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Martha's Vineyard Commission Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of January 30, 2012

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 p.m.

MVC Commissioners Present: Doug Sederholm; Christina Brown; Fred Hancock; Katherine Newman; Brian Smith, and Ned Orleans.

MVC Staff Present: Paul Foley; Mark London; Bill Veno; Sheri Caseau; Chris Flynn; and Mike Mauro

The LUPC reviewed two projects on February 2, 2012.

Documents referred to during the meeting

- LUPC Agenda of February 2, 2012.
- DRI 633 MVC Staff Technical Memorandum, January 28, 2012
- DRI 484-M7 Vineyard Golf Course Reconfiguration Staff Report 2012-01-30
- Two colored sketch plans of bus pullout alternatives
- Power point slide show for each project

1. O.B. Roundabout (DRI 633) Bus Stops, Pullouts, and Walkways Review

Present for the Applicant: Richie Combra (Highway Dept.)

Project Location: Intersection of Barnes Road and Edgartown-Vineyard haven Road

Purpose: To review the possible location of bus stops, pullouts, and related walkways and decide whether or not to make a recommendation to the full Commission

Audience: Angie Grant (Vineyard Transit Authority)

Introduction:

- Doug Sederholm noted that there are two key issues with respect to the bus pullouts.
 - How many and where will they be?
 - How big will they be?
- He said there seems to be a consensus we will have four bus stops and they will be located at the approaches to the intersection.
- Mark London summarized the MVC Staff Technical Memorandum:
 - MassDOT has indicated that they would like official confirmation as to the location of the bus stops and the possibility of pullouts within the coming week in order to allow preparation of the final plans in time to advertise the project on April 7.
 - When the MVC approved the roundabout, it was with the proviso that the infrastructure related to bus stops be scaled back as much as possible.
 - In recent weeks, there have been discussions with MVC staff, VTA staff, representatives of the Town, and MassDOT as to the location of bus stops as well as whether pullouts are warranted.

- The VTA has agreed with reducing the number of stops to four. After analyzing several options in conjunction with MVC staff, the VTA now recommends that the four stops be located at each of the approach lanes of the intersection.
- These locations offer the following advantages.
 - It is the typical location for bus stops at intersections.
 - A stopped bus in the lane would potentially back up traffic into the roundabout.
 - It avoids having one stop across the street from the other which, if there are pullouts, would result in a very wide expanse of pavement at such locations.
 - If there are pullouts (as recommended by the VTA), this configuration of stops would have the least impact on vegetation.
- **Walkways**
 - Irrespective of whether or not there are bus stops, it could be argued that there should be a crosswalk at each splitter island to provide a safe way to cross each road. A crosswalk must be connected to an ADA compliant walkway at each end.
 - MassDOT has indicated that if the community wants to they could eliminate those walkways on the north side of the Edgartown – Vineyard Haven Road that are not needed to meet ADA requirements to serve bus stops.
 - If any walkways are eliminated, staff recommends that the design alongside the roadway ensure that the occasional pedestrian who walks there can do so safely and that the layout provide for the possible addition of crosswalks in the future.
 - Locating bus stops at all four approaches would require walkways and crosswalks around the whole intersection.
 - MassDOT has agreed to set the walkways far enough from the road so that there is a vegetative buffer between the walkway and road where possible.
 - The one exception where the walkway will be right next to the road is a portion of the northeast corner between the crosswalks, where the narrow right-of-way there does not allow setting the walkway farther back.
- **Bus Platforms**
 - If the buses stop in the travel lane, the platforms can be reduced to the minimum 10' required by ADA, since the bus can pull up so either the front or the rear door aligns with the platform.
 - If a pullout is provided that is the length of a bus, the platform has to extend from the front of the front door to the back of the back door of the largest bus, namely about 30 feet. Note that in the original plans reviewed by the Commission the platforms were 60 to 80 feet long.
- **Bus Pullouts**
 - The VTA maintains that pullouts at each of the bus stops are necessary.
 - The VTA has suggested that even if there had not been a roundabout proposal, it would have proposed installation of bus pullouts at this location, mainly to accommodate buses waiting for a few minutes to allow passengers to make connections to other routes.
 - During the review of the roundabout several Commissioners raised the following concerns about providing the original large bus pullouts.
 - They would add to the paved area of the roundabout project and the project's overall visual impact.

- They would lead to the removal of a large number of mature trees and potentially eliminate the canopy of trees that now exists over the section of Barnes Road south of the intersection.
 - This is likely to remain a rural area with little pedestrian traffic and few people boarding or alighting buses. They add to the cost of the project.
 - There has been no community consensus about the desirability of providing bus pullouts across the Island.
- No formal comment has been received from the Town.

