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## Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on January 25, 2018 In the Stone Building 33 New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs, MA

### IN ATTENDANCE

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Commissioners: (P= Present; A= Appointed; E= Elected)

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|--|-----------------------------------|
| - Gail Barmakian (A-Oak Bluffs)          | P Michael Kim (A-Governor)        |
| P Trip Barnes (E-Tisbury)                | P Joan Malkin (A-Chilmark)        |
| P Leon Brathwaite (A-County)             | - Katherine Newman (A-Aquinnah)   |
| P Christina Brown (E-Edgartown)          | P Ben Robinson (A-Tisbury)        |
| - Peter Connell (A-Governor; non-voting) | P Doug Sederholm (E-West Tisbury) |
| - Robert Doyle (E-Chilmark)              | P Linda Sibley (E-West Tisbury)   |
| - Josh Goldstein (E-Tisbury)             | P Ernie Thomas (A-West Tisbury)   |
| P Fred Hancock (E-Oak Bluffs)            | - Richard Toole (E-Oak Bluffs)    |
| P James Joyce (A-Edgartown)              | P James Vercruysse (E-Aquinnah)   |

Staff: Adam Turner (Executive Director), Bill Veno (Senior Planner), Christine Flynn (Economic Development and Affordable Housing Planner), Dan Doyle (Transportation Planner).

**Chairman James Vercruysse** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Joan Malkin** noted that she has been re-appointed but not yet sworn in.

### 1. FY 2019 BUDGET APPROVAL

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Commissioners Present: T. Barnes, L. Brathwaite, C. Brown, F. Hancock, J. Joyce, M. Kim, J. Malkin, B. Robinson, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, E. Thomas, J. Vercruysse.

#### 1.1 Staff Report

**Adam Turner** presented the following:

- Based on statute, Commissioners can review the budget and make comments. Some Towns have not provided input yet. The budget can still be approved, and if the Towns have comments and changes need to be made, it can be put back on the agenda for another meeting.
  - **James Joyce** asked if any of the Towns made comments so far.
  - **Adam Turner** said there were comments, but nothing that changed the budget. They may not be happy with the increase in benefits and medical costs. The increases were announced last year, so it was not a surprise, and is fair. The comments have been pretty happy with the budget.
- The budget is \$69,000 higher than last year. Salary increases account for \$33,000. The balance is increases in health and dental costs, and OPEB.
- Expenses were reduced by \$22,000, which is primarily a reduction of legal fees.
- Grants/contracts will raise \$31,000 more than last year.
- It is a fair budget, but puts pressure on the Commission to find grant money.
- Contractually, there is \$18,000 and without grants, the MVC will only spend \$18,000.

- In house, \$425,000 needs to be raised. Last year (FY 2017), the MVC raised \$512,000.

## **1.2 Commissioner's Questions**

**Trip Barnes** asked what Dues/Subscriptions/Licenses were. **Adam Turner** said certain staff belongs to professional organizations, and it is for their software expenses and licenses. There are a few subscriptions to industry publications, the Vineyard Gazette, and the New York Times.

**Doug Sederholm** said he appreciated the great work done in researching and applying for grants and the effect that it has had in offsetting budget increases, but the problem with them is that they must be received every year. He was just making that observation. Grants may dry up and the MVC could find itself short one day, and would have to go to the Towns. The increases in health coverage and employee expenses were unavoidable. There may come a time when the Commission has to look to the Towns for more money. **Adam Tuner** suggested that if that instance were to arise, he could remind the Towns about all of the times that they were not approached to handle deficiencies.

**Linda Sibley** said helping the MVC is the Town's obligation, as the MVC does serve them. **Doug Sederholm** said it is the Town's legal obligation, and he was trying to be diplomatic.

**Adam Turner** summarized the grants that the Commission has received: \$14,000 for automated traffic counters, \$35,000 to follow up and implement Housing Production Plans, \$100,000 for the VTA, \$25,000 for pond testing, and \$25,000 to get the nitrogen information published.

