**Survey Results (Revised)**

Dear Task Force Members,

I sent out 114 questionnaires to town board and committee members, first by email (indirectly, through Jen Rand’s email request to heads of committees and boards that they forward the questionnaire to their members), then directly to the members by snail mail (with a postage-paid return envelope enclosed in each of my letters). Fifty-nine members of boards and committees responded. Such a response rate—over 50 percent--is considered excellent.

One committee member, who only identified himself or herself as “A very committed committee member,” wrote to me: “I find the enclosed questionnaire disturbing and racist. I have served West Tisbury in several capacities over the years and it was not my race nor age nor gender that enables me to be successful. The town has felt that my experience, education, character and willingness to serve to be the most important factors. If there happens to be qualified persons of a different, age, gender or race that are qualified to serve the town then I will assume they have the ability to seek out which town committees they could contribute to and apply for the position. If the town wants to be “inclusive” then they need to seek out the best and the brightest candidates regardless of their race, gender or age.”

The other 59 respondents answered some or all of the survey questions. All respondents, except one, indicated they were white and not of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin. They skewed older: under 20, 0; 20-29, 0; 30-39, 5; 40 to 49, 1; 50-59, 8; 60-69, 13; 70-79, 23; 80-89, 9; 90 and above, 0. Thirty females and twenty-nine males responded to the questionnaire.

The answers to the two questions about encouraging more inclusive membership on town boards and committees follow.

**Are there ways the town of West Tisbury or its Task Force might encourage greater inclusion in the make-up of town bodies?**

Cynthia Aguilar, Byways C.: “Meet with NAACP, Wampanoag, Brazilian groups/Brazilian Facebook to present….Is your concern only with town government committees—or also town employees—police, fire dept., school, council on aging, library?”

Anna Alley, Council on Aging Bd.: “Call up and ask them or ask others who might be good.”

Joanie Ames, Fence Viewer: “My guess is that personally asking people to serve on town committees. Many people in town don’t know there are fence viewers to help settle property-line disputes. We find they are so relieved and glad to get the help.”

Lisa Amols, Land Bank-W.T. Advisory Bd., Parks and Recreation: “Perhaps advertise on social media what positions are open and needed to fill with details of what that position entails in terms of time commitment.”

Richard Andre, Energy C.: “Hold an open house…to attract younger residents and participants.”

Tim Barnett, Bd. of Health: “Tax credit.”

Rachel Baumrin, Complete Streets C.: “Advertise online an in the paper and on radio encouraging people to join committees and offer a list of available openings on committees. Show how their participation matters.”

David Bouck, Land Bank-WT Advisory Bd. Mill Brook Watershed Management C.. : “Maybe post publicly, or make announcements/advertise when volunteer positions are available or need to be filled? Pretty sure that already happens. Maybe an open house or a stand at a public event such as the fair?”

Jill Bouck, Local Historical Commission: “Maybe more press about positions on boards, what they do, how they help the town.”

Geraldine Brooks, Conservation Commission: “Outreach to young and diverse individuals. Invitation has to be effective.”

Nancy Cabot, Council on Aging Bd.: “Asking committee members to contact potential members would encourage participation. Perhaps forum to explain the various openings.”

John Christensen, Finance C.: “Put questionnaires in other languages. It will take one-on-one recruiting focused on unrepresented.”

Sean Conley, Historic District Commission: “Almost every committee needs more people and has vacancies. Please! Please! Join a committee!”

Nancy Dole, Community Preservation C., Historic District Commission: “Young people are needed, but often don’t have the time (I guess) to volunteer. They are always welcome, we need members.”

Jane Dreeben, Housing Bank C.: “Approach people individually and ask; maybe do an e-mail blast or mailing which gives info about what is involved.”

Fran Finnegan Library Bd.: “Neighborly outreach!”

David Fielder, Tree Advisory C.: “I have limited insight into this. Survey a good start. Bring question up with underrepresented groups.”

Matt Gebo, Parks and Recreation: “More affordable housing which will hopefully attract younger families with diverse backgrounds to town.”

