

Approved Meeting Minutes

Chilmark Planning Board Subcommittee Meeting

October 30, 2023

3:00PM

Chilmark Town Hall, 401 Middle Road, Chilmark

Present: Ann Wallace, Catherine Thompson, Peter Cook, Janet Weidner

Not Present:

Staff: Jennifer Christy, Admin. Asst.

Others: Sergio Modigliani

Master Plan:

- Peter Cook opened the meeting of the Subcommittee to report that he had attended the West Tisbury Planning Board meeting's Master Plan committee. He noted that the Planning Board in West Tisbury has developed a questionnaire that may be more detailed than necessary.
- Peter Cook also urged that the zoning bylaws in Chilmark require a review and an update. He mentioned the need for this to be comprehensive.
- Janet Weidner stated that this has been initiated before, during the "big house bylaw" work.
- Peter Cook stated his concern that a lot of the things that need to be pursued are hard to have volunteers do. He stated a paid person may need to be hired for whom the project is their specific task. He also mentioned that money had been set aside in a Master Plan warrant article and he spoke with Laura Silber who says she is the point person for zoning bylaw updates.
- Ann Wallace stated that the complete neighborhoods technical assistance for both the Master Plan and the review and updating of the zoning bylaws is the subject of a grant that the MVC is hoping to apply for from the Town.
- Peter Cook asked how the Town may recruit somebody, maybe a highly skilled professional. He emphasized the need to also understand the total cost.

Minutes:

- The minutes from October 10th, 2023 Planning Board Subcommittee meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Menemsha Seasonal Speed Bump:

- Peter Cook noted that the topic of a speed bump arose at the Select Board meeting and he didn't think there is a big appetite for it. He thought people felt that once you start putting stuff into Menemsha then it is hard to take it out.
- Cathy Thompson provided a brief update on the ideas presented by Dan Doyle of the MV Commission, at the Planning Board meeting on the 23rd, to the proposed need for a speed bump in Menemsha.

- Painting of arrows/lines
 - Lowered speed bumps
 - Bollards
 - Textures on the roads
 - Issues with the length of the straightaway (North Road to the Bite)
 - Crosswalks at the start of the “s” curve
- Ann Wallace noted that more signage was not an apparent desire.
 - Peter Cook mentioned that textured road edge may be effective.
 - Ann Wallace noted that the original idea was for a seasonal solution, such as a removable speed bump, but the ideas mentioned were mostly not seasonal, permanent solutions such as textures in the road.
 - Cathy Thompson thought that there is enough information to produce a report.
 - Ann Wallace stated that Dan Doyle was checking with DOT to make sure of various regulations.
 - Sergio Modigliani stated that a crosswalk should not be ignored due to the inexpensive nature of the solution and it’s easily maintained. He also noted that the way to cross the road to the public restrooms in Menemsha was not immediately apparent.
 - Janet Weidner stated that the crosswalk was an element in the Menemsha master plan from a few years ago. She noted that a crosswalk near the curve may not be a recommended action.
 - Peter Cook agreed that a cross walk to the comfort station makes sense.
 - Jennifer Christy was asked to have Dan Doyle send his information to the Subcommittee members. Peter Cook noted that Dan Doyle showed the chevron-type painting on the road as an option. Cathy Thompson expressed some skepticism that the chevrons would fit and would therefore be a practical solution.
 - Peter Cook emphasized that this speed bump/traffic calming topic may need to be looked at quickly so that it doesn’t take too much time away from the current work of the Master Plan.
 - Ann Wallace mentioned that rumble strips could be placed on either side of crosswalks and she noted that there is worry of people tripping on speed bumps, but she has noticed that there are ways to allow bikes and pedestrian ways to safely traverse over speedbumps.
 - Janet Weidner accepted the volunteer offer of Cathy Thompson and Ann Wallace to write a draft of a Menemsha speed bump topic to provide to the Select Board.