**Ben Robinson** said the grants are appreciated, but the majority are a pass through. How much of that can be leveraged? **Adam Turner** said about 10%. The grants need to be exercised. He just got on the Southern New England Environmental Partnership and they also have some grants available. With our staff and working with the Towns, we should do more. The MVC wants to start getting more involved in climate change, global warming, sea level rise and coastal erosion. There is public money and private money for some of this. The DOT grant has been re-negotiated. If the Commission were to get to a year that the grants don't seem like a viable option, we will say that. This year was a good year to partner with the Towns.

**Fred Hancock** asked what became of the surplus from 2017. **Adam Turner** said the surplus goes back into the fund. There is a two months reserve of \$184,000. Any surplus at the end of the year would first go to replenish the General Reserve Fund if it is less than the targeted amount.

**Fred Hancock** said funds are received quarterly from the Towns, so it is important to have the General Reserve Fund to pay the day to day expenses.

**Adam Turner** said the only thing with a small organization to go up and down would probably be legal expenses. If a big case comes in, that will need to be addressed.

**Fred Hancock** said the MVC put money into the building and it was certainly needed; it was well spent.

**Michael Kim** asked if the grants were mostly from public sources. **Adam Turner** said there are a couple of foundation grants. The MVC received an Edey Grant, which is private. There are also Rockefeller and McArthur grants, which are also private.

**Ernie Thomas moved and it was duly seconded to accept the budget. Voice vote. In favor: 11. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 1. The motion passed.**

## **2. NEW BUSINESS**

*Commissioners Present: T. Barnes, L. Brathwaite, C. Brown, F. Hancock, J. Joyce, M. Kim, J. Malkin, B. Robinson, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, E. Thomas, J. Vercruysse.*



## **2.1 Executive Director Report**

There was a discussion about Brian Hurley representing a private client in Aquinnah.

- **Adam Turner** said the MVC was contacted by our legal counsel, Brian Hurley, and he has motioned us to approve his acceptance of a client in Aquinnah. He was contacted by a private client in Aquinnah, but needs approval to accept a client in a town under the MVC's jurisdiction. He will need to be designated as a special town employee.
- **Doug Sederholm** said as an attorney, he respects people who appear before Town Boards. Mr. Hurley can only do that if he is designated a special municipal employee. Being a member of the MVC, Mr. Sederholm has also been designated as a special municipal employee.
- **Leon Brathwaite** said it is complying with the ethic law. If there is a partial conflict, it has to be put on notice, and that is what he is doing.
- **Christina Brown** said he has a blanket right to appear before the Town Boards with the designation.
- **Adam Turner** said he has to decide before he takes a client if it would impact the MVC.
- **Joan Malkin** asked if it was in favor of him or his law firm.
- **Adam Turner** said it is his law firm.
- **Joan Malkin** said if it is someone we don't know they may not know to tell us.
- **James Vercruysse** said if it was a pending regulatory issue with the MVC, he could not take it.
- **Adam Tuner** said he did not think the case is regarding a land issue.

***Doug Sederholm moved and it was duly seconded to approve the motion to the MVC from Brian Hurley.***

- **Linda Sibley** said it needs to be clear to him that if he takes position in a legal matter that is adversarial to any town or board, it would impact us.
- **Christina Brown** asked if the Commission could be notified.
- **Joan Malkin** said the MVC should write a letter approving the motion, but request that the law firm notify the Commission of any pending issue that might be of impact.

**Voice vote. In favor: 10. Opposed: 0. Abstentions: 2. The motion passed.**

**James Vercruysse**, Chairman, recessed the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:35 p.m.

## **3. ISLAND PLAN REVIEW**

*Commissioners Present: T. Barnes, L. Brathwaite, C. Brown, F. Hancock, J. Joyce, M. Kim, J. Malkin, B. Robinson, D. Sederholm, L. Sibley, E. Thomas, J. Vercruysse.*

### **3.1 Staff Report**

**Bill Veno** presented the following:

- The Island Plan was a large undertaking. It was four years in the making.
- It should be examined to see if it needs to be changed and if it has been followed.
- The purpose of the Island Plan was to chart a course to the kind of future the Vineyard community wanted.
- There were focus and work groups of different topics to determine the different components.
- The plan was adopted at the end of 2009 to make the Island more sustainable, resilient, diverse and balanced, and to create a better future for the Island itself.
- The Land Use Guidance Map looks at various areas. The plan took a moderate growth approach, which was about half of what the projected growth would have been. The Land Use Guidance Map identified areas more suitable for growth, sensitive areas and protected habitat.