Discussion:

- Angie Grant clarified that the VTA wanted 8 bus pullouts (2 on each side at each approach). MassDOT knocked it down to 6. She thinks that the scenario with 4, one at each approach, is a good compromise.
- Chris Murphy asked if they needed bus pullouts at each.
- Angie said she wants four bus pullouts able to accommodate a bus out of the travel lane.
- ***John Breckenridge made a Motion to recommend to the full Commission that the roundabout should have four bus stops, one at each approach. The Motion was duly seconded by Ned Orleans.***
- ***Fred Hancock added that we should add to the Motion the four crosswalks and the sidewalks on all sides to the Motion.***
- Doug Sederholm said the LUPC now had to address the more difficult question of whether they could just be landing pads or if they should be full pull-offs sized to accommodate a full bus.
- John Breckenridge asked Angie Grant where the busses wait.
- Angie Grant said that the 1 and 9 transfer is timed. They do a lot of radio contact since the 7 and 9 routes get such limited service in the off-season.
- John Breckenridge asked if a shelter would help. Angie answered no they are waiting for a passenger on another bus.
- Mark London said this plan with four bus pullouts is not as good from a scenic values perspective but is smaller than the original request by VTA for eight pullouts that MassDOT designed 60-80 feet long each.
- Linda Sibley said that the Staff Technical Memo has persuaded her to allow the pullouts. She said that in general she is not in favor of bus pullouts everywhere. She was appalled by the original plan. She has changed her mind and is now on board with four pullouts if they can be as small as possible.
- John Breckenridge said he too was in favor of eliminating the pullouts but that with the reduction to four and scaling them down he could support them.
- Richie Combra said that without pullouts it would create a maintenance nightmare and that stopping in the travel lane seems dangerous to him.
- Christina Brown asked how big the pullouts would be.
- Doug Sederholm said his understanding was that they would be 40 feet long with angled approaches at either end that would be about 20 feet long. So a total of approximately 80 feet long including the tapered entry and exit.
- Mark London said that MassDOT has said we should tell them what we want and they will do it. Right now we are talking about the main part of the pullout being 40'-44' long plus the angled approach. He suggested that it could be 8'-9' wide instead of 10 feet wide.

- Linda Sibley said her understanding was these would be the minimal length and width necessary to accommodate the function.
- Angie Grant said their busses cannot get much bigger. 40 feet long is about as big as they will get.
- Mark London said we could use language to the effect of “minimum necessary”.
- Fred Hancock asked what the surface material would be.
- Richie Combra said it should either be stamped concrete or asphalt or some hard surface.
- Linda Sibley said it is important that the bus stops don’t migrate too much. If they get too close to the roundabout then it adds to the feeling of a sea of asphalt.
- Mark London suggested it could be a stamped, textured concrete.
- Ned Orleans asked if we have four crosswalks at the splitter islands how would this comply with the DRI 633 Condition regarding S.U.P.s that says the S.U.P. “may be located up to three car lengths farther south”.
- Mark London said that the SUP, Lighting, and Landscaping will come back to LUPC at a later date.
- Linda Sibley said then we have to clarify that we are not approving everything we are only approving the bus pullouts. The SUP is still an open issue.
- Chris Murphy said it seems the SUP has gravitated back to where it was originally.
- Mark London said the engineer told him on the phone that the SUP should join the crosswalk at the splitter island.
- Bill Veno said that MassDOT thinks the SUP is in the appropriate place.
- Doug Sederholm noted that there is a Motion on the floor. He added that the Motion includes the proviso that the location of the SUP is not yet known yet.
- Fred Hancock said that the material has not been decided yet.
- Mark London said that they need the layout now. We can determine the material later.
- Christina Brown thought the Motion should say that the bus pullouts should be within the range of 40’-44’ long, 8’-9’ wide, with 20’ long angled approaches.
- Angie Grant said that the busses are 96 inches wide so they can get away with the pullout being 9 feet wide. With the bike racks the pullouts should be 44 feet long.
- ***The Motion passed unanimously.***

2. Vineyard Golf Course Reconfiguration (DRI 484-M7) Modification Review

Applicant: Vineyard Golf Course; Sean Murphy (Lawyer); Jeff Carlson (Course manager); Adam Moore (Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation); Doug Cooper (Environmental Review).

Project Location: Old House Lane off of Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, Edgartown Map 22 Lots 57.11, 57.2, and 57.3 (211.2 acres)

Proposal: Re-configuration of the golf course including relocating the 7th and 8th holes and eliminating the flyover and cart path from the frost bottom between them. The reconfiguration will include taking 9.47 acres out of the golf course area and put into various forms of conservation while 1.35 acres will be taken out of the Frost Bottom buffer and 0.32 acres out of the Frost bottom itself and converted to part of the golf course.

