

Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee
Minutes of the Meeting held on August 11, 2005
At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

Present: Melinda Loberg, Chair: Fred LaPiana, Tristan Israel, Derek Cimeno, Steve Berlucchi, Mark London

Observers: Jo-Ann Taylor, Chris Fried, Bob Ford, Harriet Barrow, Dan Greenbaum, Denys Wortman, Lois Craine (VTA), Scott Darling and Paul Norton (Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers)

1. Independent Review

The purpose of the meeting was to allow Paul Norton and Scott Darling, Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, to discuss their mandate with respect to the existing bridge. They noted that they have about forty years experience, mostly in bridge design, often worked for MassHighway and had performed inspections on the Drawbridge, but come to this mandate with no pre-conceived notions. They asked to hear from committee members and others what they expect to result from the consulting project.

Committee members offered the following history and comments about the project.

- There was concern that the largest amount in their consulting budget was devoted to the report and were asked whether they could shift resources to other categories.
- The Committee and towns reluctantly agreed to the two-bridge solution because of risk of losing vehicular access in the event of a failure. The impacts of closure to vehicular traffic would be severe to the economy, public safety, public transit, etc. However:
 - some still doubt the need/advisability for the temporary bridge;
 - some fear that the temporary bridge could be in place for a generation;
 - cost estimates have dramatically increased since then (April 2004); temporary from \$2 million to \$3 million, permanent from \$12 million to \$24 million;
 - the visual impact of the 60-70' tower of the temporary bridge will be severe and having two construction projects will be disruptive.
- Even with the temporary bridge, we need to be sure that the existing bridge will last for two years. What maintenance or repairs program will increase the possibility of this?

- Could the existing bridge possibly last more than two years, especially the 6-8 years required to move directly to construction of a permanent bridge? With what maintenance or repairs?
- Water quality issues concern dredging/fill and/or possible relocation of channel. After review by the Mass Estuaries Project (in conjunction with a larger nutrient study), the Committee's preliminary recommendation is to move navigational channel 50' toward Vineyard Haven (within the existing wider physical channel and authorized channel), in order to improve sight distances for boats.
- Lagoon Pond is an important commercial and recreational scallop resource; one of the last in the Commonwealth
- Should deflection be more carefully monitored? How and how often? What would the measurements mean in terms of decision-making?
- Are there preventive measures that should be taken now? e.g. enforce weight limits on trucks crossing the bridge.
- What if the approaches fail? Is there a way to temporarily repair a likely failure so the bridge could continue to operate?

Paul Norton said that the report will be simple and they will reallocate resources within the budget to deal adequately with the other aspects of the mandate. He summarized what he understood the expectations to be, based on what he had heard.

- Undertake a risk assessment to identify the major risks of failure of the existing bridge, and identify what could be done to prevent/mitigate each type of failure with respect to maintenance, operations (load limits, number of openings), preventative repairs, monitoring, contingency/emergency repairs (including physical, administrative and financial constraints and implications).
- Analyze these risks over time – particularly 2-year and 8-year horizons.
- Analyze any risks to the existing bridge associated with the construction of the temporary bridge.
- Estimate how long each mitigation measure should last.

They will give no recommendations directly regarding the one-bridge/two-bridge issue, although the conclusions of the study of the existing bridge would play a role in these discussions.

The consultants will meet individually with selected Committee members, as outlined in the contract.

The consultant should make a preliminary presentation of their conclusions in mid-September, after which the report should be finalized.

The Committee agreed to allocate additional funds for a public presentation of the final report, with Q&A, to be filmed by MVTV. (This would be covered by the contingency funding built into the budget.)

Minutes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor and Mark London.