

Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee
Minutes of the Meeting held on October 21, 2005
At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

Present: Melinda Loberg (Chair), Fred LaPiana, Tristan Israel, Steve Berlucchi, Mark London, Dave Grunden, Derek Cimeno, Jay Wilbur

Observers: Jo-Ann Taylor, Bob Ford, Harriet Barrow, Dan Greenbaum, Lois Craine

1. Minutes

Minutes of the Meetings of August 3 and August 11 were approved as presented.

2. Correspondence and Communications

- Correspondence was received from Sterling Wall, a Chilmark boater who attended the August 25 session. He suggested engaging a representative from MassHighway and from the U.S. Coast Guard in the discussion. Jo-Ann will send a response.
- Correspondence was received from John Folino, a boater, who suggested that a predictable opening schedule is of paramount importance, or the alternative of a fixed span with a 60' center clearance at high tide. Jo-Ann will send a response.
- Mark reported that an e-mail was sent to Steve McLaughlin, MassHighway, asking for clarifications noted in the last meeting (see appendix). There has been no response yet.
- Tristan reported a suggestion by Phil Combra to extend the Eastville jetty significantly to provide additional sheltered mooring space and eliminating the need for larger boats to use the Lagoon. Jay reported that this option was studied fifteen years ago; a cost-benefit analysis performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that the cost then would have been \$15 million and was not even close to meeting their criteria for project funding.
- Mark reported requests from the Chilmark Selectmen and from the Martha's Vineyard Commission for providing for Island-wide participation. Steve Berlucchi noted that an Edgartown and a West Tisbury selectmen had also made similar requests. There was brief discussion of widening the committee membership, but the consensus was to continue the membership as is, and to hold a broad spectrum public forum after the results from the consultant's report have been digested, possibly co-hosted by MVC, and possibly including the impact of the possible drawbridge closure on the "Blinker" intersection.

3. Existing Bridge – Independent Review

- Several items were discussed regarding details to finalize the consultant’s report. Fred will relate them to the consultant for amendment. It was agreed to wait and send a finalized copy to MassHighway.
 - There is no mention of the theory related verbally at the last meeting that the wooden piles may be fatigued or fractured below the mud level. There may not be data available, but some explanation would be desirable. Would adding supports be useful?
 - Remove the apostrophe from “town’s” on the cover.
 - Clarify items 5 and 6 on page 16 of the draft; there is some confusion among the readers of the draft regarding the recommendations for repairs to the concrete decks of the approaches. Does item 6 apply to the whole slab, or is it an amplification of item 5 dealing with spot repairs.
 - There is no mention of the potential discussed at the last meeting to weld the bridge shut.
- There was some discussion of this notion, suggesting that welding the bridge shut now could help to stabilize the bridge and possibly make it last longer whereas welding it after it had failed would be less useful. On the other hand, it was felt unlikely that the U.S. Coast Guard would agree to simply close the drawbridge to boating traffic now and for an extended period of time. There was a consensus to continue to work on a solution to the boaters’ safety issues.
- Mark/Srinivas will contact Bob Gregory, District 5 Engineer, regarding the procedures/rights of the towns to limit and enforce weight and speed restrictions on the bridge and approaches, particularly if the limits may be enforced selectively.
- Replacing the deck in order to maintain the existing bridge operational for 6-8 years might well take 3 or 4 years, might cost the same as the temporary bridge, and raises the question of how traffic would be rerouted during construction.
- There was some discussion of including an alternative in the bid for the bridge repairs in which the contractor would be asked to maintain and operate the bridge in working order for a period of time, say 6 years, assuming the risk of the bridge failure with a substantial penalty clause. The advantage is that the contractor would quantify the risk assessment in deciding whether or what to bid. It was suggested that this would only be a true test of the contractor assumed the risk of the full financial impact to the Island of the bridge being closed during the peak summer season, which could be millions of dollars per week, and if the penalty was set that high, it is unlikely that any contractor would bid on this option. It was also suggested that there didn’t seem to be a mechanism to allow the contractor to reimburse the community for its economic loss, since any penalty would go to

MassHighway. Also, it was pointed out that the risk associated with the bridge being closed to traffic is not only economic but also to public safety, particularly with respect to emergency access.

- The question of the Coast Guard's position on keeping the bridge in the up position in case of failure was discussed. Tristan suggested that a strong case could be made that the bridge should be kept open to vehicular traffic for public safety reasons. Jay said that similar arguments could be made for keeping the bridge up. Would the Coast Guard agree to have the bridge kept down, and have it raised manually, with the internal mechanism or with a crane? It was pointed out that the consultant's study said that the breakdown of the mechanical lifting mechanism was not one of the highest risk potential causes of failure.

4. Temporary Bridge

- The Coast Guard permit has not yet been issued. The Committee might want to contact the Coast Guard to speed up the permit.
- Temporary easements are needed for the construction. Mark will ask MassHighway if the easements are needed before the project can be bid. Steve had contacted John Bugbee (Tisbury Town Administrator) to find out whether it could be on the ballot for this November's Town Meeting, but was informed that it was too late. Tristan will ask Town Counsel if the easements may be granted by the Board of Selectmen, rather than waiting for the next Annual Town Meeting in April 2006; the documents are not clear and the Town might not even be the owner.

5. Other

- A representative from Bill Delahunt's office is on the Island today and it was suggested that Committee members go and discuss funding for the permanent bridge and Coast Guard issues.

6. Next meeting

Tuesday, November 1, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor and Mark London.

