

Planning Board Subcommittee Minutes 01/07/19

APPROVED

Chilmark Planning Board Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, January 7, 2019

Present: Janet Weidner, Chair, Peter Cook, Catherine Thompson

Not Present:

Public: Clark Goff, Debbie Packer, Elise Elliston, Katie Carroll

Staff: Jennifer L. Christy

Meeting called to order at 3:01PM:

- Chairperson Janet Weidner opened the meeting and stated that the meeting would not specifically be addressing the bus turn-around since that topic is to be discussed and pursued at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019.
- **Menemsha Barrier Beach and Resource Area Concerns:**
 - Ms. Weidner recognized Debbie Packer and Ms. Packer addressed her concerns with the area that would be impacted by the proposed bus turn-around abutting the existing comfort station.
 - Ms. Packer stated she had spoken with Jim Mulholland, a representative from the DEP, and it has become clear, she further stated, that the area is a dune and a barrier beach, in need of preservation, and a "coastal zone resource area". She noted the need for the Town to not pursue the bus turn-around due to the fact that climate change and the possibly stronger storms that may impact the area are imminent. She further noted that the representative from the DEP noted that, if the Town's Conservation Commission had not already issued an Order of Conditions, they would have been able to step in and help the Town plan for the area with better information.
 - Ms. Packer provided the subcommittee members with DFW and FEMA maps that designate the area as an "otherwise protected area" and appear to show that the area is needed for flood protection.
 - More discussion occurred and Mr. Cook noted that the documents that Ms. Packer presented appear to be very valuable and they seem to state that, if the facts as presented are correct, no changes may be made to the Menemsha area where the proposed initiatives are to take place and the current recommendations for the area would not be able to be realized.
 - Ms. Packer noted her reading of the 1985 Master Plan and expressed a view that the master plan is an important document and that a new Master Plan could be a supplement to the 1985 plan, much like the 2000-2003 supplement is an additional update to the 1985 plan without supplanting that plan.
 - Ms. Packer advocated for the Town to slow down and take a step back in order to preserve the Menemsha area.
 - Discussion occurred regarding the process that has been followed so far as the ideas and plans have moved forward through the Planning Board, the consultant William Brewster, the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen.
 - Mr. Cook noted that a question within the Planning Board has often been what role should the Board have in Planning: reactive or proactive? He noted that there are, at times, great pressures on the Board to plan ahead and to take steps to proactively plan for the future and to address areas of concern.
 - Ms. Weidner suggested that Ms. Packer visit the Conservation Commission in order to find out what the answers are to the questions that she has regarding the area in question as a resource area as defined by state regulations.
 - Mr. Goff suggested that the information presented by Ms. Packer be shared with William Brewster and the Board of Selectmen.
 - Mr. Cook noted that the key to understanding the impact of the points presented by Ms. Packer would be to understand if the information provided is the last word and not negotiable as opposed to open to discussion and amendment.
 - Ms. Packer suggested that the Town work to move forward in a way that preserves the health of the environment in the area as opposed to furthering any damage in the area that has been done up until now.
 - Ms. Carroll noted that there appears to be a discrepancy between the DEP's determination for the area and Doug Cooper's determination for the area.

- Ms. Carroll stated her frustration with the process with contacting the Vineyard Transit Authority to address questions and concerns about types of buses that travel to Menemsha. She stated that the Board of Selectmen directed her to contact the VTA and she views this as a comparatively ineffective way to gather the information from the VTA.
- Mr. Cook noted that the first item of concern is whether anything may be done at the Menemsha area, in light of the information provided by Ms. Packer, before addressing concerns about specifics such as the buses and parking design.
- Ms. Elliston suggested more attention be given to the design of the paved parking area and, possibly, walking boardwalks that exist year-round.
- Ms. Packer asked how to be more involved in the development of plans for the Town. Discussion occurred regarding how to become directly involved with the Town planning efforts. It was noted that citizens could be involved by attending meetings and also there is the possibility of being appointed a member of a committee or a board.
- Discussion occurred regarding the implementation of the suggestion within the Planning Board's report to the Board of Selectmen to establish a 'super-committee' or a 'Menemsha committee'.
- Mr. Cook noted that the issues that are coming up now regarding the sizes of the buses, livery vans/buses and the demographics of ridership on the bus were issues that were being discussed a year or two ago at the beginning of the process.
- The subcommittee members thanked all in attendance for their time and efforts in discussion of what is best for Menemsha.
- **Master Plan Progress Discussion:**
 - Ms. Weidner read aloud parts of the MGL Chapter 41, §81D Master Plan; Economic Development Supplement, provided by Ms. Thompson.
 - The Board members reviewed the 'preamble' document provided by Mr. Cook, dated December 19, 2018.
 - Ms. Weidner inquired of Mr. Cook what he imagines is the purpose of the document.
 - Mr. Cook noted that his purpose for writing the 'preamble' document is primarily to give some thought to the process that the Planning Board utilizes to create a Master Plan.
 - Discussion occurred regarding how to forge ahead with the process of continuing the writing of a Master Plan. Ms. Thompson suggested that the subcommittee follow the framework that is specifically outlined in the State law, MGL Chapter 41, §81D Master Plan; Economic Development Supplement.
 - Brief discussion occurred regarding the benefits of hiring a consultant for the process of gathering the necessary information for an updated Master Plan. Ms. Carroll noted that she would be more amenable to the community members developing a Master Plan rather than a consultant. Although, she suggested she would be amenable to a consultant being hired to assist in the creation of a framework.
 - Brief discussion occurred regarding how to encourage more townspeople to be involved in the process of developing a Master Plan.
 - Ms. Elliston provided the subcommittee with a sketch of the parking area in Menemsha that she is providing to the Board of Selectmen on January 8, 2019.
 - Ms. Carroll noted that she plans to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on the 8th and she will let them know that she has more than 200 signatures, required to call a Special Town Meeting, to reconsider the decision of the installation of a bus turn-around at the location of the Comfort Station in Menemsha.
- **Minutes:**
 - The minutes from Dec. 10, 2018 were reviewed and approved as written.
- **Next Meetings:**
 - Jan. 16, 2018, 3PM
- **Documents:**

Meeting adjourned: 4:55PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer L. Christy