

LAGOON POND DRAWBRIDGE COMMITTEE

c/o Martha's Vineyard Commission

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Minutes of the Meeting held on July 26, 2007, 10:30 A.M. At the Offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

Members Present: Melinda Loberg (Chairman), Mark London, Steve Berlucchi, Dave Grunden, Derek Cimino, Jay Wilbur, Fred Lapiana, and Tristan Israel

Guests: Steve McLaughlin, MassHighway; Frank Vitale, Leslie Haines, David Patnaude, Bill Lockwood, and Jeff Keyt, Parsons Transportation Group

Observers: Bob Ford, Dan Greenbaum, Lin Gallant, and Jim Miller

1. Temporary Drawbridge

- Steve McLaughlin reported that the pre-construction conference was held on June 21, and that the contractor (Pihl) had begun ordering materials.
 - Pihl had requested information (RFI) on the suggested One-minute opening time, suggesting it would be difficult, and asking if there was leeway in that standard. Steve McLaughlin said that the MHD standard was that the entire cycle of raising and lowering should not take longer than it does now, and suggested that the one-minute standard was arbitrary. It was noted that Bob Maciel would know how long it takes currently. Mark London asked if the one-minute standard would require a new design; Steve McLaughlin replied that the design to be implemented had not been finalized, but that adding a counterweight and additional horsepower could alter the cost. Jeff Keyt suggested that electrical service would affect opening speed, and that two minutes is more standard for this type of non-counterweight design, and that counterweight designs usually open in roughly one minute. Tristan Israel suggested other activities in the cycle could be improved to save time, like the raising and lowering of gates; it was noted that gate sequencing is usually standard. Steve Berlucchi asked why there was no counterweight in the current design; Steve McLaughlin replied that two designs, one with and one without were being considered.
 - Steve McLaughlin noted that work at the site would begin soon, but that traffic would not be reduced to one lane until October, per agreement, and then only while actual work is in progress (e.g., for a few hours at a time). Tristan Israel suggested that the Tisbury police should have notice before these periods. Dave Grunden said that during repair of the existing bridge, only the State police were notified, not the local police. Jay Wilbur agreed and suggested also notifying the radio station. Steve McLaughlin noted that this activity has been going on for a decade, but promised to query the resident engineer.
 - Fred Lapiana asked where construction materials would be stored; the intent is to do so on-site.

- Steve Berlucchi asked if construction speed limits could be posted soon; Steve McLaughlin said he would check with the resident engineer.
- Steve Berlucchi asked if the current operator would be trained on the temporary bridge. Steve McLaughlin replied that the operator, whoever it was, would be trained by the contractor, but that the intent was to retain the current operator.
- Steve Berlucchi asked that openings not coincide with ferry arrivals; it was noted by Jay Wilbur that the current schedule is coordinated with SSA ferry activity and works well.
- Steve Berlucchi asked if the existing bridge would remain in place after the temporary is operational; Steve McLaughlin replied that, contrary to his recommendation, it would not.
- Steve McLaughlin reported that he was awaiting a letter of support from State Marie Fisheries regarding getting funding to relocate juvenile bay scallops. The letter will help, but not guarantee funding.
- Steve Berlucchi asked if the contractor was aware of the potential for a local cement shortage; the contractor was notified at the pre-construction conference.

2. Permanent Drawbridge

- Frank Vitale reported that the sub-contractor, BSC, has completed eelgrass mapping, soundings, and noted the extent of the salt marsh, all items needed for permitting. The habitat study will also be updated. Frank Vitale has also conducted interviews (e.g., Sail MV, VHYC, Packer) to determine boat traffic activities into and out of Lagoon Pond. Jay Wilbur will provide some data for the Marine Clearance Survey, a draft of which is due by the end of August. Dave Grunden noted that the Oak Bluffs Harbor Master would have data on moorings on the OB side.
- Leslie Haines (Parsons project manager) presented the alignment for the bridge, including a 10' MUP and a 6' walkway on the harbor side with the tender's house. Adding the MUP later (to get closer to the temporary bridge) would not be worth it as it would only gain 4' and be more costly to build. Drawings prepared show the profile with the span raised 2', 4', and 6'. The Marine Clearance Survey will determine the recommended rise. In any case, there will be some fill on the harbor side that can be contained by steeper slopes and/or retaining walls.
 - Tristan Israel expressed concern that the pull-out on the Tisbury side not be affected; he was assured it will need to be regraded, but parking should not be substantially affected. Tristan Israel also expressed concern about access to the water on the harbor side, as the 6' rise necessitates a 7.5% grade on the driveway of the Holloway house; Parsons intends to provide such access. The Holloway house will face a larger slope than currently regardless.
 - Mark London asked about fill; there will be 4' to 10' of fill depending on the increase in span height, and access to Eastville beach would only be slightly affected, and easily remedied. Steve Berlucchi asked about the pitch of the approach; it will be 4% (same as currently), which is the steepest that bikes can still easily negotiate.
 - Mark London asked how far the channel would be pushed over toward Tisbury; David Patnaude replied 8', and that more would require a longer span or more dredging.

