

Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee
Minutes of the Meeting held on January 9, 2006
At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

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

Observers: Jo-Ann Taylor, Harriet Barrow, and Chris Fried

1. Minutes

- In the interest of accuracy, draft minutes of the December 7 public session, prepared from notes only, were deferred pending broadcast.

2. Preparation for visit by MassHighway Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky on January 20

- The Committee reviewed and finalized draft correspondence to the Commissioner, to be sent as an e-mail prior to her visit (see attachment).

3. Alternative boating plan

- A Subcommittee comprised of Derek Cimeno, Dave Grunden and Jay Wilbur will begin brainstorming to develop an alternative plan for boater safety in the event of bridge failure resulting in restricted access to the pond. They will be assisted by MVC staff at their first meeting on January 17.

4. Next meetings

- Thursday, January 12, 2006, 3:00 P.M. (several members) at MassHighway office in Boston
- Tuesday, January 17, 2006 at 9:30 A.M.
- Tuesday, January 17, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. Boating Plan Subcommittee
- Friday, January 20, 2006 at 10:30 A.M. with Commissioner Paiewonsky
- Wednesday, February 1, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. regular meeting, with first hour devoted to discussion with local truckers (meeting date later changed to February 8, 2006 at 9:00 A.M.)

Minutes prepared by Jo-Ann Taylor

Attachment
e-mail correspondence to Commissioner Luisa Paiewonsky
sent January 9, 2006

Dear Ms. Paiewonsky,

Thank you very much for agreeing to come to the Vineyard to discuss the drawbridge project. This is a very important project for the Island for several reasons:

- The drawbridge completes an essential connection between Vineyard Haven, the MV Hospital, and Oak Bluffs. It is used by pedestrians, bicyclists, mopeds, automobiles, trucks, buses, and emergency vehicles.
- Traffic congestion would greatly increase if vehicles could not use the bridge, which would have a significant impact on the Island's quality of life and economic health.
- It is essential for the safety of boaters, allowing them to enter Lagoon Pond during storms.
- The proposed replacement project, especially the temporary bridge would have significant impacts, e.g. disruption, aesthetics, and economics.

As you probably know, your department is preparing to advertise for the construction of the proposed temporary bridge. Before proceeding with this project, we would like to ask you to take a fresh/last look at the proposed "two-bridge" strategy of first building a temporary bridge and then the permanent replacement, as opposed to the "one-bridge" strategy of building the permanent bridge next to the existing bridge.

There are several factors that have changed and might warrant reconsideration of this approach:

- The significant escalation in cost – the budget for the temporary bridge is now over \$6 million dollars and the permanent is \$24 million;
- The new physical assessment of the existing bridge (carried out for the Drawbridge Committee and the towns of Oak Bluffs and Tisbury by Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers) that suggests that the lifespan of the existing bridge might be able to be extended;
- Increasing public concern about the safety (notably for bicyclists, pedestrians, and mopeds), the

disruption, and the aesthetic impact of the temporary bridge, as well as about the risk that the permanent bridge might not be built in a timely way;

- The considerable delays in moving ahead with the permanent bridge.

Carrying out the repairs to the existing bridge outlined in the Lichtenstein report and acquiring the adjacent house might make it possible to proceed directly with the construction of the permanent bridge at a lower cost and without the other problems mentioned above.

We look forward to discussing this with you on January 20. Please let us know whether you will be accompanied by any of your associates

Melinda Loberg, Chair, Drawbridge Committee