- There were over 200 implementation strategies. The plan also contained the Strategy Tracking Sheet for the public to follow along, but that never happened.
- Ultimately no one body was responsible for implementing the plan. So implementation was left to the countless entities that affect the wellbeing of the Island.
- The plan also monitored progress, since goals would not remain constant and would need to be reviewed. The targets were few and far between. Each of the categories had a single goal, objective and strategy.
- Development and Growth: The map showed protected, developed, available, and potentially available lands. The differences between 2008 and 2015 were shown. There was about a 10-11% increase in protected land, a one third reduction in available land, and potentially available land remained stagnant.
  - **Adam Turner** said land is being conserved and developed at roughly the same rate.
  - **Doug Sederholm** said there was a 10% increase in the developed land in seven years.
  - **Christina Brown** asked what percent was protected land.
  - **Bill Veno** said 10-11%. Some of the protected space noted in 2008 we are being able to clarify that it wasn't protected. It is a ball park concept.
  - **Christina Brown** said the protected land has somewhat increased, as the Land Bank has continued to purchase land and people are putting land into conservation.
  - **Adam Turner** said it is fair to say that one of the things the MVC should do is update these layers.
  - **Bill Veno** said in some ways but it might not be worth the effort to be that precise.
  - **Tri Branes** said the airport was not completely developed and should not be shown that way.
  - **Christina Brown** asked if there was anywhere on the Island that has had an explosion of development. That could be helpful for towns to do planning.
  - **Bill Veno** said there are not a lot of new subdivisions, so a lot is in fill.
  - **Linda Sibley** said it would be really nice if there was a version of the map that morphed to show exactly what has changed. She agreed that it was not accurate to show the airport as completely built out.
  - **Trip Barnes** said the airport is important. It is the last commercial property that is available. It will be an issue coming up fast. There is a long waiting list for people wanting properties at the airport.
  - **Michael Kim** said there is a substantial increase in protected land and developed land. The lots more easily developed are done first, is it reasonable to say that?
  - **Christina Brown** said not necessarily, old family land is not easily relinquished and given up.
- DRI areas were identified as critical areas and were noted on the map, but proved to be problematic. That Checklist item needs to be deconstructed and have a more sensible trigger that towns and builders can understand.
- Social Environment Objectives: maintain the Island's sense of community and inclusiveness and preserve the economic continuum, to promote healthy lifestyles and improve the capability to provide seamless accessible health and humans services, to turn the Vineyard into schools without walls by providing pre K-12 and education opportunities for adult learning and increase coordination of and support to arts and the culture of the community.
  - **Christine Flynn** said that providing adult learning has been done through Ace MV. It is no longer just cultural programs and it has been very successful.
- Built Environment: to preserve the distinct character of Martha's Vineyard and promote environmentally sound building, increase public awareness of built environment, protect



historic resources, protect community character, encourage green building techniques, minimize environmental impacts of development and redevelop opportunity areas. We had the Scenic Roads Committee and the Oak Bluffs Harbor.

- In 2002 a Buildout Study was done by the State. The projected build out was based on existing trends and showed that the Island is past the build out. It showed housing units and households.

