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Martha's Vineyard Commission Land Use Planning Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of November 12, 2013

MVC Commissioners Present: Brian Smith (LUPC Chairman); Kathy Newman, Christina Brown; Fred Hancock; Trip Barnes, Linda Sibley; Ned Orleans; John Breckenridge

MVC Staff Present: Mark London, Bill Veno, Priscilla Leclerc

Others Present: Bill O'Brien (Viceroy Development); Randy Hart (Director of Transportation Planning & Engineering, VHB); David Taglianetti (VHB), Keri Pyke (Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, (HSH); Lois Craine (Vineyard Transit Authority, VTA), and five members of the public

DRI 89-M3 Stop & Shop

Mark London noted that this meeting is a dress rehearsal for the continued public hearing on November 21. All information presented at this meeting will be entered as testimony at the public hearing; hopefully, this LUPC session will help streamline that presentation by indicating what needs to be clarified.

1. Applicant

Randy Hart:

- Handed out a memorandum dated November 8, 2013, a partial response to Keri Pyke's previous peer review memo.
- Is still trying to work toward resolution of the traffic numbers.
- The memo effort incorporates the latest changes to the proposed development, including reducing the building size from 28,700 square feet to 24,800 square feet.
- First the traditional model Synchro was used for analysis, and then VISSIM. There were 2 to 3 submissions with difficulties in marrying the model to the observed intersection data. Five Corners is hard to model; it is very sensitive and hard to calibrate.
- This submission tries to simplify the analyses by going back to using Synchro.
- The change in traffic volume at Five Corners as a result of the project is projected to be between 5.2% and 6.8%, depending on what percentage of drivers going down from State Road to the Water Street area use Main Street and Norton Lane versus Beach Street and Five Corners.
- They propose having a police officer at the intersection with a mandate of improving overall efficiency, not favoring any particular movement. The intersection would then be analyzed as equivalent to a signalized intersection.
- With this analysis, most future queue lengths would be similar to the existing situation, with some exceptions: Beach Road westbound, (269 increases to 337 feet), State Road eastbound (209 increases to 300 feet), State Road eastbound (243 increases to 306) and Beach Street northbound (77 increases to 141 feet).
- He characterized the change as marginal.

2. Peer Review

Keri Pyke:

- Agreed that there had been issues with modeling the Five Corners intersection.
- Presented summary tables of the changes in traffic volumes and agreed with the changes in volumes.

3. Questions / Comments

- Trip Barnes inquired if there was any way to look at changing Union Street to a two-way operation. Fred Hancock responded that would not be part of this process. Randy agreed that looking at potential downtown roadway operational changes would be part of an expanded study. Last August, VHB collected vehicle-tracking and the MVC collected parking utilization and ferry passenger destination information that could be used in that future study.
- Linda Sibley asked for clarification of how many people coming down State Road take Main and Norton versus going down to Five Corners. Often, Main Street traffic backs up into State Road so people go down Beach Street to Five Corners so as not to block the intersection. She asked for clarification about how many cars can fit on Main Street and Norton Lane.
- Trip asked that the possibility of a police officer at Main Street intersection be addressed.
- Ned Orleans noted that so far, the Tisbury Board of Selectmen has not shown much interest in trying to tackle the larger questions of downtown traffic circulation.
- Brian Smith asked for clarification of what the impact would be of 5% more traffic to an intersection that is already failed.
- Mark London requested clarification of the revised estimate of square footage, since the latest gross floor area provided by Stop & Shop is 30,447 s.f.
- Mark London asked how a 5 to 7% increase in volume translates into queue length and delay. He noted that Dan Greenbaum has reported many times that when an intersection is near, at, or beyond capacity, even small increases in volume can result in large increases in queue length and delay.
- Randy reported that they looked at it but the model could not replicate reality so now are trying to show the incremental change.
- Kathy asked about the extent to which it is the responsibility of an applicant to deal with the increased traffic related to new business in a viable city center.
- Keri that the traffic modeling accounts for new parking spaces.
- Mark London asked how to interpret the projected model results when the existing situation in the model is so different that the observed reality, such as the delay on Beach Road heading towards Five Corners of 18 seconds when observations show this to be 6 to 8 minutes or more. We need to know whether an increase in volume of 5 to 7% on queue length and delay. Would they be barely noticeable or very significant? Christina asked whether it was a linear or exponential relationship. The current delay on Beach Road goes on for an extended period, not just when a ferry is letting out or when a police officer is at Five Corners.
- Randy characterized the change as marginal, but said that to mitigate the Stop & Shop project, there is a need for a police officer at Five Corners trained for traffic control.
- Doug asked about offering increased police control as mitigation, in that it is in the control of the Town of Tisbury and there may not be any consistency. Stop & Shop can propose this but how can it be guaranteed that it would happen?

- Mark asked for clarification as to whether adding a police officer at Five Corners would necessarily reduce congestion. Past experience at that intersection apparently made things worse.
- Kathy inquired whether bringing together the Town, Steamship Authority, and VTA to discuss general transportation improvements. Randy reported that there has been such a meeting and all had a different idea about what change was needed based on different priorities; for example, the VTA needs to prioritize getting buses out of the area while the SSA prioritized getting vehicles off the ferry.
- Ned raised the possibility of the Commission tabling review of the project until the Town had resolved the larger planning issues. Bill O'Brien questioned this.
- Linda asked for clarification about how to estimate pass-by traffic and whether ITE has percentages of pass-by traffic by building type. Randy replied that pass-by traffic estimates are in ITE they used the cap in Massachusetts which is that 25% of the trips would be pass-by trips. Linda asked that Randy give an explanation at the hearing of how pass by traffic would work.
- Linda noted that Randy said traffic change will be marginal while Keri said it is significant, which is confusing.
- Linda asked whether the proposed mitigations are quantifiable, such as having employees park at the park-and-ride. Is it possible to demonstrate that the proposed mitigations will mitigate the impacts on this area?
- Randy summarized proposed mitigation measures:
 - Update Water Street striping,
 - Install wayfinding signage, if the Town agrees,
 - Modify the circle near Union Street to better differentiate the bus area,
 - Give the Town \$20,000 for to be used as the Town wants,
 - Finance police officer control at Five Corners and on Water Street,
 - Encourage employees to park at the Park & Ride.
 - Identify a fair-share contribution for transportation improvements. This could be based on the cost of a hypothetical change – such a signaling Five Corners even if this is not being proposed – and then figuring out how much of this is reasonably attributable to Stop & Shop. This could then be dedicated to other transportation improvements to be determined later. The Cape Cod Commission uses this methodology.
- Randy noted that Stop & Shop had funded a trip destination study this summer at a cost of about \$20,000; the results still need to be analyzed. Fred for clarification of the cost of analyzing these results and of doing a larger traffic study. Randy replied that the parameters of the study are not determined so it is hard to estimate, but would likely be in the hundreds of thousands.
- Brian said that the applicant and peer reviewer should provide a presentation of this material next week at the continued public hearing.
- Christina Brown noted that the different methodologies is confusing and they should try to relate the presentation to the real world for next week.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Documents referred to during the meeting

- November 8, 2013 Memorandum from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)
- Tisbury Stop & Shop—Revised Tables from Keri Pyke – November 12, 2013