

DRAFT Chilmark Board of Selectmen January 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Public Participation - Comments for Menemsha Traffic Planning

Present: Warren Doty, Bill Rossi, Tim Carroll, John Armstrong, Barbara Armstrong, Mr. & Mrs. Morgan, Deb Hancock, Patrick Echlin, Clair Ganz, Bob Klimm, Kim Manter, Frank Fenner, Harriette Otteson, Linda Coutinho, Seth Karlinsky, Brian Cioffi, Sean Slavin, Jane Slater, Bill Venno and videographer from MVTV.

At 6:30 PM Mr. Doty called Visioning meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Mr. Venno a senior planner from the Martha's Vineyard Commission introduced himself (moderator for the Visionary Meeting) and asked attendees to introduce themselves and share their thoughts. The topic for the Visionary Meeting is:

Menemsha Traffic, Parking and Pedestrian Plan

There was extensive discussion and sharing of ideas during the one and a half hour long meeting.

A complete video recording is available at MVTV.org in the video on demand for Chilmark 01.12.16. There are draft plans and documents now available on line at

http://www.chilmarkma.gov/pages/ChilmarkMA_Selectmen/projects/

There had been a session similar to this about three weeks ago about the Menemsha bathrooms which are a big issue and when the Selectmen ended the session in December with a notion that we need to make some significant improvements with the bathrooms in Menemsha and we are working on that. We also wanted to talk about traffic and pedestrian walkways in Menemsha and that is the purpose of this meeting tonight. We have asked Bill Venno, a planner for the Martha's Vineyard Commission, to kind of act as the chairperson for this session and help us get ideas out on the table for what we are talking about.

Bill Venno, Senior Planner for the MV Commission, introduced himself. He stated he had been asked to help facilitate the exchange of ideas. He thought his job was to make sure everyone has a chance to be heard. This is just a brain storming sessions for ideas. Process wise, he will try to jot down ideas and put them on sticky notes. He thought if the notes were put up, he would organize them in a little bit more coherent fashion. He then stated that Tim would start, just briefly reviewing.

Tim noted there were two handouts, a map and stapled copies. There were 16 copies, perhaps a couple short for people. There was a town meeting in November that put \$10,000 to work on a plan and a program. The map was delivered this afternoon by the surveyors. It shows the actual conditions in Menemsha of the roadway, edge of pavement, and location of the road, etc. so it will be possible to go forward in the future to do things. The Selectmen put in a boardwalk last year along Menemsha Beach, the pink line on the map on the left, 375 feet of wooden boardwalk that was put out to try to get pedestrians out of the road, to get strollers and people going back and for to the comfort station, to the gas station, and to the fish markets out of the road. That was met with some success. The discussion during the walk around in the fall, was that we may want to take the 3 foot boardwalk and make it a 6 foot boardwalk so

Chilmark Selectmen Visioning Menemsha 01/12/16

there is enough room for people to pass each other which was another problem during the summer and to extend it all the way down to the comfort station itself instead of stopping short; another 125 feet.

The second map, noting the yellow curve, Creek Hill to Beetlebung Café, across from the Bite. There are some citizens in town who offered to pay for a sidewalk on that corner to improve public safety which kind of started the whole conversation about sidewalks and paths or whatever will be done. So, rather than just willy/nilly accept a gift or try to negotiate the purchase of the land to try to make the sidewalk, we are talking about having a plan for the whole of Menemsha. Whether we do it now or do it over time or don't do anything, at least it needs to be part of a plan.

On the next map is a red and an orange line, going down Basin Road at the intersection of North Road, and those are the two possible places for a roadside path for pedestrians to get out of Basin Road on that section. When the Selectmen met and walked there, some people liked the road across the road from the fish plant and some liked the road on the side of the fish plant and the antique store.

