

Town of Chilmark
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
February 13, 2012

MODERATOR: Everett H. Poole

TOWN CLERK: Jennifer L. Christy

REGISTRARS: Susan M. Heilbron, Harriette Poole Otteson (Temporary Registrar)

CONSTABLE: Marshall E. Carroll, III

TELLERS: Linda Coutinho & Catherine Thompson

At the close of voter registration on February 3, 2012 there were eight hundred and seventy-two (872) registered voters in the Town of Chilmark. With one hundred ten (110) voters present at the Special Town Meeting, a little less than 13% of the total number of registered voters, the Moderator called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Constable Marshall E. Carroll, III attested to the posting of the warrant. The Moderator, Everett H. Poole, reminded the gathered voters that the first article will require a 2/3rds vote.

ARTICLE 1. Read by the Moderator, moved and seconded. The article was opened for discussion. Warren Doty, Selectman, was recognized and offered an amendment to add the words, “and the Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank Chilmark Town Advisory Board”. The amendment was moved and seconded. Moderator read the newly amended article and asked if there was any discussion. There was none. Moderator called for a vote.

The Moderator declared the amendment to Article 1 was carried, unanimously.

Moderator opened Article 1, as amended, to discussion. Frank Fenner, Selectman & chair of the Tea Lane Farmhouse Committee, was recognized and gave a brief overview of what has happened with the Tea Lane Farmhouse process so far, from the perspective of the Tea Lane Farmhouse Committee. Selectman Fenner reviewed the options and explained briefly why selling was ruled out by the committee and why doing nothing was not a viable option either. Selectman Fenner explained the various kinds of farm leases the committee has considered and stated that the committee was very close to completing a lease. Mr. Fenner completed his statements by identifying what would happen if town voted in the affirmative. Selectman Doty, chair of the Tea Lane Farm Committee (a five-member committee) was recognized. Selectman Doty also briefly described what has happened so far, from the perspective of the Tea Lane Farm Committee. Mr. Doty specifically noted the open house for farmers held in January 2012. Mr. Doty stated that, if the town voted in the affirmative, the farm committee would choose a proposal from the ones submitted by people since the open house. This proposal would then be submitted, by the committee, to the Board of Selectmen and the MV Land Bank Town Advisory Board for Chilmark. Those two Boards will then make the final decision about who will be awarded the farm. Mr. Doty stated that the property will be leased to the most qualified applicant/proposal for 75 years. Mr. Doty briefly described the highlights of the 30 page lease. Mr. Doty also briefly described how equity is built by the farmer and how “added value” put

into the farm by the tenant will be reimbursed if the farmer leaves the farm. Moderator asked if there was further discussion. Eric Glasgow was recognized. Mr. Glasgow stated his view that the current plan is a great improvement over the original plan. Mr. Glasgow questioned what criteria was established by the BOS and the Town Advisory Board to choose the farmer and noted that the decision will not come before the town for consideration. Selectman Doty was recognized and stated that the details concerning criteria were still to be determined. Mr. Doty noted in-town residency is not required and the farmer does not have to be a family. Mr. Doty stated the committee wanted to leave "it wide open" to see what proposals would be submitted. Mr. Doty reminded voters that a 5 person farm committee would select a proposal and a 9 member Board (BOS and TAB) would make the final decision. Jonathan Mayhew, Selectman, was recognized and stated that the farmer must live at the farm 11 months out of the year. Robert Coutinho was recognized and asked if there was any criteria determining what kind of farming, such as pig farming, would be allowed to operate at Tea Lane Farm. Mr. Doty confirmed there was no criteria excluding certain kinds of farming. A voter was recognized and asked how the "benchmarks" for the proposals will match up with the criteria the farm committee will use to choose a proposal. Mr. Doty was recognized and stated that the farm committee did ask that a 5 year plan be included in the proposal. Mr. Doty further stated there will be an annual review for the length of the lease. Steve McGhee asked for further clarification on the review and asked if it was performance related. Mr. Doty assented. Mr. Dunkl was recognized and expressed concern about wetlands in the area and farming waste and asked if the public would have input regarding this. Mr. Doty noted the Land Bank owns 48 acres and has already outlined the wetland areas and laid down restrictions. Jeffrey Parker was recognized and asked if the proposal could be brought by a coalition of farmers. Mr. Doty was recognized and stated that one person must sign the lease but a collective could run the farm. Christopher Murphy was recognized and reminded voters that he was a critic in the beginning of the Tea Lane farm plan. He further stated that this new plan looked great. Mr. Murphy noted that this plan will help young people on the island and he thanked the committee for their work. The Moderator asked if there was any more discussion. There was none. The Moderator reminded all that the article required a 2/3rds to pass and stated that the vote would be standing and the Tellers, Cathy Thompson and Linda Coutinho, would count.

Article 1, as amended, was carried 62-5.

ARTICLE 2. Read by the Moderator, moved and seconded. The article was opened for discussion. Ms. Pease was recognized and asked if there would be public access to the Tea Land Farm. Selectman Jonathan Mayhew was recognized and stated public access would be limited to the acreage owned by the Land Bank. The Moderator called for a vote on Article 2.

The Moderator declared Article 2 was carried.

ARTICLE 3. Read by the Moderator, moved and seconded. The article was opened for discussion. A voter asked if the boat has radar. Denny Jason, Harbormaster, stated "No." Mr. McGhee was recognized and inquired whether the old boat could not be repaired for \$6,500.00 Mr. Jason explained why it was not

reasonable to repair the old boat. Mr. Coutinho was recognized and inquired whether the boat would be available to the fire department. Mr. Jason stated that he supposed the boat could be used by the fire dept. because "it is a resource of the town. But, it would require a little more than jumping in and taking off." The Moderator called for any other discussion. There was none.

Article 3 was carried.

The Moderator asked if anyone had any more business to bring before the voters. Moderator recognized Judie Jardin. Ms. Jardin rose and praised Jane N. Slater, a tireless elected official, town committee volunteer and town columnist who will turn 80 years old on February 15, 2012. Mrs. Slater was recognized for her extensive and dedicated role in town government. All stood, made applause and sang Happy Birthday to Mrs. Slater. The Moderator declared the meeting dissolved at 8:05 p.m.

A true record. Attest:

Jennifer L. Christy
Town Clerk
February 15, 2012