Loren Ghiglione, Task Force: Have the town budget—and assign staff—for inserting list of open committee positions in quarterly tax bills, posting quarterly the list of vacancies at West Tisbury Post Office and other spots frequented in town quarterly, and advertising at least annually in local media. Solicit names of possible committee members from NAACP, Brazilian organizations, and other bodies that might help with the goal of inclusion. Personally reach out to representatives of underrepresented communities, including younger and lower-income members of the town. Hold educational sessions about work of committees and boards at library and high school.

Whit Griswold, Conservation Commission, Preserve West Tisbury C.: “You tell me. I’m informally recruiting all the time. Maybe putting on the signs coming into town, ‘West Tisbury welcomes all.‘”

Sam Hall, Housing Bank C.: “Towns of MV need to decide if we want to orient toward the very wealthy who are increasingly driving local dynamics, and the services and trades that serve them, or maybe focus on a broader, more authentic, more diverse society and population. Don’t talk to me about ‘maintaining WT’s bucolic, agricultural tradition’ when you’re facilitating—if not encouraging—the wholesale transformation of the island into the bloody Hamptons.”

Ted Jochsberger, Affordable Housing and Community Preservation: “Reach out to the various constituencies. Also recruit from the younger populations who have a vested interest in the missions of the committees. Support, such as stipends, etc., might be used to encourage participation.”

Omar Johnson, Task Force: “There are ways to encourage greater inclusion via the town web site or other media outlets.”

Virginia Jones, Climate Advisory C., Planning Bd., Shellfish Advisory C. Jones is concerned about board and committee memberships being “pale, stale, and male.” But she described the difficulty of getting people to serve. She said the Planning Board resorted to going through the Vineyard telephone directory, when there was still a telephone directory, asking West Tisbury residents to serve. Matt Merry agreed to serve.

James Klingensmith, Affordable Housing C., Affordable Housing Trust, Personnel Bd.: “Possibly occasional ads in local papers or postings in public places of openings that need to be filled and how to apply for the positions.”

Richard Knabel, Capital Improvement Planning C.: “The town administrator or Select Board might make a greater effort. They really don’t do anything along these lines.”

Terry Kriedman, Task Force: “Probably by directly asking underrepresented people to participate—going directly to meet them where they work, or play or pray.”

Cheryl Lowe, Community Preservation C., Conservation Commission: “I think we need more young people. Reach out to students who are not leaving for higher education or who have moved back to the island again.”

Bruce MacNelly, Preserve West Tisbury C.: “Advertise more extensively and more in advance when there are openings coming up with as much detail as possible about the mission and roles in each case.”

Marina McFarland, Assessor’s Office Bd., Capital Improvements Planning C. : “Reach out to younger members of the community. Put committee vacancy notices in tax bills.”

Matt Merry, Capital Improvements Planning C., Housing Bank C, Planning Bd.: “Get younger folks involved, it’s really the future that we are working on.”

Cathy Minkiewicz, Byways C. Finance C.: “Pat Gregory used to get his students at the HS involved in town meeting. Is anyone working with our youth to attract them?”

Wendy Nierenberg, Library Bd.: “I think there are several issues: 1. We need younger blood on committees and boards, but young folks are busy working and raising families. Some targeted effort needs to be made to attract them. 2. It is hard to know what boards or committees are in need of (extra) membership. If one doesn’t know there is a need, one will not volunteer. 3. I have a sense that the same people have the same positions in perpetuity and that new people might feel reluctant to apply or express interest. This questionnaire is a good first step.”

Alexandra Pratt, Task Force Against Discrimination: “Affordable housing, for folks making more than currently allowed for affordable housing. Life here is expensive, even for us making a solid salary. Many friends my age are moving off island due to the lack of housing options. Some people in their 20s and 30s don’t feel like getting involved because they don’t feel like they can make a life here or are even wanted here. Most people have to work two or more jobs just to afford to be here and have no time or energy for volunteer work.”

Peter Rodegast, Conservation Commission, Land Bank-.T. Advisory Bd., : “Yes, post the need for folks’ involvement at the post office, the library, and the dump.”