**Christine Flynn** presented the following:

- Livelihood and Commerce Objectives: Blue Economy; Island Grown Initiative, which brings food to the schools, advocates for small farmers, and provides community outreach to buy local products; Arts MV, which has been in existence for six years. It is important as a seasonal economy to support the Main Street businesses. It is economic development promotion and there are two cultural districts, one in Vineyard Haven and one in Aquinnah. Over 10% of the local economy is in this area, such as graphic arts.
- Diversifying the economy: tourism and hospitality are a huge segment of the Island's economy and will continue to be so.
- The natural resources are the economic engine, and are why people choose to purchase a second home here.
- Health and human services sectors of the economy are growing.
  - **Bill Veno** said in 2004 construction was 17% of the employment and in 2015 it was 12%.
  - **Doug Sederholm** asked where these numbers came from. Are they wages paid to employees? A lot of construction on the island is not paid to Martha's Vineyard employees. They are off Island workers.
  - **Adam Turner** said the purpose of this meeting is to examine how the plan projected for these things, and if it needs to be changed going forward.
  - **Bill Veno** said 30% of people who work on the Island don't live on the Island.
  - **Ben Robinson** asked how those numbers were determined. Did you look at the long form?
  - **Christine Flynn** said the data was from the US Census. In 2010 they stopped using the long form.
  - **Bill Veno** said this is sample information.
  - **Christin Flynn** said it does speak to a lot of people in the community and speaks to a continuing issue that land and housing is unavailable. The Island is not keeping up with the demands and needs of our communities with housing.
  - **James Joyce** said this information doesn't mean much to him unless compared to the national average.
  - **Michael Kim** asked if nonresidential included seasonal workers.
  - **Christin Flynn** said it depends when the survey was taken.

**Bill Veno** presented the following:

- The energy and waste goal is to organize and deal effectively with energy issues. Some towns have adopted stretch codes. The Vineyard Energy Co-op came out of the Island Plan. The VTA is going electric which will improve air quality. Some towns have adopted solar ray bylaws. The Refuse District is adopting composting.
- Housing: the target was to have 10% of the year-round housing be permanently affordable to residents earning 80% less than median income and prioritize residents with greatest need; allow additional density for new community housing in appropriate areas; prioritize use of existing housing stock for affordable housing; increase funding for community housing and related infrastructure and services; and streamline the planning and management.
  - **Trip Barnes** said the MVC and Island are failing at this and it is useless to talk about it.

- **Christine Flynn** said there are zoning issues and infrastructure issues. The Island needs housing for an aging demographic and there is a growing homeless population. By technical terms, if a person does not have 12 month stable housing, they are homeless. We have failed on providing housing. These needs will continue to grow and get worse. It is hard to find stable housing, even for the professionals who are doing well financially.
- **Bill Veno** said in 2000, the Lank Bank reported first time homebuyers were reported for 200 units per month, and down to 100 in 2008.
- **Transportation:** the target is to minimize increased car use with future growth by expanding the use of alternative means of transportation. A graphic was reviewed of the SSA usage: there has been an 8% increase in just cars via the SSA, the average amount of cars per quarter is going up, and the increase in truck trips was also shown. The VTA is growing in ridership by 4-5% annually. The Vineyard Haven and Edgartown Park n' Ride grew 40% over the decade. The plan also looked at problematic intersections and the roundabout.
  - **Linda Sibley** asked if there was data separating how the Park n' Ride and the VTA are used. With her own observation, there are now more people waiting at the bus stops, and that use is more important than the shuttle bus. If the two are mixed together, it is hard to tell which is growing.
  - **Leon Brathwaite** said paid versus unpaid ridership would answer the question.
  - **Linda Sibley** said the Park n' Ride is virtuous, but it is very different use than bus ridership.
- **Water Resources:** to restore the health of the coastal ponds. The water quality map was shown. The impaired ponds and watersheds were shown. The testing that has been done since shows that the ponds are not getting significantly worse.
- **Main areas of action/progress include:** the housing assessment needs, the housing production plans and continued protection of open space.
- **Main areas needing attention are:** how to reduce nitrogen in coastal ponds, how to provide increased density and multi-unit housing (rentals), how to provide necessary infrastructure, how to grow the economy without being strangled with increased traffic, and how to prioritize among competing issues.
- **Leadership is a question.**

### **3.2 Commissioners' Discussion**

**Adam Turner** asked what the Commissioners recommended to do with this plan, in terms of updating and implementation.

**Bill Veno** said the MVC has to be working with the towns. Decision making that starts moving the marker. If nothing has happened on a certain topic, maybe the priorities have changed.

