

Approved 2/22/17
TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
SELECTMENS MEETING
Wednesday, January 18, 2017 4:30 p.m. – 6:25 p.m.

Present: Selectmen Richard Knabel, Cynthia Mitchell, Skipper Manter (@4:47) Jennifer Rand

Also Present: Susan Silk, Doug Ruskin, Dick Johnson, Rez Williams, Cynthia Aguilar, Sue Hruby, Tim Rich, Whit Griswold, Joan Ames, Tara Whiting, Maria McFarland, Michael Colaneri, Joe Tierney, Edie Prescott, Heather Hamacek

Minutes: *C. Mitchell motioned to approve the minutes of 12/14/16 & 12/21/16 with amendments. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.*

S. Manter motioned to approve the minutes of 1/4/17. C Mitchell seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was CM & RK in favor, SM abstained.

School Funding Formula Study: Susan said she volunteered for the study committee as a former educator who was concerned with maintaining the quality of the education, noting she has no children in the system. She presented the report (*attached here*). Doug then presented a breakdown of the numbers for the Board (*in the report*). Cindy asked if the Committee has spoken with Chilmark. Sue said no, they felt that was the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen, Skipper said the three-town committee has met once; they are waiting on this report to meet again. Richard said he found it difficult to follow the numbers as presented. The subject will be put back on the agenda for February 1st for a second presentation of the number analysis.

C. Mitchell motioned to accept the report with deepest gratitude. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

C. Mitchell motioned to dissolve the Committee with thanks. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Request to Extend Deer Shotgun Season: Dick Johnson said he was working with the tick-borne illness reduction committee looking at ways to address the high numbers of ticks on the island. He said the ticks' life cycle requires them to feed on deer. By reducing the number of deer the anticipation is that the tick population will drop as well. He said he was asking the Board to support an additional two weeks of shotgun season in January. Richard asked about the work on the project to genetically modify mice so they cannot pass the lyme virus on to ticks. Dick said that is on a parallel track and would be 5-10 years down the road. Richard then asked by how much the deer population would need to be reduced in order to have an impact on the amount of people infected with lyme disease. Dick said reducing the heard from its current 40/square mile to 20/square mile will have an impact. The modeling shows if the number could be dropped to 8/square mile the lyme cycle would be broken entirely, but the goal of the added two weeks of hunting would be to halve the population. He said on average, there are 622 deer checked in during hunting season and another 150 known to be hit by cars. Dick noted that the hunters have said they think allowing hunting on Sundays will be more effective than adding two weeks in January, but that would require a vote of the Legislature, who has historically denial this action. Adding two more weeks of shotgun season is determined only by the Department of Fish and Game. He added that in January with fewer homes occupied there might be more land available for hunters. Tim Rich said permission would still need to be given by the owner even if the house is empty. He added that many hunters take only what they need so the excess meat would be given to the food pantry. Dick said they are working on getting a cooler for people to

hang the deer and setting up a processing center. They are working with Sophie Abrams to compost the unusable parts, and they are trying to find a use for the hides. Joan asked why not wait until February so the deer can settle down more after the longer season. Dick said at that point the does would be quite pregnant. Skipper asked how many years they wanted to extend the season. Dick said until the residents asked them to shorten it. Skipper asked if they had looked into professional hunters. Dick said yes, but it would be expensive, and they felt it was disrespectful to the local hunters because given the same guidelines that professionals use (bait, night hunting etc) they would be able to kill a similar amount of deer.

C. Mitchell motioned to accept the recommendation of the Committee and support the additional two weeks of shotgun season in January. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Immigration Warrant Article Request: Cynthia Aguilar asked the Board to place an article on the warrant stating “To see if the Town will vote to request the Selectmen to authorize law enforcement and all Town officials to refrain from using Town funds and/or resources to enforce federal immigration laws, *in keeping with current practice*, unless presented with a criminal warrant or other evidence of probable cause, as required by the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution”. She said she had enough signatures for a petition, but thought it was more powerful coming from the Selectmen. Cindy asked why the Town needed this if it was current practice. Cynthia said there was concern about Federal pressure. She said it would be on the Edgartown and Chilmark warrant by petition.

S. Manter motioned to add this article to the warrant for annual town meeting. C. Mitchell seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Moped Action Committee Warrant Article Request: Tim Rich said he had been working on the issue of moped safety since the ‘80s. He noted that a few years ago his son had been the driver in a catastrophic accident where an inexperienced moped driver had lost control of her moped and driven into the path of the truck driven by his son. He said the Committee is presenting to the Oak Bluffs Selectmen at their next meeting showing constant violations to their own bylaws dictating that businesses shall not be transferred and new licenses shall not be granted. He said he was asking the Board to put a non-binding ballot question on the annual election ballot that states “Are you in favor of eliminating rental mopeds from Martha’s Vineyard”? Richard noted that the industry was regulated by the State. Tim said that was true, but the town issues the licenses and they wanted to get the island sentiment about rentals.

C. Mitchell motioned to allow the non-binding ballot question to appear on the election ballot. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Homer Watcha Trust Conservation Restriction (CR): Tara said that the Conservation Commission was concerned about setting a precedent that CR’s could be easily changed. She said in the Conservation Commission’s research there was only one CR they could find that had been amended and it had overwhelming public benefit. She said they did not feel that the Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) increased ownership without public access was an overwhelming public benefit. She also said that they still had concerns about habitat fragmentation. Richard asked if the Conservation Commission would ever consider an amendment to a CR. Tara said each was considered on their merits. Cindy said that TNC felt there was an overwhelming benefit in increased land in conservation and she added that the increased marketability of the land was irrelevant if the expansion of the CR has enough benefit. Sipper said he thought that when the original CR was written these horse trails would have been allowed, the owner at the time had a specific goal in keeping a horse riding business off his property when he wrote the CR. He added

that he felt it was important the owners knew a CR could be changed so they might not be as concerned about putting land into conservation. He said he didn't really agree that it would set a precedent as the process to change a CR was rigorous. Cindy said she wanted to be clear it was difficult to vote in opposition to another town board, and she understood they had given it a great deal of thought.

S. Manter motioned to approve the amended CR for Homer Watcha Trust. C. Mitchell seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Culvert Repair Grant Application: Tara said that there was a grant opportunity to look at town owned culverts that need repair to increase fish passage. The Conservation Commission wished to apply for the grant and work with the Highway Department on the project if they had the blessing of the board. She said they had spoken to the Highway Superintendent and he was supportive of the project.

C. Mitchell motioned to authorize the Conservation Commission to apply for the culvert engineering grant. S. Manter seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.