Livelihood/Commerce Work Group Core
Meeting Notes of November 8, 2006, 4:00 pm, Cronig’s Market

Present - Members: John Abrams (Chair), Jim Athearn, Sherm Goldstein, Sean Welch, Linda Sibley, Steve Bernier, Sandy Ray, Phil Hare, Pat Gregory
Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Christine Flynn
Present – Others: Mimi Davisson

1. Meeting Notes
The following corrections were made to the October 25th meeting notes. Who Else Do We Need to Reach Out To? should include the cultural community (theater, dance, etc.). The additional items of What Else Do We Need to Know is added to the list discussed on October 11.

2. Priority Issues and Trends
The following issues and trends should be tracked in the future.

- Who are the seasonal residents and what do we have to do to keep them coming?
- What will the impact be of an aging population and an increasing number of retirees?
- How can we attract and retain skilled labor?
- What is the impact of growing on-line capabilities?
- How can business deal with demographic change?
- What are the impacts of transportation of people and freight to and from the Island?
- What other economic issues are related to being separated from the mainland?
- As we run out of available land, will there be a decline in the construction industry or will reconstruction and remodeling replace new development on virgin land? If there is a decline, what will the impacts be?
- What is the economic impact of seasonal residents and retirees who spend their pensions on island?
- What are the local impacts of spending versus leakage off-Island? What is the profile of the transient workforce?
- What is the cost of living / market basket?
- Can we improve job development and creation?
- How can we educate people about the economic underpinnings of our quality of life?
- Can schools provide more vocational education related to on-island jobs?
- How much food and energy is and can be produced locally?
- How does the wastewater infrastructure, or absence thereof, impact business?
- Where is business located – in town centers, in business areas, or dispersed in residential and rural areas?
• What is the potential impact of chain stores, and institutions like the YMCA? What about Island chain stores like the Black Dog?
• What sectors of the economy provide the best employment opportunities in terms of wages, benefits, working conditions, satisfaction, compatibility with a good quality of life?
• What is the balance of trade by sector: leakage of money and money coming from off-Island?
• What sectors of the economy should be encouraged because they have the most positive benefits for the community and the lowest negative impacts?
• What sectors of the economy are most essential to the community?
• How can we promote sustainable tourism?

3. Meeting of the Full Work Group on November 15, 2006
The aim is to have a range of topics, without attempting to be comprehensive. The break-out sessions will deal with the following. Two members of the Core group will participate in each session, one as a facilitator and one to take notes.

A. The Cost of Doing Business on the Vineyard: How can we make it easier to do business? Regulatory impediments. Expenses. Other challenges. (Sherm, Christine)
B. Post-Secondary Education: Are there opportunities to establish programs in the future? What can we learn from past efforts? (Pat, Mimi)
C. Working on the Vineyard: How can we make it better for employees? A living wage. Benefits. Working conditions. Housing. (Steve, Sean)
D. Think Globally, Act Locally: How can we take best advantage of global changes? (Phil, John)
E. Producing and Buying Locally: What can we do to increase local production of food and energy, and to increase local buying? (Linda, Mark)

4. Scope of Work
John reminded the group that we should be producing a work program describing how we will carry out the Work Group’s mandate by next Spring.

5. Upcoming Meetings
November 15, 5:30pm Full L/C Work Group MVC Offices
November 29, 4:00pm L/C Core Cronig’s
November 30, 5:00pm Steering Committee and L/C Core to be determined
November 30, 7:30pm Public Meeting – Michael Shuman Katharine Cornell Theater
December 12, 4:00pm L/C Core Cronig’s

Notes prepared by Mark London