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Mark London

From: Mark London [mlondon@mvcommission.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2005 8:19 AM
To: Steve McLaughlin
Cc: Merrienne "Casey" Sharpe; Tristan Israel; Todd Alexander; Steve Berlucchi; Srinivas Sattoor; Russell Smith; Richard Combra Jr.; Melinda Loberg; Mark London; Jo-Ann Taylor; Jay Wilbur; Fred Lapiana; Derek Cimeno; Daniel Greenbaum; Bob Ford; Bill Wilcox; Bill Venno; Angela Grant; Chris Fried; Bernard McCourt; john.blundo@state.ma.us
Subject: Lagoon Pond Drawbridge

LAGOON POND DRAWBRIDGE COMMITTEE

c/o The Martha's Vineyard Commission, Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, MA, 02557, 508-693-3453

Steven McLaughlin, Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Project Engineer
MassHighway

October 11, 2005

Steve,

As we discussed on the phone last week, the Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee asked me to follow up on your e-mail of August 2 – which replied to most, but not all, of the issues raised in our June 14 and July 21 notes – and to give you an update on other issues.

Design of the Temporary Bridge

- We would very much appreciate receiving a written response to our comments on the temporary bridge. We would like to know which ones are being dealt with and, for the ones that are not being dealt with, why not.
- We are especially concerned about the safety issues related to bicycle and pedestrian movement. As you know, there is a lot of bicycle use on the Vineyard and the most heavily used route is along Beach Road. Presently, people in the vicinity of the drawbridge ride on the shoulders on both sides of the road. If we understand correctly, the temporary drawbridge has no shoulders and a 5' multi-user path on the lagoon side. There is concern that this is not a safe solution.
 - The 5' on the Lagoon side appears to be too narrow. In that this is a cantilevered section, it should be possible – even at this late stage of design development – to widen this by a few feet, perhaps even more except right in front of the house.
 - Of particular concern is what bicyclists on the ocean side of Beach Road are to do. Is the plan to have them cross the road just before and after the drawbridge to get to the path? If so, where will this happen? It would appear preferable that a multi-user path be added on the ocean side as well. Again, since this would involve a lightweight structure cantilevered off the bridge, it should be still possible to make this modification. This would presumably

involve adding this path after the existing bridge is demolished and removing it when construction of the superstructure of the permanent bridge takes place.

- Has the opinion of the MassHighway Bicycle Coordinator and District 5 engineers (such as Mark Carmichael) been sought with respect to the bicycle and pedestrian safety of this proposal?

Permitting

- Could you clarify the status of the Water Quality Certification, the Army Corps / CZM, the Coast Guard permits? Unless the Committee changes its position with respect to the one-bridge/two-bridge solution, we will follow up with the Coast Guard to encourage them to issue the permit as soon as possible.
- Your note said that National Marine Fisheries has extended the period in which work can take place in the water from January 15 to May 30 (you also mention a 7½ -month period; is this a typo?). Is there anything we can do to support your request to have the Army Corps also extend the time period for working in the water?

RFP for Permanent Bridge

- You said that the deadline for RFPs was October 27. Could you please let us know what happens, whether you will be requesting technical proposals, and what the resulting timing will be?
- With respect to having design/planning professionals as team members, you mention that you intend to have an architect prepare renderings of the various bridge designs and possibly have a landscape architect involved if there is an area that could support vegetation. This misses the point of our suggestion of involving design/planning professionals as active team members from the earliest stages of the process, involving them in the planning and design of the bridge structure itself, not just the peripheral treatment. Implementing the Governor's policy of promoting community and context sensitive transportation design means approaching projects in new ways. Having design/planning professionals work with the transportation and civil engineers as active team members would seem to be a very desirable approach, especially in dealing with a project in a community like the Vineyard, where these community and context integration issues are so important. (I believe that I mentioned my experience at the City of Montreal where the Bridge Department involved a senior design/planning professional as a full-fledged team member in several bridge projects, where their input helped identify solutions which resulted in much more successful and widely accepted projects, within the same overall budget.)

Timetable

- We would very much appreciate receiving the current timetable for the various phases of both bridge projects, recognizing that they are subject to change. Is the timetable in our June 14 memo generally correct?

Existing Bridge

- Last Wednesday, we received a preliminary verbal report on Lichtenstein's study of possible measures to extend the life of the existing bridge. They indicated, among other things, that there does not appear to be a layer of peat contributing to unpredictable instability of the bridge. They also questioned other aspects of the analysis of the situation that had been presented by

MassHighway. They identified twelve possible failure mechanisms and identified possible preventative or corrective measures for each one. Lichtenstein did not and will not take a position about the relative merits of the one-bridge or two-bridge solution, although the engineer commented that he didn't think the existing bridge would last. We are expecting the complete report in a week and will then meet to discuss what position the Committee will take. We will no doubt be in touch after that meeting.

Design Parameters for Permanent Bridge

- The August 25 public meeting on the design of the permanent bridge went off well. I have sent you under separate cover a DVD of the meeting and notes from the meeting. The Committee will discuss the issue at a future meeting and will then formulate suggestions.

Finally, in order to improve communications with the Vineyard community, and avoid any misunderstandings about the implementation of this complex project in a very sensitive location over the coming years, it really would be desirable that you meet the full Drawbridge Committee a few times a year, either on the Vineyard or in Boston so that we can discuss and resolve any issues directly.

Mark London

cc John Blundo
Bernard McCourt