

# Martha's Vineyard Joint Transportation Committee

c/o Martha's Vineyard Commission, Box 1447, Oak Bluffs, 02557 508-893-3453

## Minutes of the informal Meeting held on October 3, 2007 at the offices of the Martha's Vineyard Commission

### In Attendance

#### Voting Members

Steve Berlucchi, County of Dukes County  
Fred Lapiana, Town Tisbury

Angela Grant, VTA  
David Whitmon, bicycles and pedestrians

#### Others

#### Ex-officio Members

Mark London, MVC  
Karen Pearson, EOTPW

Jim Miller, MVC  
Pamela Haznar, MHD D5  
Robert Wheeler, MHD D5  
Craig Whitaker

As a quorum was not achieved, Steve Berlucchi, Chair, opened the informal discussion at 10:33am. The discussion was preceded by a site visit by MHD D5 personnel to the Lake Avenue project in Oak Bluffs. Site visits to potential projects in Tisbury, West Tisbury, and Edgartown followed the discussion.

### **1. Discussion with MHD District 5 personnel**

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- Steve Berlucchi opened the discussion regarding the JTC's proposal, planned for the next few months, to reclassify Island roads so that more are eligible for state and federal funding.
  - Mark London noted that the Island is unique in that private roads are a large part of the Vineyard road network, and also stated that protecting the rural character of the roads was paramount; he noted that the "Footprint Roads" program was an excellent program.
  - Pam Haznar stated that MHD does consider the character of roads, and that the "design exception committee" grants waivers from the design standards. Craig Whitaker asked if there is a general, Island-wide waiver we could get, and Pam Haznar answered no, but that long stretches of road could be granted a waiver for a period of years. Craig Whitaker then asked if Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) could be applied, citing the importance of tourism, and Pam Haznar replied that we would still need a waiver, and that the process is "not difficult."
  - Mark London noted the great concern on the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the Island Boards of Selectmen about a "slippery slope" regarding ceding control over roads to MHD. Fred Lapiana noted that the character of the roads could still be protected if we didn't take the state money.
  - Fred Lapiana said that he was encouraged that the waiver process was simple, and asked if the FHWA was on the design exception committee. Pam Haznar replied that FHWA is, but that for projects costing under \$5 million, MHD makes the decision.
  - Fred Lapiana asked if a batch of roads could be reviewed for waivers if the safety of those roads was demonstrated. Pam Haznar replied that she was not sure if MHD would approve a group waiver. If the case for each road is well-documented the process can

take less than a year, as the design exception committee meets monthly, as opposed to quarterly for the project review committee. She also noted that the committee takes into account AASHTO guidelines as well as cost, environmental, aesthetic, and economic factors. The chief engineer must also approve the waivers.

- Fred Lapiana then brought up the TIP eligibility criteria, noting that he doesn't understand the process, and specifically wondering why the JTC does not have the freedom to decide to use TIP funds for projects such as replacing the non-ADA compliant sidewalk on Main Street in Tisbury. Pam Haznar replied that she was not familiar with Main Street. Mark London said that MHD's decision on that project had to do with the definition of "repair/resurface" versus "improvement," noting that by expanding the number of eligible roads through reclassification, and by clarifying the eligibility requirements, we can improve the use of TIP funds.
- Fred Lapiana noted the cost of design as an impediment, considering the uncertainty of TIP funding. Pam Haznar noted that waivers are granted at the 25% design stage, but that funding is determined for conceptual plans. Mark London again suggested that clarifying the process will assist us in filling out project need forms. Angela Grant stated that the JTC needs guidance from MHD on how to get TIP funding without spending design funds, noting that one TIP project in seven years has been successful. Pam Haznar agreed that "something seems wrong."
- Steve Berlucchi noted that in the guidelines for reclassification "recreational resources," including beaches, are noted as travel generators, and that this could require recognition of many Island roads.
- Craig Whitaker asked is the JTC could work with D5 to develop a reclassification proposal. Steve Berlucchi stated again that a blanket exception would be infeasible. Mark London noted that we could present a detailed application for reclassification and waivers without going to the level of 25% design.
- Craig Whitaker pointed to the example of Yellowstone National Park, where FHWA was involved in the redesign of roads. David Whitmon expressed his support for design that calms and reduces traffic.
- David Whitmon asked if bicycle facilities are eligible, noting that none of the Island bike paths meet AASHTO guidelines of 10' minimums. Steve Berlucchi noted that 8' paths are acceptable if environmental factors come into play.
- Angela Grant gave a brief overview of the Martha's Vineyard Regional Transit Authority, stating that with a modest \$3.5 million budget, they carry over 900,000 passengers annually, more than Nantucket and Cape Cod combined. She explained the problems of an aging fleet of 42 vehicles that cost \$260,000 apiece.
- At 11:30 Karen Pearson arrived after air travel delays due to fog. Mark London summarized the conversation up to that point for her. Karen Pearson explained that the MARPA formula is the key to getting the Vineyard more funds. Mark London noted that the seasonal nature of the Vineyard should be accounted for in the formula.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m., with MHD D5 personnel, Karen Pearson, Steve Berlucchi, Mark London, Jim Miller, and Craig Whitaker visiting potential project sites.

The next JTC meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 7, 2007 at 10:15 a.m.