

Approved 12/12/18
TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
SELECTMENS MEETING
Wednesday, November 28, 2018 4:30 p.m. – 5:50 pm

Present: Selectmen Cynthia Mitchell, Kent Healy, Skipper Manter, Jen Rand

Also Present: Jefferson Munroe, Julie Scott, Brian Athearn, Bob Egerton, George Athearn, Joe Tierney, Ron Rappaport, Brendan O'Neill, Prudy Burt, Tara Whiting-Wells, Tom Rancich, Sally Rizzo, Amy Coffey, Allen Whiting, Bea Whiting, Rebecca Haag, Maria McFarland, Holly Pretsky, Richard Saltzberg

Permitting at the MV Agricultural Society (MVAS): Jen explained that the meeting was organized with all the stakeholders in the MVAS permitting process including the Zoning Enforcement Officer Joe Tierney, the holders of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR), which is both Vineyard Conservation Society (VCS) led by Brendan O'Neill, the WT Conservation Commission, the Selectmen, the Ag. Society, and Town Counsel for guidance. The goal of the meeting was to find a way to permit events at the MVAS that were in keeping with the APR and zoning, and offering guidance to the MVAS about which events meet that criteria.

Bob Egerton, Financial Officer for the MVAS provided a list of events held at the hall in the past three years, they were categorized by type of event. He noted that they received numerous requests for events that they deny, and further he said the 2/3 of the time the hall is not in use. He said the MVAS operates in the black, but barely. He noted that the fair brings in 75% of the income they need. He thanked the Town for the Preservation Funds they were given to repair the doors on the Hall. He said the MVAS has over 2,000 members of which over half are lifetime members. They have formed a committee to take in donations, they have property debt, and debt for the solar project they need to direct funds toward. He proposed a streamlined permitting process where the MVAS would submit a list of events for the upcoming year to the Town Administrator who would then obtain all necessary signatures. He added that the 1998 agreement as modified in 1999 allowed for 6 weddings, he said they had had 8 weddings in 1998, and would like to go back to that number again. In the proposed new permitting process he assured that if events were added after the initial list at the beginning of the year, it would be circulation to all and at the end of the year a list would be provided of the events that actually took place. The request from the MVAS were not looking to depart from what was allowed by the APR or zoning.

Rebecca Haag of Island Grown said she was grateful for the cooperation from the MVAS for allowing access to the facility for agricultural lectures, which was a huge benefit. Brendan said the APR was granted by the Woods family as the "public benefit" part of their open space planning for the abutting 500 acre property. They wanted to MVAS to continue to host their "mission specific uses" without a negative impact on their conservation land. Tara said the WT Conservation Commission wanted to be part of the conversation about any new events proposed. Skipper asked if the MVAS hosted events required that they be the sole beneficiary.

Ron Rappaport, Town Counsel briefly outlined the 1998 agreement. He noted that the uses that took place at the Grange were not grandfathered as the uses stay with the property not the MVAS. He said the letter written by him in 1998 was a negotiation between all parties that no one was particularly happy with. He noted that the Wood's Attorney had written a letter at the time indicating their concern that uses not expand on the property. Ron suggested that he take time to review the list of events proposed for 2019 and determine how they fit in the framework of the

1998 agreement, he did note that the MVAS's financial obligations were not relevant to the conversation. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss in detail with a member from each stakeholder's group.

Julie Scott said it would be helpful if the Town could define "event". Cindy said she liked the proposal to streamline permitting. She added in response to Julie that certainly things like the 4H meetings and Board meetings were not "events". She noted that when Dale McClure had been president of the MVAS a neighborhood meeting was held and the general feeling of the abutters was that the MVAS has been a good neighbor. Kent said it was important that the Selectmen uphold their promise to the Wood's family. Brian Athearn said he understood the concern about events on the property but felt what happened inside was not an issue. Ron noted that the Fleet Center held rock concerts inside, the MVAs couldn't do that even though it's inside. Prudy said the MVAS was letting funding drive the discussion, she said weddings aren't a community event, the barn raising was a community event so maybe something held as a fundraiser in the offseason for the community would help bring in money.

Jen said one of the questions left to answer was if the APR prohibited the granting of a beer & wine license. Jim Athearn said the social aspect of the events is important and the town voted to allow alcohol. Ron said there was no prohibition of alcohol in zoning or the APR. Julie, responding to the comment that the need for money was driving the request for events, said the events were what kept the MVAS viable and relevant, in order to gain members they need to be able to offer them something besides the fair. Allen Whiting said he was related to the Woods family, and while it was impossible to know exactly what they would think but he knew they supported the MVAS and they loved the town so they were likely to have been willing to make some adjustments to be in keeping with the times. Ron will meet with other stakeholders once the 2019 activity list has been generated.

Minutes: *S. Manter motioned to approve the minutes of 11/7/18. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.*

Cultural Council Request for Budget Increase: Jen explained that the Council had requested an increase from \$3,000 to \$3,500. Skipper asked what the other towns pay. Jen will investigate and put it on next week's agenda.

Email Policy: Jen presented the Board with a policy she proposed to handle emails from and to Board and Committee members to bring the town further into compliance with public records laws. Cindy said she thought it was fine. Skipper suggested a few small edits.

S. Manter motioned to approve the email policy as amended. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.