

Livelihood/Commerce Work Group Core

Meeting Notes of October 24, 2007, 3:30 pm, MVC Offices

Present

Members of the Core: John Abrams (Chair), Sherm Goldstein, Linda Sibley, Sean Welch, Jim Athearn,

Member of the Work Group: Mimi Davisson

MVC Staff: Mark London, Christine Flynn

1. Membership of the Core Group

In terms of representation of different interests and points of view, we are not well served by the reduction in numbers. The majority of members are owners of small businesses who directly or indirectly earn their livings from seasonal tourist industry, which is admittedly the key part of the Vineyard economy. However, it would be useful to have representation from:

- Professionals,
- Business services,
- Banking,
- Health services,
- Arts and entertainment,
- Larger organizations,
- Higher-paying jobs,
- Employees,
- Younger people.

The expansion of the Core should be done carefully, with an effort to seek unlike minds. The name was raised of George Balco, who has a background in this field and wrote an op-ed piece in the Times about the leakage study; however, it would be better to have someone like that from a town other than Tisbury, since it is already very heavily represented. Richard Leonard could make a suggestion for banking.

2. Relation between the Core and the Work Group

The Core should branch out into whole Work Group more. The September forum indicated that there is considerable interest, that people want to be more involved. The Core needs to communicate more consistently and effectively with larger group.

We should send the draft of the first phase of the Ryan study as well a copy of the leakage study to Work Group and invite members to come and comment on the reports. When it is ready, we should send the updated synthesis document out and ask for feedback.

Instead of just generally asking for input, we should ask for Readers, who would agree to read the three documents and provide feedback to the Core. We could send a note to Work Group members asking who would like to be a reader. we could also solicit readers through the Chamber of Commerce. We could also actively recruit other people from underrepresented points of view.

3. John Ryan Study

We have received a first draft of the results of the first part of the study. There were a couple of obvious errors that should be corrected before even the draft is circulated more widely. John Ryan should be asked to prepare a brief summary of the report.

4. Forum Feedback and Synthesis Document

Sherm said that half a dozen people approached him with skepticism about the idea of a community-owned utility. There was concern about this being run by the county, and that this might limit people's ability to purchase at the lowest price. It might be that we are actually subsidizing off-Island businesses at the expense of local businesses, encouraging people to shop off-Island and penalizing shopping on Island; some people afraid of eliminating this subsidy.

John Abrams met Lynn Benander of Co-op Power at a meeting of the Cape and Islands Energy Collaborative. This is a consumer-owned cooperative building sustainable energy resources in New England, whose first project is a biodiesel production facility in western Massachusetts. He has invited her to meet the Livelihood and Commerce Core on November 14. We should also invite the Energy and Waste Core. The possibility was raised of having a second event that evening for the general public.

Mark will send the Proceedings of the forum to the whole Work Group, and will send the spring version of the synthesis to the Core.

The revised synthesis document should include more information about each proposal such as: the nature of the strategy (regulation, incentive, program, project, etc.) who is appropriate implementation entity, what is missing in order to move ahead, how long would it take, how much is it likely to cost, what the priority is.

Notes prepared by Mark London