

**Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee
Minutes of the January 12, 2006 Meeting
at MassHighway, Boston**

Attending:

From Mass Highway:

John Blundo, Chief Engineer

Tom Donnelly, Chief of Staff – Commissioner’s Office

Bernard (Skip) McCourt, District 5 Highway Director

Alexander Bardow, Bridge Engineer

David Anderson, Project Management Engineer

Steve McLaughlin, Project Manager

From the Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee:

Tristan Israel, Tisbury Selectman

Fred LaPiana, Tisbury Department of Public Works

Steve Berlucchi, County Engineer

Melinda Loberg, Chair

Harriet Barrow (TWI) and Chris Fried, Engineer - observers

The purpose of this meeting was to follow up the December meeting some members of the bridge committee had with District 5 of Mass Highway regarding the Lichtenstein Engineering consultant report. District 5 submitted the report to the State for its consideration and today the committee would have an opportunity to discuss the State’s plans for implementing the recommendations contained in the report.

- Speed limit and weight considerations: The Committee shared the letter it had distributed to truckers through the SSA. Officials encouraged the Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Boards of Selectmen to submit a “commercial vehicle exclusion request” for trucks over 2 ½ tons. There is an official packet of materials available for download for this purpose. The Boards of Selectmen may also apply for a temporary reduction of the speed limit.
- Monitoring: District 5 agreed to set up monitoring of the bridge and requested that the local DPW arrange to take the regular readings.
- Cement condition and repair: District 5 may use ground-penetrating radar to assess the condition of the decks. The State is concerned that once repairs are begun to the cement, there will be nothing solid to connect to it and it could

eventually encompass the entire decking. They state that it may be better to leave it alone until a breach occurs.

- Pile caps: District 5 intends to take another look at the questionable pile caps on their late January visit.
- Regular inspections: The bridge is on a stepped-up inspection schedule of once every six months.
- Opening Mechanism: There is a manual mechanism for opening the bridge. District 5 stated that it has revitalized its ability to work, although opening the bridge in this manner is time-consuming. Mr. LaPiana stated that having this ability may assist the Coast Guard in its deliberations about allowing the bridge to remain closed if it could be opened manually in the event of foul weather.

In concluding their discussion, Mr. Blundo explained that the State intended to seek an independent analysis of the report while undertaking some of the more routine repairs immediately. A group is scheduled to be at the bridge to begin repair work on the concrete deck on January 30.

The group had a frank discussion of the concerns raised by the island:

- Safety concerns of the temporary bridge: The Committee again raised the issue of the narrowness of the temporary bridge and the safety concerns that imposes on bicyclists in particular. While Steve McLaughlin stated that the bridge design could probably add two additional feet to the walkway, the exact amount to be added could not be known until construction. Mr. Blundo stated that bicyclists would most likely be requested to walk their bicycles across the walkway portion of the bridge.
- Funding stream and timetable for the permanent bridge: Mr. Blundo stated strongly that funding for the permanent bridge was built into the State's budgets and earmarked for the Lagoon Pond Bridge. He did not foresee any reason that this funding would not be readily available on the schedule previously submitted. Mr. Israel commented that until money was in hand, it was not guaranteed. The finalist for the design of the permanent bridge will be selected by mid-February. The designer will have a notice to proceed within two months after the selection.

- Expedited construction schedule: Mr. Israel requested an expedited construction phase for both the temporary and permanent bridges. The towns of OB and Tisbury should request two eight-hour shifts from the state prior to their letting of the contracts. The towns will seek public input in advance of this request. The Committee requested that they be given a preliminary schedule of anticipated construction in order to prepare for traffic management and public information.
- Permitting issues: The permit for the temporary bridge has not yet been signed by the Coast Guard. And the design for the temporary bridge is in its fourth re-examination prior to final approval. Permitting for the permanent bridge will begin as soon as the design is in place and is still targeted for November 2006. Should the one-bridge solution be undertaken, the State would have to start again with the bidding process for the designer and the permitting would be more scrutinized as there would be additional fill in wetlands and piles put in eelgrass beds. Mr. Blundo again stated that the State would not involve itself in a taking of the house. Mr. Israel clarified that the house, a second home owned by seasonal residents, is assessed at \$649,100 (land \$494,200 and house \$154,900) and has a market value of approximately \$1 million. Mr. Anderson stated that permitting issues often added considerable cost to projects, in this case, the cost of placing a temporary bridge.
- One-Bridge vs. Two Bridge : Mass Highway was asked by the Committee to take a second look at the one-bridge vs. two-bridge plan in light of the Lichtenstein report and increased cost estimates.
- Community input for design of the permanent bridge: Steve McLaughlin stated that the design firm will produce several architectural renderings and hold a public meeting on the Vineyard in advance of beginning their work on a specific design.

The meeting adjourned at 5PM.

Minutes prepared by Melinda Loberg