For various reasons, the parking lot on one side if you are walking through the cars backing out of traffic, on the other side you have a driveway and a water pipes sticking there. On the big white sheet shows where actually everything is located, so it does show that there is a little bit of wiggle room on either side. The blue line on the right hand of the floor map is across from the Homeport, along the Greenebaum's property. Currently, there is parallel parking there. The Town of Chilmark owns into Greenebaum's yard a bit, about ten more feet. The question is whether to clear back a little bit on that bank to get cars further out of the road to create two-way traffic at the top of that section of North Road or do we want to turn cars diagonally perhaps as the previous Chief of Police had recommended for diagonal parking.

Across the street from that there is a yellow line, basically going from Edy's Island Road all the way up to the old gallery on the corner next to the Homeport. The suggestion was that the Town owns the edge of that road, it is paved, and right now it is marked as no parking. That could be where the pedestrian path would be, marked on the asphalt. The problem there is that the Homeport takes advantage of some of the road there which is an issue.

The green dot at the end, down by the Galley. at the walk around in the fall, there were a couple of suggestions and some discussion about taking out the handicap space, moving it to the other end of the strip of parking there and removing two spaces and making a turn-around where the yellow spot is at the end of the road across from the Galley. It probably would mean, doing the first measurement of it, it might mean besides losing those two spaces that we would have to push back the pilings in front of the Galley by five feet. Those are just some of the ideas that were thrown out during the walk-around in the fall. In the packet are some comments made by various people that go from project to project and then at the end there

Chilmark Selectmen Visioning Menemsha 01/12/16

are some comments from people who were not able to be here were sent emails regarding the buses. In the end, they wanted to just look at everyone's comments to see what they have to say.

The ridership was up 56% for the VTA bus. The count in August alone was 2775 people using it, so there was a big increase from 2015. Someone asked if that included the shuttle. Tim responded that it was just the shuttle, the sunset shuttle and the day time shuttle. The two month increase was 56% over last year. There were 2775 people using the shuttle in August. The two month increase was a 56% increase over 2015. It wasn't too well used in 2015, so as to not get too excited about the increase.

Mr. Venno then requested people to introduce themselves and to give some sense of their relationship to Menemsha.

Mr. Bob Klimm stated his family owns the cottage closest to the corner at 2 Creek Hill. He had a question about the red square area for parking. Tim explained that the Selectmen had gone to the Conservation Commission to preliminarily request permission to get a notice of intent and order of condition move the shell lot from one place to another. It is in the packet. The idea is that the shell lot is currently on the edge of the wetland and the CONCOM would like the Selectmen to downsize it a little bit. The Selectmen would like to move the parking on the other side of the building, on the north side of the building. That would then be used to turn around buses so they would not go down into the beach area and try to navigate between the cars and the people. In so doing, they intended to keep the tour vans out. The tour vans have gotten a little bigger and have turned into miniature buses and they are causing part of the problem. They do not fit into any of the parking spaces and they stick out and block traffic. If they stop along the side of the road they stick out and block traffic. So the idea was to keep where the bus stop is. In the summer time in the evening, it was discovered that people would flag the bus down before it got to the bus stop and then by the time it got to the bus stop it was full. So that people standing at the bus stop were not able to get on the bus because it was full. The area where they were staging the bus stop in front of the Menemsha Fish House was crowded and dangerous with the fork lifts, the trucks, the deliveries, the bus and the people and everybody was complaining about the mix and the use there. We met with the VTA in early November and they flagged down one of their buses and some random bus driver pulled in with one of the brand new big buses and was able to do an easy turn in and out of there. It surprised us that it was that easy, so we pursued the VTA.

IDEAS: Mr. Venno requested ideas.

John Armstrong stated he was very much opposed to the shell lot being used for buses for a couple of reasons.

Mr. Venno stated that they may get more ideas that would be more attractive.

John Armstrong stated the reason is that it is probably the worst location on the corridor. It is furthest away from the destination of the beach. Letting people off and they are going to have to cross the street in a bad location.

Mr. Veno replied that all of that will have to be evaluated and you will have a chance to evaluate the ideas. That is not the purpose for tonight. They are still looking for more ideas.

