

Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee
Minutes of the Meeting held on February 22, 2006
At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

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

Observers: Srinivas Sattoor, Chris Fried, Bob Ford

1. Minutes

- The minutes of December 7, 2005 meeting were approved.
- The minutes of February 8, 2006 meeting were approved.

2. Boating Plan Subcommittee

Jay Wilbur, chair of the subcommittee, reported on its work.

- Hurricanes are generally easier to deal with. There is more notice and people take it more seriously. Small boats can haul out themselves. With larger boats, insurance companies pay to have them hauled out. Boats can go to Tashmoo (there are no town moorings but the harbormaster can assign people to unused private moorings). Bigger boats can go to Edgartown, to Falmouth, or to home ports
- Nor'easters more problematic. There is less advance notice. Some people assume that, because they are on a mooring they are safe, and don't realize that the outer harbor is exposed. Conditions in the outer harbor can be worse than in a hurricane. The Harbormaster must do more notification. People are confused, maybe terrified at the prospect of going to sea to seek safer shelter, even just in the Lagoon, let alone going to Tashmoo or Falmouth.
- The availability of moorings in Falmouth needs to be clarified. There would probably not be space in the inner harbor but there might be in other locations, especially since many local boats might be hauled out in case of storm.
- Part of the contingency plan would be opening the drawbridge using a generator truck or manually, depending on the problem. Using a crane would probably not work, as the lifting has to be done very precisely to avoid racking. It would be useful that MassHighway prepare by doing a mock-up practice and outlining the procedure of how to quickly implement such an operation.

Tristan suggested that the committee outline a policy that would then be adopted by the Board of Selectmen, outlining what boaters should do in case of impending storm: A) if the drawbridge is operating, and B) if the drawbridge is not operating (pointing out that the bridge is being rebuilt). This could be printed in a pamphlet and distributed to boaters. MassHighway might fund this as mitigation for the drawbridge.

The subcommittee will meet again to finalize its recommendations and to clarify the follow-up actions.

3. Temporary Bridge

Luisa Paiewonsky raised the possibility of modifying the color of the temporary bridge. Presently, it is proposed that they be galvanized, which would be very shiny at first and would gradually get dull. The committee discussed that it might be preferable that it be painted the color of water towers, a muted grey-blue designed to disappear against the sky, although it was pointed out that many views of the bridge would be against the background of vegetation. It could also be painted a stronger color. The Committee and MassHighway should also clarify the design and color of the railings.

Mark will make the following requests to Steve McLaughlin:

- Ask the bridge designer to prepare variations of the visual simulations already prepared of the bridge, to show various color options;
- Ask for a copy of the latest version of the bridge design drawings including the adjacent bike paths, sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Ask for a copy of the Coast Guard permit.

4. Joint Meetings of Boards of Selectmen

Yesterday, there was a joint meeting of the Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Boards of Selectmen at which there was discussion of the drawbridge including possible speed and weight limits. Casey Sharpe and John Bugbee will coordinate the preparation of a joint letter to MassHighway.

Tristan asked the Drawbridge Committee to prepare a preliminary list of issues to be addressed. These include:

- Speed and weight limits including the possibility of establishing the construction zone soon so these limits could be implemented,
- Establishment of a truck route,
- Construction staging,
- Compensation for police officers doing traffic mitigation (e.g. Blinker, Five Corners, Look Street intersection);
- Possibility of temporary and longer-term improvements at the Blinker.

The MVC will:

- Review past discussions to see whether there are other items to include, and
- Outline alternative truck routes for discussion by the Boards of Selectmen.

5. Permanent Bridge

Mark participated in the selection process for the permanent bridge engineer. MassHighway has selected Parsons. Luisa Paiewonsky has said that this will be a prototype of a community and context sensitive design process.

Mark asked and Steve McLaughlin agreed that the Drawbridge Committee would have an opportunity to provide input to the preparation of Parson's final scope of services. Steve could come to the Island in March to meet the Committee, primarily to discuss the scope of services.

Mark prepared the enclosed memo about bridge design issues, in order to initiate discussion about issues that could be included in the scope, and also to identify issues that the Committee needs to work on over the next four to six months, so that we have information ready for when Parson starts to work.

Committee members had the following comments on the issues raised in the memo:

- In order to achieve an extension of the adjacent open space network from Eastville Beach along the shore of Lagoon Pond, it was pointed out that Dr. Strock owns part of beach facing the Lagoon on the Oak Bluffs side and would likely be amenable to helping find a solution for the community's benefit.
- There was a discussion of the possibility of eliminating the electrical poles along Beach Road. Power supply should be on the ocean side of the bridge and could be underground. The only reason for a power line on the Lagoon side is for the house and if it were not there, all the poles could be eliminated. The power for the bridge tender's house could be supplied from Oak Bluffs.
- The Tisbury seawall needs to be repaired and this should be coordinated with the bridge construction.
- Having a wider new bridge would lead to an increase in the height of the seawall facing the ocean. This would have visual impacts, could make it more difficult to create a pedestrian walkway there, and would be more vulnerable to wave action compared to having the waves break up on the rap.
- In order to narrow the bridge, we should consider reducing the size of the sidewalks. Alternative, it might be possible to eliminate the sidewalk on the Lagoon side, widening the MUP to 10 or 12' to allow pedestrians to share it.
- Accommodating the MUP on the Tisbury side of the Lagoon might require shifting the road slightly towards the ocean, in order to avoid resource areas.
- The possibility of acquiring the house should be further explored including whether Island resources (e.g. Land Bank) could be involved, given its potential critical role in the open space network and in waterfront access.

6. Next meetings

Wednesday, March 8, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. to continue the discussion of the issues related to the permanent drawbridge.

Wednesday, March 15, 2005, late morning, to meet Steve McLaughlin about the scope of services (to be confirmed, and subsequently confirmed for Tuesday, March 21, 10:30).

Minutes prepared by Mark London.

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