Jay Wilbur expressed concern that 8' was not what had been discussed previously, which he recalled as 30' to 40'. He remarked that 8' would not solve the safety issue in the channel, and that more dredging to move it would seem unnecessary as the approach to the channel is only 9' deep. He emphasized the importance of the issue. Mark London and Steve McLaughlin agreed that the channel needed to be moved farther, staying within the 100' federal channel. Steve Berlucchi said it was primarily a sight-line issue and suggested a larger span, but Jay Wilbur noted that it was also difficult for some boats to maneuver in the current. Parsons promised to re-examine the issue, but expressed concern about the USCG agreeing to a shallower channel; Jay Wilbur said he doubted the USCG would be a problem.

- Bill Lockwood (Parsons architect) presented some initial thoughts on architecture, mentioning that economics and function would determine the architecture to a large degree. He presented some images of spans, tenders' houses, and railings, and noted that he understood the committee feels strongly that the bridge should be compatible in scale and design with the Vineyard surroundings.
 - Tristan Israel mentioned that the railing design should take into account that some individuals jump off the bridge; Steve McLaughlin mentioned that, regardless of local custom, jumping from the bridge is forbidden.
 - Mark London mentioned that the design of the general area should include plans for access under the bridge, and connecting to Eastville beach. He also mentioned integrating other recreational facilities (fishing pier, viewing/seating area). Tristan Israel said the Eastville Beach Committee (of which he is a member) will meet August 8 at noon, and will communicate with Parsons to coordinate the larger area. It was suggested that perhaps Henry Stephenson of the Tisbury planning board would also be involved and that the Vineyard Conservation Society had drawn plans for that area in the past. Parsons will also look at the proceedings of the August 25, 2005 MVC forum on the subject (available on the MVC website document center as "Drawbridge Public Meeting 2005-8-25 notes").
 - Steve Berlucchi asked about the design of the pilings; it is expected they would be pile bents, except for the piling supporting the bascule span, which would be a solid wall.
- Jeff Keyt (Parsons mechanical engineer) presented initial ideas about gating systems and one-leaf versus two-leaf systems. He mentioned that drawbridge gates usually consist of warning gates and then resistance barriers that can stop cars. He also mentioned that the current bridge only has a resistance gate on one side (to prevent cars from plunging into the channel), and that the committee could possibly decide to forgo resistance gates altogether, as this roadway is of lower speed than say, the Woodrow Wilson bridge in Washington, DC, which Parsons also designed. He mentioned the two suppliers of gates that he's aware of recently merged into one company (B&B Roadway). It was decided that the committee would like to see specific design examples at a later date.
 - Steve Berlucchi asked about combining the two gates; Jeff Keyt replied that it could be done, but it's not usual.
 - On the subject of one leaf vs. two leaves, Jeff Keyt explained some of the mechanical aspects, and the pros and cons of both were enumerated:

- one leaf - pros: fewer moving parts, less complexity, less expense (though not half), better sight lines for boaters; cons: more wind load (deemed not relevant).
 - two leaf - pros: slightly faster, less visual impact, symmetry, smaller equipment and piers; cons: two of everything.
 - Steve Berlucchi felt a one-leaf bridge would require less maintenance.
 - Mark London mentioned that in case of a failure, a two-leaf bridge could open only one side to allow access, though it was noted that getting through a small opening can be a difficult maneuver for boaters.
- Leslie Haines concluded with a discussion of the schedule. The draft Marine Clearance Report will be delivered by the end of August. A draft of the Type Study Report will be delivered October 1, and will present facts regarding bridge types but make no recommendations. Two weeks after that, a public hearing can be scheduled. MassHighway's Value Engineering Report would be completed sometime between October 1 and completion of the final report.. Mark London strongly suggested including an open-space plan for the area. By mid-January the Type Study Report with the detailed design will be delivered.

3. Upcoming meeting

The next meeting of the Drawbridge Committee was set for Wednesday, September 19, at 10:30 A.M. in Boston at the State Transportation building. The meeting will help provide the scope for the draft Type Study Report.

Minutes prepared by Jim Miller