

DRAFT

Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Chilmark Planning Board Chilmark Public Library Meeting Room

August 8, 2016

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Warren Doty, Jim Malkin, Bill Rossi

Planning Board Members Present: Janet Weidner, Joan Malkin, Peter Cook

Not Present: Mitchell Posin, Chris MacLeod, John Eisner, Rich Osnoss

Public: Judith Flanders, Marie Larsen, Mr. & Mrs. Gollin, Elise Elliston, _____, _____

Staff: Jennifer Christy, Admin. Asst., Tim Carroll, Executive Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:05PM

- **Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board & Town Affairs Council:**

- The Board of Selectmen chairperson Warren Doty called the meeting to order and introduced the Planning Board subcommittee members present.
- Ms. Weidner introduced the process the Planning Board is working on to update the Master Plan with a concentration on Menemsha. She noted that the subcommittee working on the Master Plan has gathered information from a variety of town committees/Boards and departments.
- Ms. Weidner asked the public for their thoughts, ideas and visions for Menemsha. She noted that the subcommittee is starting with a blank canvas and some things may be altered in a new updated Master Plan vision for Menemsha and many things may stay the same, but the subcommittee is interested in gathering all thoughts without providing direction at this point.
- Ms. Gollin inquired how the transfer station off-site Menemsha parking is working. Mr. Rossi stated that the off-site parking seems to be working well and the lot is full in the evening, especially on weekend nights.
- Ms. Larsen inquired about signage for the off-site parking. Mr. Doty and Mr. Rossi stated that they felt the signage was appropriate.
- Ms. Larsen noted the difficulty for pedestrians to walk safely near the bend in the road just past The Bite in Menemsha.
- Mr. Doty noted the plans that are in place for improving that area and noted that the plans are currently on hold while the public provides feedback for the Master Plan process.
- Mr. Malkin stated that it was the view of the BOS that there were so many areas in need of attention within Menemsha that a prudent way to proceed was to obtain the help of the Planning Board to create a broad plan through the Master Plan process before proceeding piecemeal.
- Ms. Flanders inquired if there is still public access over Crick Hill. Mr. Rossi stated this is not clear. Mr. Doty stated that counsel has opined on the topic. Mr. Carroll stated that counsel has said that the Town could not successfully state a claim of right of way, but individuals could.
- Mr. Doty noted that at times during the summer, the comfort station sees use of 200 persons an hour. Mr. Doty further noted that there are ideas regarding how to charge for use of amenities such as the comfort station.
- Mr. Gollin noted that it may be almost impossible to define a long-term plan for Menemsha with all of the unanswerable questions that are produced by planning for Menemsha. He noted that the best approach may be to find solutions that work for a period of time, even for a few years, and then keep adapting. Mr. Gollin noted that Menemsha is a private place and a very public place. He noted that the public place must co-exist with the slower-changing privately owned places in Menemsha.
- It was noted that a sign could be put up that asks people to walk single file.

- Ms. Flanders inquired how many accidents involving pedestrians occur in Menemsha. There were no statistics available.
- Mr. Malkin noted that some of the pedestrian habits may be the result of an unavoidable vacation mindset.
- Ms. Larsen stated that she would like the BOS to move forward on the walking space around the curve after The Bite and not wait for the Planning Board Master Plan completion.
- Mr. Rossi stated his support for the creation of safer areas for pedestrian traffic in Menemsha and elsewhere.
- Mr. Gollin inquired if there is any possibility that vehicle traffic could be banned from Menemsha.
- Mr. _____ inquired about the creation of a pedestrian walkway in the form of a boardwalk, possibly raised.
- Mr. Rossi stated that a walkway next to the fish shacks, along the roadway and aligned with the bulkhead, would eliminate parking space.
- Ms. Larsen suggested that a better parking plan be designed for the Menemsha area. Ms. Larsen stated that the police should ride bikes to their details in Menemsha rather than park their cruisers in Menemsha if in fact this is being done.
- Mr. Doty noted that a current objective is to pair the commercial fishing operations with the tourist activities and inquired if that was still a situation that is desirable. Mr. Doty reiterated the idea of the installation of a winch or crane to be used by commercial fisherman to haul large ice chests of fish directly into waiting trucks. Ms. Elliston stated that she would ask the Town to focus on the continuing success of the commercial fishing business in Menemsha.
- Mr. Gollin noted that there is a delicate balance that must be maintained in Menemsha of both tourists and commercial fishermen.
- Mr. Doty described the various people that come to Menemsha and noted it is difficult to define the demographic that visits the area in the summer months.
- Ms. Elliston stated that the essence of Menemsha is as a fishing village. This feeling was echoed by Mr. Gollin and he encouraged the Town to maintain Menemsha as a fishing village as long as it is economically feasible. Mr. Malkin noted that it would be worthwhile to identify what kinds of fishing is viable to Menemsha now so that the case for a focus on the maintenance of Menemsha as a commercial fishing center in Town can be made with evidence.
- Mr. Gollin stated that it would be important to define Menemsha. He further noted that there are many different “Menemshas” and in the past it seemed that there is a competition to see which vision of Menemsha is going to prevail. He said that somehow many of these visions need to be merged and a way to co-exist needs to be developed.
- Ms. Flanders noted that Menemsha is a year-round area which then goes through a transformation for eight weeks.
- Mr. Doty broached the subject of sea-level rise and what responsible planners should do now if there were a 1 foot sea level rise, for example.
- Ms. Larsen noted that it is very difficult to see in Menemsha when driving in particular. Ms. Elliston stated that people coming into Menemsha to buy gas need a way to turn around without going through the entire parking area lot loop. Ms. Malkin noted that the subcommittee has planned a traffic workshop for Menemsha in the fall and she welcomed these traffic flow ideas.
- Ms. Flanders noted that there are many locals who like to “buzz the bight” and it would be great to maintain that and facilitate that activity.

- Ms. Larsen stated that a drop-off area in the parking lot would be beneficial for flow of traffic and pedestrians as well as providing a way to open up a “view.”
- Mr. Rossi inquired about whether there would be any possibility that a better traffic plan for Menemsha would include moving some of the flow into the area where the dune is now.
- Ms. Larsen suggested that parking be only allowed on each side of the road out to the beach but none, or very little, be allowed in the center parking area in front of the beach. Ms. Malkin inquired how attendees felt regarding the idea to have resident and non-resident parking. Mr. Doty expressed dislike for the idea. Mr. _____ stated he did not feel there is a way to limit the traffic in Menemsha to a great degree.
- Mr. _____ noted that a comprehensive plan would need to deal, in some way, with climate change issues that are a reality now and in the future.
- Mr. Gollin stated there needs to be a comprehensive plan even though it is difficult to create one. He encouraged the BOS and the Planning Board to keep working to produce the plan.
- Ms. Malkin noted there is hardly any zoning in Menemsha and wondered what the attendees felt about this. Ms. Flanders noted there are many conservation restrictions in effect in the area.
- Ms. Weidner noted that a survey will most likely go out next winter to residents, seasonal and year-round. She further noted that the Master Plan is a vision statement but will also contain action plans for Town entities to tackle.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer L. Christy