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Martha's Vineyard Commission

Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of August 9, 2010

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Linda Sibley; Christina Brown; Chris Murphy; Ned Orleans; Fred Hancock, Holly Stephenson.

MVC Staff Present: Paul Foley; Mark London; Bill Veno

1. Joint Meeting with Tisbury Planning Board on Beach and State Roads

Tisbury Planning Board: Henry Stephenson; Tony Peak;

Attendees: Will Craffey and guest; John Best; Geoghan Coogan; Liz Wild

Discussion:

- Paul Foley presented a staff report and a preliminary comparison of the before and after traffic generation of four current DRI projects on Beach Road in Tisbury.
- John Best, a former MVC Commissioner, pointed out that the traffic comparison kept the estimated trip generation for an office unit at 45 Beach Road at 5 trips per day when now they have a Century 21 real estate office in there which has 10 agents that are coming in and out fairly regularly. He thought the new trip generation would be more.
- Tony Peak added that 45 Beach Road is also overflow parking for the marina, not just the Blue Canoe restaurant. There is West Marine, VH Marina, and the restaurant in there.
- Will Craffey said that the receipts that he brought in to the MVC were every single receipt for the whole day. A lot of them were single pizzas. Your Market is right next door and so a lot of those were probably people walking in after making other stops.
- Paul Foley pointed out that for the Shell Gas Station number they kept the trip generation of before and after the same although they may have added some pumps.
- John Best said they did add pumps in the back.
- Holly Stephenson pointed out that though the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy is no longer located at the Shell Station they only moved up the block so that traffic is still on Beach Road. She also added that Island Deli Market, which is located in the Shell Station is also asking for a push cart that should be added to the analysis.
- Mark London said that this is a review of projects pending and that if we want to look at the whole road it will take more time.
- Linda Sibley noted that is what the LUPC discussed with the Tisbury Planning Board the previous Wednesday night.
- Ned Orleans said that based on these numbers the overall trip generation from these properties is going up 8%.
- Henry Stephenson pointed out that this is just a portion of the overall

- John Best said that traffic going through in each direction is going to have less impact than those trips that stop because they can create backups by crossing traffic.
- Christina Brown asked if it is the impeding of the flow of traffic that is our issue or are we looking at the both the flow and that this is a business area.
- Holly Stephenson said that keeping the traffic flowing is one of the things that make it regional. Henry Stephenson noted that this particular piece is important because it leads to the hospital and the ferries.
- Linda Sibley asked what portion is through traffic and what is destination traffic and which is multi-destination.
- Geoghan Coogan had two questions. Are the numbers for existing uses estimated or actual counts.
- Paul Foley said they are estimated based on the ITE (Institute of Traffic Engineers) Manual.
- Geoghan Coogan asked if the MVC has ever gone back to look at whether the actual use correlates to the estimate numbers. Secondly, he asked if this a total trip generation based on seasonal averages.
- Paul Foley said that they are ITE estimates based on the same rate over the whole year. They do not take into account the seasonal variations of the island.
- Mark London noted that ITE estimates tend to be low. The rates are often different than what we experience on the island.
- Linda Sibley said that historically we have been supplied with the closest to real numbers. Applicants frequently do bring us more reliable numbers than we get out of ITE.
- Geoghan Coogan suggested that if you did an estimate for, say, Larsen's Fish Market could you go back and say look at the Fish Market we estimated X but it really generates Y.
- Paul Foley noted that the Fish Market did not get referred to the MVC as a DRI.
- Mark London added that it is not as easy as it sounds. Doing a comprehensive traffic analysis for a complex area like Beach Road is not something that takes a week.
- Linda Sibley said she thought tonight was the beginning of that process.
- Mark London reiterated that these numbers are preliminary so we might want to get a little more information. At first glance these numbers show that some properties are adding significantly and others are slightly less than existing. He suggested that the Commission might say the ones that are close can go forward and the ones that are not close might have to wait until there has been a more thorough study.
- Linda Sibley disagreed and said that is not the conversation she thought we were going to have. She thought we were going to look at what information we have and what else we need.
- Tony Peak said he thought what came out of the joint LUPC/TPB discussion was that the Beach Road Corridor is like a single property with incremental change. This section of road is approaching a critical status.
- Holly Stephenson added that you can't estimate trips solely on retail receipts because people may leave when a parking lot is full but they still create a trip. There is also a fourth level of trips such as tourist trips. State Road requires a curb cut of 60 feet wide. It's a disaster for sidewalks and bicycles. It would be good to look at the curb cut issue

