

# ISLAND PLAN

## CHARTING THE FUTURE OF THE VINEYARD

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### Minutes of the Meeting of the Island Plan Steering Committee

Held on July 31, 2006

In the Stone Building, 33 New York Ave., Oak Bluffs, MA

#### IN ATTENDANCE (P = Present; - = Absent)

15 P John Abrams	22 - Ann Floyd	29 - Russell Smith
16 - Clarissa Allen	23 - Ray LaPorte	30 - Bret Stearns
17 P James Athearn	24 P Ned Orleans	31 P Henry Stephenson
18 - Prudence Burt	25 P Kerry Scott	32 - Paul Strauss
19 P Tom Chase	26 - Linda Sibley	33 P Richard Toole
20 P Steve Ewing	27 P Elio Silva	34 - Susan Wasserman
21	28	

Facilitator: Robert Leaver

In Attendance: Mimi Davisson (MVC Commissioner)

Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Christine Flynn (Affordable Housing & Economic Planner), Jo-Ann Taylor (Coastal Planner), Christine Seidel (GIS Coordinator)

The Committee chairman opened the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

#### 1. Update on Ongoing Activities

Mark London gave a status report of on-going activities. The main aim of activities over the summer is to make Islanders aware that the planning process has started and to let them know how they can get involved.

- The exhibit/poster is up at the SSA ferry terminal in Vineyard Haven
- A smaller version of the exhibit/poster is in the window of both Cronigs stores, Reliable Market, and the Vineyard Haven Stop-n-Shop, and will circulate in town libraries. It will also be used at the Ag Fair.
- The Island Plan flyer was distributed last week in every copy of both newspapers, a total of 33,000 copies. We have extra copies on hand that can be used for the rest of the year.
- The proceedings of the first Island Plan Forum have been completed and are available in the website.

- Information within the Island Plan Source Books have been updated and can be found in each library
- The website has greatly been expanded
- There will be another Forum on Wednesday August 9<sup>th</sup>

## **2. Preparing for Forum 2**

It was agreed that the August forum would have a two-fold purpose:

- give seasonal residents and those who could not attend the June Forum an opportunity to participate;
- get feedback on the emerging priority goals/issues with respect to level of agreement and identification of priorities.

It will be a challenge to make it interesting both for people who did and did not attend the first forum.

It was agreed that a way of engaging people that would be slightly different from the first forum would be to ask what the Vineyard has done well and less well in the past thirty years, and what that tells us about what we should be doing in the future.

The committee also discussed the possibility of delving into the topic of sustainability: What does it mean? How do we get there? What is the carrying capacity of the Island? It was agreed to leave this important topic for a future forum.

## **3. Debriefing from Forum 1**

There was a discussion of the June 24<sup>th</sup> Island Plan Forum.

### Positive Comments:

- Members were pleased with the turn out (about a hundred people) and the overall level of energy and exchange of ideas that occurred throughout the morning.
- There was a good range of participants, including young people and members of the business community who don't normally turn out for this kind of activity.
- Individuals were very engaged, and had a chance to express their opinions.
- Robert did a good job facilitating.
- People were willing to think beyond areas of their own interest.
- Many people seemed relatively well versed regarding the subject matter.
- The majority of participants stayed throughout the whole forum.

### Constructive Criticism:

- The end was cut short
- The results of the exercise on priority goals/targets may have been skewed because the end was rushed and part of the question might have been unclear.
- The room was uncomfortable and noisy

- Some participants were frustrated that some of the discussion, especially by people less familiar with work that has already been done in a give field, spent time on naïve and unworkable proposals, rather than jumping off from the knowledge and work that has already been done i.e., water, housing, energy.
- Some participants were frustrated that there was no effort to achieve consensus.

#### **4. Selection of First Wave of Work Groups**

The Committee reviewed the priorities as identified in the on-line survey and at the forum. The Committee selected the following topics – the only ones had been in the high priorities with both techniques – to be the first wave of work groups:

- Natural Environment,
- Energy and Solid Waste,
- Water Resources,
- Housing, and
- Livelihood and Commerce.

The Committee agreed to the following with respect to setting up the work groups.

- The people to make up the work groups will be proposed by the Membership Subcommittee and submitted for the approval of the entire Steering Committee.
- We should consult with existing groups such as the Water Alliance, the Vineyard Energy Project, and the Joint Transportation Committee, in setting up the work groups. We should not cut across the bows of existing groups, but also ensure that the groups are balanced representatives of the cross-section of the community, not just the strongest advocates of a point of view.
- Members should be formally appointed by the Steering Committee.
- Each work group should include individuals with differing backgrounds, expertise, and points of view. It should include both advocates and experts. We have to make sure that the people can work well together.
- Groups of about 7 people work best, however we could have work groups as large as 10 or 12.
- There should be two facilitators and MVC staff member assigned to each work group. They would be responsible for taking notes.
- Each working group should have one Steering Committee member who would be Acting Chair for the first 60 days.
- We can start off the work groups with a basic number of members, and ask them to identify who else should be added. Such recommendations would have to go back to the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee should meet the work groups for an initial, kick-off meeting, to explain the process and outline their mandates. At the kick-off meeting, participants would be given background documents including the Synopsis of Past Plans, results of on-line surveys, draft goals/targets, proceedings of forums, etc.

- Not all the people who expressed interest in a given topic will be on the work group. They should be given the opportunity to follow the work of the group and to provide their input.
- Work groups should be given considerable freedom to analyze issues, set goals and objectives, and propose strategies within the framework of the overall direction set by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee should ensure the compatibility of the proposals emanating from the various work groups, and from the Steering Committee itself.

## **5 Website**

Susan Goldsmith from Mindshare Media gave an overview of the Island Plan website: [www.islandplan.org](http://www.islandplan.org). There is a calendar of upcoming activities. Staff is in the process of uploading documents.

We will need additional guidance on how to use the on-line forums, once they get going.

## **6. Other**

The issue of where and how new development should take place will be dealt with primarily by the Steering Committee, not the Built Environment Committee, though there will be an overlap.

We should close out the first on-line survey soon, and do a second mini-survey using the same questions as planned for forum 2, namely: 1) feedback on the emerging goals/issues and 2) comments on what the Vineyard has done well and less well in the past 30 years and what this suggests for the future. This should also be used at the Ag Fair.

We have to set up a procedure to acknowledge letters and other contributions from members of the public.

The upcoming meetings are as follows:

- August 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm to discuss the big issues that the Steering Committee will deal with itself.
- September 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm - Regular Monthly Meeting and appointment of initial members of first wave of work groups.
- September 28<sup>th</sup>, [subsequently changed to October 5] at 5:00 pm - Kick off meeting for the Work Groups

Now that summer is over, we will go back to the regular monthly coordination meetings to be held on the second Thursday of each month at 5 pm, with special meetings scheduled as required.

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm.

Minutes prepared by Christine Flynn and Mark London