

Jo-Ann Taylor

From: Aaron Naparstek [Aaron@naparstek.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 4:56 PM
To: taylor@mvcommission.org; london@mvcommission.org; STRIPERCAPT@aol.com; lewsmv@msn.com; Al Read; info@mvcommission.org; diorioron@aol.com; Lon and Nancy R. Hendricks; Belleruth Naparstek
Cc: SilverVox@aol.com
Subject: Re: Public Comment on Pier from Belleruth Naparstek

Dear All,

I just want to second the comments raised by Belleruth Naparstek in her letter below and add a couple of additional points for the official record.

I find it very unfortunate that we are not all working together to get this fishing pier built on the south side of the Steamship Authority pier. If the project were proposed for that location, I believe that residents of the North Bluff would be happy to support this project or, at least, would not have any major objection. As it now stands, this project does not make sense and the process by which the town has pursued the project has been shoddy and improper.

Section 15 of the MVC Act is very clear. In weighing the benefits of a pending project, the MVC must determine whether "the development at the proposed location is essential/especially appropriate in view of alternatives on the island."

In the case of this fishing pier project there has been no consideration or analysis of any alternative site. The cursory MEPA report identifies only a no-build alternative, as if this one spot were the only possibly location for a fishing pier in all of Oak Bluffs. While various comment letters have come in asserting that another fishing pier is appropriate on island, there has been no critical or significant review that the proposed location is essential or especially appropriate. To the contrary, the proposed location is actually not preferred for a variety of reasons, including:

1. As the intent is to provide quality fishing grounds, this area is clearly substandard. I've been fishing off of the Oak Bluffs jetty going on 30 years now. The fishing at this location is, simply put, lousy. But don't take it from me. See Greg Skomal's letter indicating that other locations are preferable; see Harvey Russell's letter discussing the lack of structure and other issues. Further, the area is in proximity to protected eelgrass beds.
2. The existing development in this waterfront area presently is extensive (SSA pier, Nancy's, primary access to downtown OB), yet another use of the waterfront will overstress the existing infrastructure and impose an undue burden on the residents of the North Bluff.
3. The 317 foot length of the proposed pier to access water depth – has the applicant reviewed other areas of town or the island in which a shorter and less expensive pier length exists in known fishing areas to reach requisite water depth?

Second, the MVC Act mandates that the MVC determine "whether the proposed development will have a more favorable or adverse impact on the environment compared to alternative manners of development." The environmental impact analysis of this project has been cursory at best. Again, there are questions regarding the proximity of eelgrass beds. There has been no real analysis of storm

damage and whether the pier (at 317 feet with an L-shaped ending), will impact wave action and/or negatively impact coastal erosion processes.

Finally, the MVC must determine "whether development of the proposal will favorably or adversely affect other persons/property and if so, whether the effect is likely to be greater than is ordinarily associated with this type of development."

This development will, without question, have a greater adverse affect on the residents of the North Bluff. The small neighborhood already is stressed, developmentally, due to proximity of the SSA docks and the substantial traffic and commercial uses that have increased drastically over the last 10 to 20 years. A fishing pier on the north side of the ferry pier will further exacerbate existing intense land uses. Likewise, given its proximity to the neighborhood and its requirement to be open 24 hours, the proposed pier will further create not only traffic, police and sanitation impacts, but a noise impact that is inconsistent with a residential neighborhood. Further and most troubling, the proposed development of a fishing pier at this location will eliminate a swimming beach that has been used by Oak Bluff residents, islanders and visitors to the island for the better part of a century.

Meanwhile, there is a far more appropriate location for a public fishing pier on the north side of the Steamship Authority ferry terminal. I urge advocates of the fishing pier, the Town of Oak Bluffs and the MVC to avoid a protracted legal fight and the risk of losing public funding for the project. Move this fishing pier to the south side of the ferry terminal. The fishing is better on that side anyway.

Respectfully,

Aaron Naparstek
Saco Avenue
Oak Bluffs

On Oct 19, 2010, at 7:12 AM, SilverVox@aol.com wrote:

TO: Linda Sibley, Chair
TO: MVC Commissioners
CC: Jo-Ann Taylor
CC: Mark London

Please consider these final points, which hopefully aren't just a repeat of what you've heard before.

We residents of the North Bluff think there's been a rush to make this fishing pier happen, at the expense of due diligence and good judgment.

The MEPA review did not assess alternate sites, but simply looked at a no-build alternative. And although there has been a shrill insistence by site proponents that this is the best possible location on the island, it is not clear from anything we've heard or read how they came to that conclusion.

We wonder whether environmental impacts have really been addressed, as claimed, in an unbiased, methodical, accurate way. For instance, has there been a authentic study of traffic during the summer (vs. the shoulder season)? Does a casual eyeballing by town officials who are under tremendous pressure to give this project a thumbs-up, pass muster?

Have competing public trust interests truly been considered, given that the area in question is used as a public swimming beach, by residents and by island visitors waiting for the ferries?

What about the conflicting comments over where the water depth and fishing is preferable? When neighbors who have fished those waters (or used to and stopped trying to in recent decades) describe their experience, how does calling them liars make a convincing case?

The lack of civility around this pier proposal may be a side issue, but it is worrisome and disheartening. When residents of a neighborhood express their valid concerns and objections, and are subjected to derision, intimidation, accusations and drive-by epithet-hurling, it doesn't bode well for the future of our island. Decisions like this one should not be made through bullying.

As citizens of Oak Bluffs, we have the right - even the duty - to suggest (to people who are mostly from other towns), a sensible alternate location - one where there are no impacts on homes and swimming; where there is better parking, less bottlenecked traffic, a public bus stop, a police station and better fishing conditions.

Sincerely,
Belleruth Naparstek
<Pier Comments to Linda Sibley Oct 18, 2010.doc>

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