- Chris Murphy said the short answer to Geoghan is yes, we tried. In a broader sense what would help Chris is hearing from the Town of Tisbury. Do they think there is too much traffic?
- Linda Sibley said that is why we went to them last Wednesday. We said that tonight we would survey what we know and figure out what we need to learn.
- Henry Stephenson said they want to study more than traffic. We might want to pursue a design plan for the whole area. It's not just that you have more or less traffic. We want to assess what the capacity is. Are we going to have SUPs. Is there going to be enough parking? Should we think about municipal parking? Do you want to deal with traffic incrementally or do we want to have a larger context about the land use, all parking (not just at these spots). We want to tell applicants here are the guidelines. Business zoned properties should know what they can and can't do.
- Bill Venno said that there is also the sewer.
- Linda Sibley said the design piece is also important. She thought that if the traffic circulation was reversed at Tisbury Market Place it could improve. There is at least one other property where the internal circulation causes backups onto State Road.
- John Best said that the takeout truck at the Art Cliff is not open at the same time as the restaurant.
- Paul Foley said that it is still adding trips to the property.
- Liz Wild said that the takeout truck opens earlier, at about 3:00 pm, and they often park at 45 Beach Road.
- Will Craffey said that his proposed Pizza takeout hours are 11 am to 9pm. He went out to Blue Canoe and the lot was full and he saw four people at the Art Cliff parking at 45 Beach Road. He would say that his numbers would be less than estimated.
- Ned Orleans asked what we are trying to come to a conclusion to in reference for this Thursday night. Linda Sibley said that we don't need to come to a conclusion.
- Paul Foley presented the total trip generation on Beach and State Roads. The latest traffic counts for Beach Road were done this week in August of 2010 and showed that on busy days in August Beach Road experiences 14,100 Average Daily Trips (ADT) or vehicles a day. Numbers from State Road were compiled in late May and early June and, even though it was before the peak season, those traffic counts were over 15,000 ADT. The stretch of Beach Street between Five Corners and Main Street experienced over 21,000 ADT in August.
- Mark London added that for some things the only way you can figure things out what is going on is through an origin and destination survey.
- Linda Sibley noted that it makes sense that the trips coming off the ferry will generally go right. If you are going to West Tisbury, Chilmark, or Aquinnah, and even Edgartown then you are likely to go right up toward State Road.
- Fred Hancock said there must be a relationship between time of day and the counts. It seems that the peak is what we should be concerned with.
- Ned Orleans added that may be so unless it is a beach day when you look at it.
- Henry Stephenson said that if Beach Road has about 14,000 ADT then the projects in front of the MVC now represent about 4-5% of the total.