John stated the idea is to move that sign somewhere else that has already been established for the buses.

Mr. Veno asked if they should remain where they are?

John replied that people who want to go to the beach should be closer to the beach rather than letting people off and having them walk. They are not going to walk, all of them along the side of the road. They are going to want to go to the fish market as a lot of them now want to go into the fish market and the fish market abuts the road. From a traffic standpoint, it is the worst place you could let people off.

Mr. Veno wanted to clarify to drop people off at the beach, their destination.

John replied yes.

Barbara Armstrong introduced herself. She stated that her family owns the houses on Creek Hill. She thought that the turnaround there would be a very bad idea. She would like to see it down by the beach. She thought that if there were smaller buses and the Town reconfigures the parking down there, not only will the buses be able to get around there but also emergency vehicles. This summer when she was down there several times it was so congested in parking that she saw a little girl almost get hit by a car as the parking was so close to the road. The parking needs to be reconfigured so the buses, emergency vehicles and other cars will be able to get down there closer.

Barbara stated the other thing she would like to add is time. The buses that are going down there are virtually way too big and even in the summer the buses are empty a lot. There are buses down there every hour or so and are constantly empty. They are too big for the number of people that are using them. She would suggest that they actually look at and eliminate some of the buses that are not being utilized.

Barbara then introduced her mother Roberta Morgan who owns the Harbor Craft Shop which is across from the proposed or possible side walk on the curve right after The Bite.

James Morgan then introduced himself, son of Roberta and brother of Barbara. He too felt there should be a way to reconfigure the parking down by the gas station. He thought that once again, smaller buses, take away a few of the parking spots. If there is a way that the bus

Chilmark Selectmen Visioning Menemsha 01/12/16

can pull over to where the emergency area is somehow which is in the far corner of the parking area and then loop around. He thought that a loop was the way to go. If you have to park a bus and then turn around and cross traffic, it is just going to add to the congestion down there.

Mr. Veno asked for clarification "reconfigure parking."

James stated that if you are at the gas station in the summer time and are on an outside pump and you have a truck as he has and you want to get around, you can't. A car cannot get by. If there is an emergency vehicle that has to get down there, it is a gridlock and it's bad. He does not even want to go down there.

Mr. Veno stated that "reconfiguring means removing parking spots."

John stated there was a yellow bus now that fits. He thought they would be doing the same thing by eliminating the parking in the shell lot?

Mr. Veno was not saying whether it was good or bad. You cannot keep accommodating more stuff and keep everything up there.

Mr. Doty asked if there were any way to widen the road and to extend the pavement. He has had discussions with the Selectmen before about that and you don't want to encroach too much on the dunes but generally he thought that between the fish market and the comfort station, that roadway down to the beach needs to be widened. To have new asphalt put down with new lines that are clearly marked. That would alleviate some of the congestion.

Barbara said she would like to see the Comfort station stay where it is. And about the congestion Barbara recommended some of the fish trucks being stored at the landfill site. Barbara also mentioned that trash pickup should not be earlier than 6:00 AM; it has been as early as 5:15 AM

Mr. Doty said that the fish trucks will be changing to electric-standby and not run their diesel to reduce the noise in Menemsha.

Frank Fenner said he was one of the owners of the Galley and said there have been some really good comments tonight. Mr. Fenner supported the recommendation of widening the area to allow for less congestion not necessarily adding more parking area but travel lane would increase. Mr. Fenner recommended clearly marking (painting) pavement where there is no parking and where there is parking.

Debbie Hancock also supported the recommendation Mr. Doty suggested about increasing the space for maneuverability. Debbie supported the sidewalk along Basin Road.

Chilmark Police department members discussed the policy of informing drivers looking for parking during “sunset” hours to utilize the parking lot and free shuttle service. Suggestion of more signage for free lot and shuttle service was also made.
Chairman Doty thanked everyone for their comments and for Bill Veno to assist in this process.

At 8:43 PM meeting was adjourned

Submitted by June Manning & Diana DeBlase