

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
WEST TISBURY SELECTMEN AND
W. T. PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009
4:30 p.m., Howes House**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Dianne Powers, Richard Knabel

SELECTMEN ABSENT: Skipper Manter

PLANNING BOARD PRESENT: David Douglas, Eileen Maley, Ginny Jones, Susan Silva, Leah Smith,

PLANNING BOARD ABSENT: Jim Powell

ALSO PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING: Jonathan Revere, Barbara Day, Robert Day, Susan Silk, Ernie Mendenhall, Robert Potts, Simone DeSorcy

OLD BUSINESS

Island Plan: Chairmen Dianne Powers and David Douglas called the meetings of their respective Boards to order. Dianne Powers said that this would be a working session to discuss the draft Island Plan written by the Martha's Vineyard Commission

Richard Knabel said that from the beginning he felt the outcome would be predictable regarding the directions we would like to go. He said most of the Plan seems like motherhood and apple pie, goals that a person could not disagree with. It will come down to implementation that will require cooperation between towns, and the Island towns do not always agree. He wondered what happens next with the Plan, noting that he would like to hear from the MVC.

Eileen Maley noted that many of the goals listed in the Plan are already routinely incorporated by towns; for instance, when the Planning Board is negotiating with the developer of a subdivision, the Board requires native species be planted.

Leah Smith said that increasing density in town centers is particularly germane to Planning Boards; however, whenever the Board has presented such ideas at Town Meeting, voters have rejected them, as they don't want to see change. The Board supports the protection of green corridors, but has very limited powers to discourage development. Ginny Jones added that another planning concept, Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) is mentioned; this would be an excellent idea for West Tisbury, but no part of Town wants to be on the receiving end of increased density in order to preserve other parts. She also said that the Plan needs to explain what the five eco-regions are.

Leah Smith said that larger, better maps would help, noting that determining the acreage of habitats was difficult. Susan Silva wondered who would compensate the property owners for preserving habitats.

Ginny Jones said she felt some of the facts need checking, including median income numbers. Leah Smith said she felt some of the population numbers seemed low. If 2000

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Census figures were used, it should be noted that there has been some growth in the last nine years. She also said the plan contains many typos.

There was a general discussion about U.S. Census vs. Town Census numbers. Leah Smith said they employed different methods. Richard Knabel asked how accurate the Town Clerk's population records are between U.S. Census years. Ginny Jones described the local census process. She said she felt the numbers used by the MVC in the report were low for West Tisbury. Dianne Powers said that the Plan needs to address the accuracy of the numbers being used, and clarify sources and assumptions. Ginny Jones wondered whether the MVC could wait to publish the final draft until the 2010 U.S. Census numbers are in. Leah Smith said that it sometimes takes up to two years to get more detailed figures, especially those for smaller communities.

Leah Smith said that implementation of much of the plan would call for Island-wide cooperation, much of it falling to the purview of the Selectmen. Dianne Powers said that as of late meetings of the All Island Selectmen Committing have been occurring more regularly. Leah Smith said it would be good for that group to identify issues in the Plan that require its cooperation. Richard Knabel said that regional issues other entities need to cooperate on should also be noted.

Leah Smith said that an important regional issue was increasing the safety for bikes and pedestrians using the Island's roads system. There are substantial portions of road where bike paths are needed. Dianne Powers said that the Town currently has a committee addressing this, as well as alternative modes of transportation, with the MVC. Leah Smith noted that alternative paths don't necessarily need to follow major roads. She said that consistent rules for taxis were also needed; all agreed.

Ginny Jones said that she liked the sections of the Plan discussing self-sufficiency, but noted that a lot of the suggestions are already happening, albeit slowly. She said the Plan doesn't mention any specific goals re. fishing, and it should, as fishing is very important. She said that overall, the Plan could be condensed considerably for much of the general public.

Leah Smith said that the Plan discusses 50 wind turbines for energy efficiency, but doesn't say where they should be built.

Dianne Powers said that a copy of minutes from this meeting should be sent to the MVC, and Commissioners could watch a tape of the meeting. Susan Silva said that the two Boards should further review the Plan section by section at their future respective meetings. Ginny noted there is some turgid prose. She said that the map showing home businesses places a lot of them in the Mixed Business District and at the airport. She said that overall she was glad the MVC did the Plan. She said the affordable housing section numbers need to be brought up to date to include some larger projects like Morgan Woods and 250 State Road. She said the Plan discusses making the Island part of a

world class heritage trail; however, everyone in the world now knows where Martha's Vineyard is. Richard Knabel said that the plan is a bit overwhelming, and wondered how to approach its review in a reasonable way in order to chip away at it. Ginny Jones said that the MVC had originally wanted comments back by the end of September. Dianne Powers said the MVC should be asked whether this had been extended; Simone DeSorcy said she would ask MVC staff. Dianne Powers said that perhaps the Boards should focus on portions of the Plan that address/affect the Island over the next ten years. If the MVC has extended its deadline, the two Boards will focus on sections in more detail.

Richard Knabel said that water quality is very important, both in the short and long term. He said some things in the Plan are superfluous. Ginny Jones said that the Coastal Ponds section is excellent, noting that if we screw up our water quality, we're really doomed.

Ginny Jones said she knew how many hundreds of thousands of hours went into drafting this Plan, and thanked all participants for their efforts.

Town Hall Building Committee: Committee member Ginny Jones reported on the move into the new building and progress on the new playground.

NEW BUSINESS

Permission for Access to Counsel: Ernie Mendenhall, Building Inspector, asked the Selectmen for permission for access to Town Counsel. He said he would like Counsel to review another attorney's written opinion regarding buildability of a particular piece of land. Selectmen granted his request.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Simone DeSorcy, Planning Board administrator