- Christina Brown said that it's not just the total number of cars, we have to break it down to the time of day. We also have to look at the potential change of other properties.
- Linda Sibley said it might also have to do with the geometry. It seems that the additional uses of the Tisbury Market Place is putting trips on to the road at a different time of day.
- Chris Murphy said that anybody who has to drive around Tisbury knows that it is the ferry schedule that wags the dog. The other piece is these businesses. It seems clear that any vehicle that turns in and out has a bigger impact than the through traffic.
- Ned Orleans said he is troubled with how we got to where we are. When he raised this issue of meeting with the TPB he said we need to find out whether the TPB alone, or the MVC alone or together could sit down and figure out what could be done. Henry gave an answer that we need a design plan.
- Linda Sibley said she thought the joint group said we would agree that we would continue the discussion but gather more information.
- Ned Orleans said that if we keep talking it is going to take much too long.
- Henry Stephenson said that in terms of planning and deadlines we said that this being August these permits are not likely to be approved before the season is over. They need to be going by next Spring. There is a block of time where we can see what we look at. We might give ourselves until the end of the year to pull ourselves together.
- Christina Brown asked if Henry thought that the TPB and MVC can do a design study that looks at these things fairly easily without an outside consultant.
- Henry Stephenson said we should talk to Mark London about the MVC schedule. From our point of view the MVC can provide information that we cannot. It would be helpful to us if we had an overlay for the area.
- Will Craffey said from my perspective, as an applicant, he approached the landlord in March. They are holding the property empty for him. He thinks if you hold him off until next year then he thinks they will put their old tenants back in there.
- Geoghan Coogan said that some of these businesses are seasonal and others are not. If you are going to do a study you might want to include Main Street. This issue is not isolated to Beach Road.
- John Best said that we are not totally sure how the Sewer Board is allocating flow.
- Geoghan Coogan said that may change. On Main Street the businesses are being restricted to their previous flow. So if someone wants to convert a store to a restaurant they will not be able to get the flow they need.
- He added that what the LUJPC is talking about is large scale planning. Tisbury is going to replace a fire station soon. There are a lot of other pieces to this puzzle than these four projects before the MVC now. He thinks holding up applicants to figure this out is not right. You have to figure out a way to do it with what you have.
- Henry Stephenson said he agreed. There are certain things that effect the traffic. If you change the direction of Union Street that might have an impact. There is also a proposal for a gas station on State Road that might decrease the number of trips to five corners. He added that the whole stretch is also a disaster for bicycles. As for the projects the only hold you have is when they are in front of you. That is when you have to ask if there is something we can do.
- Chris Murphy said that a DCPC is the answer to your question.

- Henry Stephenson asked if there is a way you can let the applicants proceed but hold them to a study that is done in the next year.
- Bill Veno said that about ten years ago there was a study done up on State Road. We concluded that we had to do a traffic destination study to see what was going on.
- Mark London said that to go back to the issue of the relation of the traffic study. He would suggest it would be useful to look over and improve the estimates. If you look at certain properties that are major increases we might hold off on them. But if it is a wash between the previous and the proposed use we should be able to look at them now.
- Christina Brown said that if we look at this traffic sheet and amend it for Thursday night we could do that. She also suggested that we take the Art Cliff diner off the list since they are not in front of us now.
- Linda Sibley said she felt that we need to look at a lot more than the four projects in front of us now. Does the LUPC want to meet before the meeting on Thursday? No.
- Chris Murphy said he would love to hear from the TPB on Thursday night about the increase in non-water related uses in the waterfront commercial district and about the sewer which was supposed to be growth neutral.
- Henry Stephenson said they have talked about how the waterfront commercial zoning is awkward. They have situations where a boundary goes through a living room.
- Linda Sibley said on Thursday night we will have three concurrence reviews. Has the TPB gotten to the point where they want to designate the area a DCPC? These projects would not be covered by it because they are already in the permitting process.
- Henry Stephenson said the TPB thought that all of these projects should have a full public hearing.
- Chris Murphy said that all of those conditions in the minutes could use more soul searching.
- Mark London said that some of these issues are big complex issues. The community has said we don't want to open up the zoning down there. If they want to reexamine that they should let us know.
- Tony Peak said that there was a study in 1996 that had some strong language about the disparity in the goals. The zoning reveals some of those tensions such as wanting development but not wanting parking. The people on both sides have retained their opinions so there is still a lot of tension on the subject.
- Christina Brown asked if we can look at the two sets of zoning.
- Chris Murphy said that we have been dealing with a project in West Tisbury and the Town made a zoning change and now ten years later the neighbors are realizing what the implications are and are very upset and feel they were not adequately informed.
- Henry Stephenson asked if we could invite the sewer commission on Thursday. He thought that Liz Wild said that the sewer board has simply changed the calculations for how much water you need per seat.
- Linda Sibley noted that a study by Catherine Donaher, the Donaher Report, was done for the Commission in the 1990's on traffic over the whole island. She came up with notion that significant part of five corners was pick-up and drop-off at Ferry.

Adjourned 7:14