

Martha's Vineyard Island Roads Committee

Minutes of Meeting 8

Date: October 16, 2014, 5:00 p.m.

Location: MVC Offices, 33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs

Present:

Committee Madeline Fisher (Co-Chair, MVC), Linda Sibley (Co-Chair, MVC), Trip Barnes (MVC), Dan Greenbaum (Chilmark), Fred Hancock (MVC), Richard Knabel (West Tisbury), Kathy Newman (MVC), Joan Malkin (MVC), Brian Smith (West Tisbury), Craig Whitaker (Tisbury)

MVC Staff: Mark London, Bill Veno

The meeting was chaired by Madeline Fisher who opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the September 18, 2014 meeting were approved, as corrected.

2. Political Update

Richard Knabel said that he had met Dan Wolf with Craig Whitaker, Madeline Fisher, and Christina Brown. Dan is supportive of the effort to protect and restore the Island's scenic roads and is willing to facilitate discussions with MassDOT, if needed, sometime after the elections. Richard will meet Tim Madden next week on another topic and will bring this up.

It is likely that there will be a new Secretary of Transportation after the elections, while other senior staff at MassDOT would likely remain the same. It would be desirable to meet the new Secretary and enlist his or her support.

The first step should be to clarify what we want. This should be first discussed with the towns. To that end, we should finish off the mission statement and prepare a statement of what we are proposing. A couple of people should be charged with making presentations to all boards of selectmen, with the committee members from that town in attendance. We could also meet the planning boards again. The presentation should include some visuals.

Richard offered to work on a text and Kathy could help with visuals when needed.

3. Consultant

Mark London reported that he had requested MassDOT authorization to spend \$5,000 for preparation of the scope of work for a general study/manual of scenic roads; it could take up to 30 days to get approval. Together with the \$5,000 we already have from DHCD, this would give us \$10,000 to work on the scope of work as discussed at the last Island Roads Committee meeting. He has discussed this with representatives of McCormick Taylor, along with possible meeting dates. They propose to have two people come and said this could involve three days of time, including travel. They are available either the first week of November or the first week of December.

Some committee members expressed concerns about the cost of travel and time for a three-day trip within this limited budget.

Craig Whitaker suggested that once the consultants were travelling from Philadelphia, they meet MassDOT officials in Boston.

Mark London suggested that to best take advantage of the consultant's expertise, it would be desirable to give them some time to explore the Island on their own so they could give an independent perspective. They could then meet the committee to share their perception of the Island and their initial suggestions about how they would approach the study, after which the committee members fill them in on the political situation (e.g. six towns, relations with MassDOT), and discuss our concerns and questions. Craig Whitaker agreed and suggested starting a working meeting with the committee at 3 p.m.

Craig Whitaker proposed putting off McCormick Taylor's work on the scope of work for the general study/manual of all scenic roads and instead, asking DOT to fund the cost of preparing engineering plans for the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road. Working on the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road would include outlining options and public outreach, and would allow making progress on the overall study/manual by working on a TIP project. It would allow discussion of most of the issues of concern and the results could be incorporated into the overall study/manual. After the work on the Edgartown Vineyard Haven work was completed, in a year or two, we could see what other work was needed to complete the overall study/manual. McCormick Taylor could accompany committee members at a meeting with MassDOT to ask for the funding for the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road design.

Fred Hancock said that this is very different from what we have been working on for the past months and what we agreed to last time. Brian Smith questioned using our political capital for this request when we are not really ready, rather than saving it for potentially more significant needs later.

Mark London noted that since the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road was a town road, the towns are responsible for funding the design. MassDOT has already agreed to do the engineering work on the basis of this being a relatively simple resurfacing job. They want the towns to clarify very soon what design they want in order for MassDOT to be able to complete engineering plans in time to advertise the project in the current federal fiscal year. He said that we have an obligation to the state departments providing the \$10,000 in funds, if approved, to use the funds for the purpose they were requested. He noted that if we put off working on the contract, McCormick Taylor would not be working for us and therefore unable to go to Boston.

Craig Whitaker also proposed, for the design of the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, asking MassDOT to fund consultants that we choose and direct, suggesting that this be McCormick Taylor. Mark London questioned whether MassDOT would fund a firm that is not licensed to work in Massachusetts. Fred Hancock said that the MVC has only agreed to hire McCormick Taylor for the scope of work, and we cannot presume who will do any additional work as a result of an open Request for Services. Craig Whitaker said it should be easy for McCormick Taylor to get licensed in Massachusetts.

Mark London said that, given MassDOT's request that the towns clarify the design of the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, MVC staff has started working with the three towns' representatives on the JTC, namely Jay Grande, Stuart Fuller, and Richard Combra Jr. to try to move forward a discussion of the options. The town representatives will propose that the first section of road improvements be the mile-long stretch heading east from the Edgartown town line. While it would be desirable to give the community more time to discuss the options, we don't want to jeopardize the TIP funds for FFY2015. The town representatives also discussed how the FFY2015 funds might be used without having to finalize the design of the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, such as a specific improvement to that road that is not dependent on the design, or an alternative project such as the Tashmoo Overlook or the purchase of buses for the VTA. Until we are sure of funding to hire a firm to take over project

design and/or a postponement of the deadline, we have to do our best to proceed with our limited means.

Joan Malkin moved that we continue with the \$10,000 contract with McCormick Taylor to work on the scope of work for the general study/manual, and also pursue the possibility of asking for MassDOT funding for the design of the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road.

It was agreed that before approaching MassDOT about the possibility funding the design of the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road, we ensure that the three towns involved agree with this approach. This would mean going to the Boards of Selectmen, but should start with the town's representatives on the Joint Transportation Committee. Craig Whitaker will write a statement of the proposal, with Mark London's input.

It was agreed to ask McCormick Taylor to plan on coming on December 4, with the possibility of changing this based on the progress of other efforts.

4. Working Groups - Mission Statements

The discussion of a consolidated mission statement was postponed to the next meeting. Mark will send a compilation of the drafts prepared by the work groups. We should have the mission statement ready for the meetings with the towns.

The meetings with the three towns not involving the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road would be a status update and presentation of the mission statement. The meetings with the three towns involving the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road would also include a discussion of the possibility of asking for MassDOT funds for the road design.

While we are working on these efforts, it would also be desirable to move ahead with some short-term projects, to both make and demonstrate progress. The Signage etc. Work Group will be going on a bus tour to start to identify signs that are problematic. The Vegetation Work Group started to identify possible short-term projects.