

Town Committee on Squibnocket

Minutes

November 18, 2014

Chilmark Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

8am

Present: Jim Malkin (Chair), Allison Burger, Dan Greenbaum, Jane Slater, Janet Weidner, Ron Rappaport (*ex officio*)

Also Present: Andy Goldman (Housing Committee), Jim Feiner (Housing Committee), Margaret Maida (Beach Committee), Jay Walsh, Richard Osnoss (Planning Board), Jessica Roddy (Housing Committee), John Flender (Planning Board), Mitchell Posin (Planning Board), Chris Murphy, Joan Malkin (Planning Board), Rosalie Hornblower, Ann Wallace (Housing Committee), Jennifer Christy (Planning Board and Housing Committee staff), Wendy Weldon, Warren Doty, Chuck Hodgkinson (Zoning Board staff), Tom Wallace (Wallace & Co.), Kristin Maloney (Beach Committee), Warren Doty (Selectman), Alex Aelvin (Vineyard Gazette), *others unspecified*

Minutes of October 31, 2014 approved, November 5, 2014 approved as amended.

Update on Committee's Work: Jim Malkin outlined the Committee's upcoming work plan. The Committee hopes to receive a report from the coastal and environmental experts by mid-December. The Committee will then hold two public informational sessions with Chilmark residents in late December and early January, and finalize its recommendations for a Special Town Meeting in early February, possibly February 9th.

He recalled for the Committee communications received from FoS LLC which indicated that land belonging to Orphanos/Jeffers along Squibnocket Road would not be available unless it was part of the dune ridge proposal presented by the FoS LLC. The effect would be to limit the Committee to considering only the causeway originally proposed by the SFHA (which was specifically designed to involve only properties under control of the SFHA), or the dune ridge proposal of the FoS LLC. The Committee has chosen to proceed with its work without considering this land as being necessarily linked to construction of a dune ridge. If the Committee finds that the best solution does not involve a constructed dune, and that the land in question is required in order to achieve the charge given to the Committee by the Town, consideration would have to be given to a taking under eminent domain. He stated that the Committee does not take such a possibility lightly, and would strive to do this in as conciliatory and appropriate a manner as possible. He also noted that Orphanos/Jeffers have a right of first refusal on the "Big Weldon" property to the east of Squibnocket Road and the "Little Weldon" property to the west. The Committee has written to Peter Weldon regarding these properties, but has not yet heard back from him.

He summed up the issue for the Committee: two members of the community (who had in fact supported the resolution of Town Meeting creating the Committee) have stated that unless the

Committee recommends their proposed solution, their land will not be made available. The Committee will move forward to provide the best possible recommended solution to the Town.

Discussion with Planning Board: Jim Malkin asked the Planning Board for its views on the matrices prepared by the Committee. He specifically asked for Planning Board input and ideas as to what the Town could do with the “Big Weldon” property that might help to bring down its probably considerable cost to the Town. A suggestion had been made to create homesite housing lots, or to sell the property, or some portion of the property, at market rates. Richard Osnoss, responding on behalf of the Planning Board, stressed the Planning Board’s strong support for the creation of affordable housing opportunities in Chilmark, but noted that the Board has not had the opportunity to study the property in detail. He stated that the next meeting of the Planning Board will be held on November 24, and that the Board will collect available information on this and surrounding properties to review possible options for the Committee.

Discussion with Beach Committee: Janet Weidner facilitated discussion with Beach Committee Chairperson Kristin Maloney. She asked about the Beach Committee’s needs and preferences with regards to parking, specifically, how many parking spots should be created. Beach Committee members noted that, if the Beach can be restored, the popularity of the beach will increase. They felt that roughly 75 spaces, with a maximum of 100 spaces, would be most appropriate, and stressed the need for additional handicapped parking spaces and a drop-off area to minimize the walking distance to the beach. The Beach Committee also clarified additional elements needed at the parking lot, including a Porta-Pottie, a small Guard Shed, and a dumpster. The Beach Committee thanked the Squibnocket Committee for its attention to the Beach Committee’s recommendation that the parking area should ideally be located close to the best bathing area, and that reasonably easy bather-access to the beach is a high priority.

Discussion with Housing Committee: Members of the Housing Committee pointed out that the creation of homesite housing lots will not reduce the cost to the Town, and that it would be preferable to purchase land elsewhere, in order to maximize the homesite lots that can be created. Tom Wallace clarified that the “Big Weldon” and “Little Weldon” properties are on the market for a total of \$3.2 million.

Update on Experts: Dan Greenbaum reported meeting with Les Smith from Epsilon, who is an environmental / coastal management expert. He expressed clear opinions regarding the difficulty of getting approval for construction in wetlands, indicating that 1:1 replacement would be required, and that approval would only be granted when it is clearly demonstrated that no other alternative exists. Without such a “limited condition”, approval is extremely unlikely. A possible berm road that closes off access to the Pond would need to have openings to ensure such access. Mr. Smith conducted a site visit last Thursday, and is preparing a written report for the Committee which could be ready in two weeks.

Jim Malkin noted that Epsilon sent a note asking that we authorize Epsilon to file with the Endangered Species office, and that Committee members will be meeting with the USGS coastal engineers on Thursday.

Review of Correspondence: Jim Malkin stated that the Committee has received correspondence from the SFHA responding to the responses provided by FoS LLC regarding a dune ridge proposal; Jim Malkin was also contacted by the owners of Great Island, who commend the Committee for its efforts but point

out that an emergency access via Great Island is not a viable concept, since areas of the proposed access are low-lying enough that they, too, would be flooded during an emergency.

As for any access route travelling across the Pond, Epsilon has indicated that this would require working through the State, as the State owns land under the Pond, and would be an extremely arduous process.

Timeline for the coming weeks: The next step is to receive and review reports from the experts as soon as possible. In addition, the Committee will begin to go through concerns regarding each proposal, and assess whether and how well it reaches the goals mandated by the town. The Committee will aim to hold an informational public meeting for Chilmark residents in mid- to late December, followed by an additional public informational meeting in mid-January, with a view to having the Special Town Meeting by February 9th, if possible.

The Committee will want to have reached a preliminary recommendation or recommendations before the first informational meeting, then refine its recommendation on the basis of these meetings and go to the Town. He reiterated the Town's charge to the Committee, which was not a charge for a particular aesthetic, but calls for a Town Beach, adequate parking for that beach, and secure vehicular and utilities access to the Squibnocket Farms area. He stated it is now time to converge towards the more viable options, and identify those that best fit the charge given to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 09:11.