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PRESENT: Leah Smith, John Rau, Matt Merry, Heikki Soikkeli, Amy Upton, Cass Luskin

ALSO PRESENT: (Names as they appeared on the Zoom screen)

Rob McCarron, Phil Hale, Lauren Lynch, Virginia Barbatti, Patrick Roden-Reynolds, Mary Breslauer, Hayley Duffy (Vineyard Gazette), Lily Echeverria, Samantha Look, Katharine Sterling and Jane Rossi.

Leah opened the meeting at 5:00 and declared a quorum present.

5:00: Public hearing on an application from The Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society to install a Deer Cold Storage and Processing Facility consisting of a 40-foot Cooler Trailer, Two Mobile Meat Processing Units and a Mobile Office Building that will house three Residential Freezers, on the property located on Assessors Map 25, Lot 3.1 (3.1E), 5 Janes Way, RU District:

Leah pointed out that the board had reviewed the submitted materials. She added that she had received an email from Lauren Lynch after office hours. She read the email item by item to the Planning Board which was a list of answers to some outstanding Planning Board questions:

1. The Plan proposes to install one (1) 2000 gallon holding tank, two (2) 36' Mobile Harvest Units, one (1) 40' Cooler, one (1) 8x20 Office Trailer, one (1) 12'x12' concrete Pad and one (1) Transfer Rail and one (1) Drain. There is an existing Transformer and one (1) Proposed transformer. The existing road (Jane's Way) will be used, and a driveway will enter the utilized area.
2. Hunting season will begin on September 21, 2026, and end on February 14, 2027. Forty+/- deer are anticipated to be butchered daily during the hunting season. The facility will be used (as needed), and active operation is likely to occur mainly nights and weekends until the program can understand the number of donations being made and the need for butchers. Following the close of hunting season, the facility will remain open on a reduced basis to serve Deer Damage Permit (DDP) holders. Hours and staffing for the post-season DDP period are still being finalized; Tick Free MV and the MV Agricultural Society will provide an update to the Planning Board once confirmed.
3. Hours of operation will be between 8:00 am to 11:00 pm 7 days a week during hunting season. The facility will continue to function throughout the year for deer management processing purposes
4. A maximum of ten (10) employees will be hired. It is anticipated that 3 to 5 Butchers will do the bulk of the work. There are currently 5 to 6 people on hand that have signed up and are interested in butchering. A processing training will take place on October 19, 2026, for potential employees.
5. Eight (8) parking spaces will accommodate staff parking as well as 3 to 4 pick-up trucks for uploading harvested deer into storage coolers before the deer move through the processing units. 3 to 5 daily trips are anticipated.

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6. Processed deer will be distributed to local food pantries to address food insecurity on the island. The harvest will be frozen upon packaging. Distribution will be year-round covering both hunting season and the post season DDP period. Island Grown Initiative will cover the pick-up of the finished product on an as-needed basis depending on volume on hand. Donated venison will be available to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head as part of the distribution effort.

7. All structures are sited to comply with the 50-foot setbacks required under the zoning bylaws as shown on the site plan referenced in Section 2 of the Narrative. Given the distance to the nearest abutting property, additional screening is not anticipated. The Agricultural Society has informed Polly Hill Arboretum that they will install additional screening between Polly Hill Arboretum and the proposed site if requested.

8. Bruno's will provide a roll-off dumpster for the solid waste material: hides/skeletons and sometimes guts. They will pick up the dumpster for disposal when it is full. The Martha's Vineyard Refuse District will accept deer carcasses if they are properly bagged for disposal. Maciel and Sons, Inc., has agreed to empty/service the 2000 Gallon Tight Tank once installed at the MV Agricultural Hall when the alarm sounds indicating the tank needs to be emptied. The Facility is inquiring about composing waste materials. Incineration is restricted in Massachusetts.

9. Hunting for the day ends 30 minutes after sunset.

10. There are roughly 12 to 18 deer per square mile on the island. The goal is to increase hunting access to properties and cull the herd from roughly 5000 down to 1500 deer.

11. Further tick control will require Mass Wildlife's mission. The mission is to reduce the deer herd as the major host for the ticks. More education and outreach, repellent-treated clothing, controlled burning, habitat management, trail maintenance, research on different treatment are additional ways of reducing the tick population. The state will not allow the elimination of deer.