Master Plan:

- The Subcommittee members reviewed the available Master Plan responses from the Housing Committee, the Energy Committee and the Police Dept.
- Very brief discussion occurred about the current legislation at the State level that is being considered: Housing Bank, Option Transfer Tax.
- Sergio Modigliani expressed his view that the survey responses are good which indicates that the survey questions were good. He also noted that there is a model for a community encouraging affordable housing by housing a priority in the Master Plan and there are certain places where affordable housing is encouraged by right. Then, he continued, the community invites developers and they use 40B funding, but it is not adversarial. He noted that, in

Brookline, there is Cambridge St. that has been re-zoned to promulgate housing on the upper level with the ground level is commercial. There is no, he emphasized, special permits or other hoops like that to go through and this is private land, not public.

- Ann Wallace noted that it may not be able to be applied here with many seasonal homes.
- Cathy Thompson noted that 40B is not perceived to be friendly for some in Chilmark.
- Sergio Modigliani noted that there have been terrible uses and results from the application of 40B and he noted only that it can be used positively by a community.
- Sergio Modigliani noted that the three responses received from the Master Plan survey are very similar.
- Peter Cook emphasized that a key point is that the status quo is not acceptable when it comes to housing in Chilmark. Peter Cook noted that Peaked Hill Pastures Housing project has been going on for 5 years and there have been no other affordable housing options initiated in that time.
- Discussion occurred about the benefits of posting the responses to the survey on the webpage. It was decided that the better path would be to post a report with the data at a later time.
- It was decided to not send a reminder email to Boards/Committees/Depts. just yet, in advance of Nov. 3.
- The warrant article that was voted a little while ago was discussed and the Subcommittee members tried to remember what the amount was that was voted.
- Ann Wallace thought that possibly the Complete Neighborhoods grant may come through with some funds for a Master Plan.
- Peter Cook thought that it might be good to identify what are the top topics, two or three, that a person may then pursue. Ann Wallace thought that the goal was not a complete rewrite of the Master Plan, but rather a Master Plan that has updated parts that are informed by the new topics like climate change and housing. Cathy Thompson noted that this is why the Planning Board is doing this survey, to start the process of updating/adding to the Master Plan.
- Janet Weidner suggested that, after the responses are back and the Subcommittee is able to organize them into themes, a person may be gotten to help move forward with the next step.
- Peter Cook noted that the rural aspect was a big aspect of the Master Plan in 1985 and he thought that a good plan would be to see if the Subcommittee could identify whether there is appetite for a Master Plan that branches out from that and addresses the current pressures: need of affordable housing, town center needs, farmers branching out into agritourism-type activities.
- Catherine Thompson asked if the Subcommittee may return to the topic of hiring a consultant for a Master Plan and wondered about Judy Barrett. She explained that she shares the concerns of the Town's direction, but thought that the practical task of obtaining a consultant would serve the Town.
- Sergio Modigliani noted the positive reasons for hiring and working with an independent consultant.

- Peter Cook noted Chilmark has worked with a consultant: for the Menemsha Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan. He noted that the reasons for hiring the consultant were the same as what Sergio Modigliani has noted are the good reasons for a consultant.
- Janet Weidner thought that what would be best is to take the process one step at a time and review the survey responses before considering the idea of a consultant.
- More discussion occurred about the next steps. Janet stated that a consultant is a good idea, but it will be important that the Master Plan is “ours”. She noted that she thinks a plan and a budget for the Master Plan will be important to develop that incorporates the existing Master plan warrant article money. Sergio Modigliani urged the Subcommittee to plan for the needed funds early.

Next Meeting(s):

- Monday, Nov. 13, 2023, 3:00PM, Chilmark Town Hall

Documents:

- Master Plan draft survey response document: Police Dept. Energy Committee, Housing Committee, cost quotes for Master Plans in MA Communities

Meeting adjourned at 3:58PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer L. Christy