**Adam Turner** said we have this plan and things have happened. Is it because of the plan or is it because we have talented people on the Island so things happen. What are the next steps?

**Bill Veno** said we need to put measures on it so we know if we have achieved the objective.

**Linda Sibley** said you were being a little nonjudgmental. She was part of the planning and the assumption was there was not going to be one implementer. There are various groups on the Island to do so and in some cases it has, yet regarding housing and water quality not so. We could check off those with great programs and perhaps look at the ones that have not progressed. The Housing Production Plans are with the towns.

**Joan Malkin** said the towns have just started with the Housing Production Plans. Things take time to judge as a failure.



**Trip Barnes** said the biggest problem is water quality. The SSA charges a fee for people to come here and all of those funds should go towards better sewerage facilities. The most serious problem is the drinking water.

**Joan Malkin** said she did not think the MVC should revisit the plan. Some of the data could be updated. What she thought would happen tonight was that staff would identify the critical issues and those strategies that are effective and doable. The MVC would work with other entities that have some sort of ownership with the issues. What would be handy is for staff to examine the Island Plan, and determine the critical issues, and what strategies are doable.

**Adam Turner** said Bill Veno gave us an overview of the plan, and Commissioners need to talk more strategically about where we can go and what has worked. It will take more than one night. This is a start.

**Joan Malkin** said we need to focus and be accountable on deliverables.

**Bill Veno** said staff went through every strategy and sometimes a lot of effort was spent on something, and yet the results are not showing a great deal of progress.

**Doug Sederholm** said because the power is in other hands.

**Christine Flynn** said staff would like to know what the Commissioners envision for the plan moving forward. There are some great opportunities for the towns, and some of the work they are doing has stemmed from the plan.

**Christina Brown** said she thought it would be helpful to address the staff's questions on where we go. For ourselves, to review and determine if we agree with the general goals of the future of the Island, and then look at the implementation of strategies and keep the discussion going on whether we agree with the goals.

**Joan Malkin** said she has read the goals and she agrees with them, but Commissioners are not steeped in this material as much as the staff is. We need staff to say these are some of the strategies that are achievable, so we can organize it so we can do something or can help the towns do something.

**Leon Brathwaite** asked if staff could come back with five or six items that need to be done. Focus down to critical areas and as a group we work on those.

**Linda Sibley** said the most important ones are the ones where there has not had been great progress, such as water quality and housing. The Island Plan did not provide much guidance on sea level rise, and perhaps that could be addressed.

**Adam Turner** said Bill Veno did a cross section of a very dense product, and the Commission can move forward. The Island Plan is a great product and he doesn't see it being used. He wants it to be implemented. Should we go to the towns more, and break it down so it is smaller?

**Ben Robinson** said staff has been great working with the towns. The MVC should be focused on management of development.

**Adam Turner** said he went to a Cape Cod Compact Visionary session where energy was discussed. These things should be pilot products. We should also talk about these issues but at the beginning and we need to come up with a green policy that includes energy.

**Joan Malkin** asked if Ben Robinson is working on sustainability issues. **Ben Robinson** said there are materials out there that can be used. **Joan Malkin** asked if he was pulling that together to present, so the Commission could start working on it.

**Bill Veno** said we should work with the towns to start working on issues, such as light pollution.

**Adam Turner** said when talking with developers we need to talk and present to them that these are the things we will be looking for.

**Linda Sibley** said we have developed policies in all these areas and they should be put into a synopsis so a developer knows what they are.

**Michael Kim** said the developers need to be presented and told about the policies.

**Joan Malkin** said they know about the policies, but they are creators of a capital society so they only do what they need to do. You can't fault them.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO DURING THE MEETING

- Martha's Vineyard Commission DRAFT Budget FY 2019
- Island Plan – Land Use Guidance Map

  
Chairman

4.5.18  
Date

  
Clerk-Treasurer

4-10-2018  
Date