Purpose: To review the project and decide whether or not to make a recommendation to the full Commission as to whether this is a significant change to the approved DRI requiring a public hearing review as a Development of Regional Impact.

Introduction:

- The proposal is for the Re-configuration of the golf course including relocating the 7th and 8th hole and eliminating the flyover and cart path from the frost bottom between them.
- The reconfiguration will include taking 9.47 acres out of the golf course area and put into various forms of conservation while 1.35 acres will be taken out of the Frost Bottom buffer and 0.32 acres out of the Frost Bottom itself and converted to part of the golf course.
- Sean Murphy noted that the Commission had a condition on the original golf course, Condition 1.L, which stated that Commission shall accept the delineation of the existing frost bottom as submitted by the Applicant; and further...
- Since then the members have taken over the club from the developers. They have come up with a plan to remove the long detour and cart ride around the frost bottom by relocating holes 7 and 8.
- The plan includes:
 - 0.52 Acres will be converted from golf course conservation and limited building (staff housing) areas and put into the frost bottom buffer.
 - 8.73 acres will be converted from golf conservation area to a Conservation Restriction and managed as Frost Bottom buffer.
 - 2.32 acres will convert from the golf course (Hole 8) and be restored to native vegetation.
 - 0.81 acres of Frost Bottom buffer will no longer be a "flyover" area (Hole 8).
 - 1.35 acres will be converted from Frost Bottom buffer to golf course (New Hole 5).
 - 0.32 acres will be converted from Frost Bottom to golf course (New Hole 5).
- This eliminates human activity around the frost bottom and Edgartown-West Tisbury Road.
- Doug Sederholm asked why it was done this way.
- Jeff Carlson said that this is intended to be a walking course. They have lived with the shuttle system around the Frost Bottom but would prefer to remove it by eliminating the holes going around it.
- John Breckenridge asked if this would include filling the 0.32 acres of Frost Bottom.
- Jeff Carlson said it is mostly just stripping the oak and blueberry. They are not going to change the contours.
- Doug Cooper said that he and his wife (biologist) did the environmental review of the project.
 - They reviewed the previous documentation. They visited the site and analyzed the conditions. They verified what is there and what was reported.
 - He added that they made a trial attempt at trans-locating a slice of oak barren. It is highly vigorous and resilient and it appears amenable for trans-locating.
 - He said that the Frost Bottom is exposed to the wind on the Metcalf Road side. This reconfiguration should restore the windward side.
- Adam Moore of the Sheriffs Meadow Foundation (SMF) said that it's a great plan and confident that it will work. There are 17 rare moths; 1 beetle; 2 birds; and 1 rare plant in the Frost Bottom. They cut some pitch pine along the edges and planting some oak at the edges with this plan should help stop the pine. He added that SMF made a controversial decision at the time by setting aside some lots they had control over in order to allow this golf course to go forward because they felt a golf course was better than a large subdivision.
- The Conservation Commission holds the Conservation Restriction and SMF is the managing agent.
- Linda Sibley said that the Frost Bottom is fascination and she would like a presentation on the special nature of it at the review.
- John Breckenridge asked if we have specifics of the change to the Conservation Restriction.
- Sean Murphy said he can provide packets with the change for the state and C.R. change.

- Doug Sederholm asked what the state has done.
- Sean Murphy said that after the Commission they have to file requesting that the CR amendment is not subject to Article 97 so that it does not have to be approved by the Legislature. Then they have to go to NHESP and MEPA to amend the C.R. and the Secretary of Environmental Affairs has to sign off. It will also be signed by the Edgartown Conservation Commission and Sheriff's Meadow Foundation.
- Paul Foley pointed out that the majority (8.73 acres) of the supposed newly protected area is already partially protected as part of the golf course. Most of those acres are not in the field of play and would have to be approved by the MVC to make them part of the field of play.
- Bill Veno said that SMF has been exploring creation of a trail parallel to Metcalf from Dr. Fisher Road and asked about the trail's status.
- Adam Moore said they have talked about it with the State but have not got an answer. He agreed that there is some merit to having a trail but pointed out that Dr. Fisher already connects to Edgartown-West Tisbury road elsewhere. But a trail along Metcalf Road is a possibility.
- Christina Brown said she is leaning towards a public hearing because of the visibility of the golf course.
- Chris Murphy said the bottom line is whether there are neighbors who would be affected. It seems like an improvement.
- Linda Sibley asked what the purpose of a public hearing would be. She said that at the time of the original hearing for the golf course, she was strongly against the flyover wrapping around the Frost Bottom.
- ***Christina Brown made a Motion to recommend to the full Commission that this is within the scope of the approved DRI and does not require a public hearing review as a Development of Regional Impact. Ned Orleans seconded the Motion which was passed unanimously.***
- The Modification Review was scheduled for February 16, 2012.

Adjourned 7:01 pm