Patrick Roden Reynolds explained that last year 3000 pounds of venison were donated for distribution to the Food Pantry, and the demand exceeded the supply, and it is difficult to predict how many deer will be processed. They expect approximately 100 to 150 deer donations this season. 40 deer can be butchered in each day. Phase one is to get used to the whole idea of the process.

Leah asked if the power line /transformer can support 3 phase power. Patrick said 3-phase power will support the facility. She asked if the Board of Health had been informed about Brunos, Maciel's and the MV Refuse District participation in. Lauren Lynch said they still need to get

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the figures to the BOH.

Patrick said the process will not eliminate the tick population, but the hope is to reduce the deer herd, so the ticks have fewer hosts to latch onto. He said other forms of tick reduction are being explored such as controlled burns. There will be incentive payments to the hunters for their donations. \$100 will be paid for a buck and \$150 for a doe.

Leah mentioned that the board had received a letter regarding a property within the town that had been processing deer without a permit. Jane informed the board that the issue was currently under the Conservation Commission's purview. Virginia mentioned that they were not affiliated with that property which is affiliated with the MV Hunt Club. Leah asked if the processing would provide for personal use. Rob McCarron said it could happen in the future, but not during Phase One. However, people may hang their deer in the cooler. Amy asked if there were any plans to grow the program. Virginia said the reason they are running the program in Phases is to see what is most effective. She said the considerable health problem ticks are only getting worse, so they want to add capacity management now and then move onto Phase Two. She said they know they need more processing management on Martha's Vineyard if they want to make a difference. The Phase Two project is to create a permanent processing facility. Jane asked about the time frame and the hours of operation, confirming with Virginia that hunting season will be between September 21, 2026, and February 14, 2027. She asked what the remainder of the year will entail. Virginia said the bulk of work will be during the deer hunting season. Following the hunting season will be for deer damage management. The year will be a learning process, and they will have more of an update after hunting season. Deer Damage Permits are specific to deer removal, not hunting. It is a permit that exists between the landowner and the state. The type of removal implement is determined by Mass Wildlife. Leah asked if Patrick would be on call 24/7. Virginia said the hours will be figured out.

Deer Damage permits will be issued year-round, and the permit allows for year-round management upon request from the property owner. Patrick will hold a list of butchers with new or previous training. Butchering will occur mainly at night, and on weekends. The board requires that Panhandle Road be used as the entrance to the Facility and Jane's Way will be the exit. This will minimize headlights onto neighboring properties. Hunting season is between September 21, 2026, and February 14, 2027, with damage control on a requested basis. Daily hunting ends one hour after sunset.

Katharine Sterling asked about disposal of the deer carcasses. Rob said the waste will be stored in strong plastic bags and thrown into very sturdy dumpsters with secure lids provided by Brunos. The bones will be cut up so there are no sharp edges poking through bags. The dumpster will also contain hide, skeletons and occasionally guts. The garbage will be dumped at the Refuse District and will be sent to an incinerator outside of Massachusetts. No incineration allowed in MA. Rob said Bruno's will be called when the dumpsters need to be picked up/as needed/. They are looking into composting as an alternative to trash.

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Matt asked what the goal of the organization was. Virginia said there were 5000 deer counted in February of 2026. There are 10 to 12 deer per square mile. They hope to be able to increase hunting access onto private property through property owner permission. The goal is to reduce the count from 5000 to 1500 this season.

John made a motion to close the public hearing and Matt seconded the motion. John-yes, Matt-yes, Heikki-yes, Amy-yes, Leah-yes.

Requirements under the Decision:

- Leah suggested the applicants return to the board in one year to provide an update on the progress. Rob McCarron suggested he provide a written report to the board with an update and progress report. The board was amenable to a written report.
- Enter the property from Panhandle Road and exit onto State Road from Jane's Way, and determine if the process works as the project progresses .
- Consult with the Conservation Commission regarding an Agricultural Protection Restriction on the property.

Amy made a motion to approve the application and Matt seconded the motion. Amy0yes, Matt-yes, Heikki-yes, John-yes, Leah-yes.

MINUTES:

Amy moved and Heikki seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Amy-yes, Heikki-yes, Matt-yes, John-yes, Leah-yes.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Rossi, Board Administrator