Doug Ruskin, Finance Committee: “The town as a body does only a so-so job of communicating openings in general. I believe only posting on the town website and at town hall. So better outreach is needed, in my opinion. But I think the key is to encourage town involvement in general. A few years ago a number of us put together a workshop sponsored by and held at the library called “What Makes West Tisbury Tick?” We presented most aspects of town government, what volunteering looked and felt like and generally encouraged involvement. We got an opening statement from then-senator Dan Wolf (via video) to kick it off. Some of the documentation is included here.”

Karen Stanley, Local Historical Commission: “Communicate better about what committees exist and their functions. Maybe some sort of open house or info session or printed outline of town committees?”

Susanna Sturgis, Task Force: “I believe in the power of F2F (in person) gatherings, esp. informal and even social ones. They’re a way of expanding “the loop” and helping break down insider/outsider splits.”

Rise Terney, Capital Improvements Planning C.: “It is hard to have or expect a great deal of diversity in a town that is not very diverse either racially, economically or otherwise. Advertising about town committees and boards aggressively would help. There is a need to reach out to encourage younger town residents.”

Kate Warner, Climate Advisory C., Energy C.: “We have trouble having enough members period who are knowledgeable on our topics.”

Rez Williams, Byways C., Mill Brook Watershed Management Planning C.: “As the present town population is not very diverse and cost of living makes it even more difficult to attract diversity, I would fid it difficult to encourage greater inclusion.”

**Is there anyone that you feel would make a good board or committee member? If so, briefly explain why.**

Anna Alley: “Carmen Wilson—retired licensed social worker and school counselor—very experienced. Black. John Samuel Alley Jr. (AKA Samuel Alley Jr.), finance committee. White. (Don’t tell him I told you. Just ask him,).”

Lisa Amols: “Anyone who lives here would be a good board or committee member in my opinion.”

Richard Andre: “Jon Harfarand, John Stanwood.”

David Bouck: “To be honest, I have a hard time thinking of anyone. Most folks are very busy already.”

Jill Bouck: “It’s hard to recruit. Positions often go unfilled as it’s a volunteer thing and everyone is so busy.”

John Christenson: I think about this a lot and I try to convince anyone I think would be good. Town demographics work against us. Maybe work through religious communities. That’s what we did for Energy…Also organizing VTA bus drivers.”

Sean Conley: “We need more young people I would guess that average age of members is 65”

Jane Deeken: “Deborah Mayhew, Barbara Bellinggame (sp?). Both reliable,…have community awareness.”

Nancy Dole: “Someone who cares to contribute time to the community they live in. Per terms of our by-law we should have an attorney on the [historic district] commission, but we have been unable to find one who is interested.”

Annie Fisher, Historic Commission & Historic District Commission: “We need younger members. Both boards’ members are over 60. Have not heard of anyone interested in either board.”

Loren Ghiglione: “Winona Madison, Wampanoag tribal member who seems to know everyone, but she is extremely busy running a business and four-child household.”

Whit Griswold: “Anyone under 60.”

Ted Jochsberger: “There are some, but I would like to discuss it with them before.”

Omar Johnson: “Leon Brathwaite. He’s familiar with many areas of town government, he’s outspoken and he’s a minority (African American).”

James Klingensmith: “Rebecca Moore of West Tisbury (508-627-2004) as a member of the Affordable Housing Committee. She understands the need and may have a voice that needs to be heard. [mvbecca@yahoo.com](mailto:mvbecca@yahoo.com).

Cathy Minkiewicz: “Hunter Moorman, great leadership skills.”

Gret Orcutt: “Matt Merry—he’s involved with the town and attends town meeting and community meetings. He is quite smart.”

Susanna Sturgis “I’m thinking.”

Kate Warner: “People in the energy business. Members of other boards whose work will be impacted by climate change.”

**Where do we go from here?**

Undertake some recommendations on our own? Take a concise list of other recommendations to the Select Board? Request the Select Board review all of the people who were recommended for membership on town boards and committees? Create a press release about our findings to be shared with Vineyard media? Other ideas?

Best, Loren