safe berthing alternatives for boats in an emergency.
    - Work on determining/securing support of public officials (hospital, EMT's, selectmen, police, fire, harbor masters) for the request for a ruling that would allow vehicular traffic.

### **Permits for Bridge Construction (Temporary/Permanent)**

- The USCG will hold a public hearing and comment period before October, probably in July, regarding the plans for the temporary drawbridge. It is not supposed to deal with the one-bridge/two-bridge issue, or on the contingency ruling to leave the existing bridge down in the event of failure, although these issues will likely come up.
- There has been no response as yet regarding the Committee's request of MassHighway regarding permitting questions from the last meeting.

### **Other**

- A meeting with the Police Chiefs regarding traffic contingency planning will be June 14, 9:30, at the County Administration Building. Our purpose is to learn what emergency plans are in place for traffic in the event of a bridge closure and to bring them up to date on the work of the Bridge Committee. Chuck Cotnoir, County Emergency Coordinator, will attend.

- Steve Berlucchi distributed a document on the implications of construction financed through bonding.

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 15 at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor and Mark London

ADDENDUM 1

**USCG Drawbridge site visit  
May 25, 2005, 9:30 A.M.**

(Interim notes by Jo-Ann Taylor – USCG write-up to follow)

Present:

*USCG personnel:* Gary Kassof (Bridge Program Manager, First Coast Guard District, NY, NY) N.E. Mpras (Chief, Office of Bridge Administration, Washington, D.C.), 2 other Washington, D.C. staff [Jay and others: do you have their names?];

*Drawbridge Committee:* Melinda Loberg (Chair), Harriet Barrow, Jay Wilbur;

*Others:* Bob Maciel, Phil Hale, Jo-Ann Taylor

- USCG will soon issue a public hearing notice to permit the temporary drawbridge, permit process expected to be completed by end of September
  - USCG was advised that several present favored a 1-bridge solution, eliminating the temporary bridge
  - USCG was also advised of the status of the Drawbridge Committee and towns' recommendations
- USCG was advised of need to keep the bridge open to boats, particularly in case of hurricanes or NE winds >50 knots (including slide show by Phil Hale), and in order to keep boatyards and boat services accessible
  - USCG was provided figures on past bridge openings and numbers of boats served.
  - USCG was advised of MassHighway past unauthorized deviations from drawbridge ruling and poor maintenance record
  - USCG was advised of need for emergency vehicles, particularly ambulances, to keep the road open; suggestion for possible contingency medical emergencies: helicopter transport from airport
  - USCG was advised that the draw works well, since the last repairs
  - USCG (Kassof) advised that, given the expressed need to keep the bridge open to boats, without an effective contingency berthing plan the Coast Guard apparently will not agree to leave the bridge in the down position to allow vehicular traffic to continue in case of bridge failure
- USCG personnel and harbormaster continued on to tour the site by boat