



OAK BLUFFS PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, February 23, 2023

5:00 p.m. | Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance: Ewell Hopkins, Bill Cleary, JoJo Lambert

Members Absent: Erik Albert, Mark Crossland

Staff in Attendance: Jessica Downey

Attendees: Richard Toole, Bo Fehl, Peter Goodale, David Hannon, Barbara Ronchetti, Dana Mylott

Chair Hopkins opened the meeting at 5:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from both the January 12 and January 26, 2023 Meetings of the Planning Board will be approved at the next scheduled meeting on March 9, 2023.

Member Cleary made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2023 Meeting of the Planning Board. Member Lambert seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 3-0.

Discussion Regarding Direction for Zoning Reform Subcommittee

The Chair provided context for the discussion, stating that the current Master Plan was adopted April 25, 2019. The Master Plan should be kept current, with updates every five years. As such, the Chair proposed forming two subcommittees to work in tandem: one for the Master Plan, and one to be the Zoning Reform Subcommittee. The purpose would be to ensure that what comes out of the update to the Master Plan is reflected in the zoning changes that need to take place. A discussion followed regarding the logistics of working on both plans in tandem. The Chair explained that the Zoning Reform Subcommittee already has a scope of work, and that they could look at the results of the Master Plan Update Subcommittee to determine whether there are any additional matters they would like to include in terms of recommendations at Town Meeting. The Zoning Reform Subcommittee now has twelve months to complete their work, and could use the second six months to incorporate the results of the work from the Master Plan Update Subcommittee. Further discussion ensued regarding the process followed by the prior Master Plan committee: identifying deficits, performing public outreach, engaging consultants, and making recommendations. The

Board discussed the propriety and affordability of hiring a consultant. The Chair stated that the Board's responsibility is to keep the Master Plan document current, and the subcommittee would quantify what they have already identified as issues, then define the scope of the recommendation. The Chair stated that if the Board would support him, he would take on the role of Chair of the Master Plan Update Subcommittee. He would then work with the Zoning Reform Subcommittee to be sure they were informed of the Master Plan Subcommittee's progress throughout, to facilitate incorporating it into their own work. The Chair explained that the Master Plan Subcommittee brings up six new topics to be incorporated in the Master Plan. Zoning does not have to reflect those six changes in the first year, but there is a time issue, and both committees are necessary. However, the Chair recognized the Zoning Reform Subcommittee as a priority.

Member Cleary expressed interest in joining the Master Plan Update Committee, and the Chair agreed he would make a significant contribution, especially in light of his work with the Energy Subcommittee. The Chair recommended that Member Lambert chair the Zoning Reform Subcommittee, but she declined. Member Cleary inquired as to whether there was still money in the budget for a consultant. The Chair confirmed that money does remain in the budget.

The Chair expressed a desire to keep a Planning Board member chairing the Zoning Reform Subcommittee. A discussion followed regarding potential re-consideration of the zoning districts. The Chair acknowledged that progress would be incremental, and again addressed the possibility of hiring a consultant.

Public Comment

Peter Goodale – Mr. Goodale expressed that the current zoning structure is too restrictive on some businesses, and that there is nowhere for them to exist outside of the downtown/commercial area. In terms of re-zoning, the issue that most needs to be addressed is where do you put those businesses (for instance, landscaping) that you don't want downtown? If this is not resolved, businesses will be forced out. The chair acknowledged the problem as well as it's impact on the overall economy, and re-iterated his determination to bring some recommendations to Town Meeting in April of 2024.

Dana Mylott – Mr. Mylott stated that he has a piece of property on the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road, and he as well as others are getting pushback from the Building Inspector about having trailers on the properties. He expressed a desire to comply with town guidelines but is finding it difficult to operate his business. The sooner zoning reform can be enacted, the better so that people don't have to hide what they're trying to do. There is an increasing need for the services these businesses provide, and the business owners don't want to do anything illegal. Mr. Mylott also explained that there is a need to be able to conduct agricultural activities on a smaller footprint. He expressed appreciation for the Board's efforts and indicated a desire to do what is right for the

community. The Chair acknowledged the critical value of the business owners' voices being heard, especially in light of the size of this task.

Richard Toole – Mr. Toole echoed the business owners' sentiments regarding the need for zoning reform, and stated that the number of people coming on to the island from the Patriot Boat to work each day is excessive, with work trucks being parked in the commuter lots. There is a need to solve the issue of making it difficult for people to run an island business. There is also a need to solve the housing problem, and any zoning work that can be done to achieve that is necessary to balance out the year-round community.

The Chair acknowledged the critical nature of zoning reform efforts, and stated that he will work to return to the next Board Meeting with a recommendation for a path forward, and will seek ratification at that point.

Board Updates

Member Cleary – The Energy Committee is trying to get in front of the Select Board to discuss the \$144,000.00 in grant money received for being a Green Community. Secondly, Vineyard Power is going to designate money, earmarked for resiliency, to be moved to the town over the next fifteen year period. As such, the committee is researching town buildings that need work related to resiliency efforts. Additionally, there is an effort to audit existing buildings to determine current issues and future needs. Another issue is determining what kind of EV charging program they would like to see implemented throughout the town. Finally, he highlighted his work on climate change and the effort to offer outreach in order to facilitate conversation. The goal is to have a monthly meeting involving a different environmental topic. Member Cleary added that he will not be seeking re-election to the Planning Board, but expressed willingness to continue to participate in Planning-Board related matters and subcommittees.

Chair Hopkins - indicated that there are currently two candidates for the Planning Board seat: Sean DeBettencourt and Bo Fehl. He also stated that the Special Permit decision for the 10 Oak Bluffs Avenue project has been filed and is now in the twenty day appeal process.

Public Comment

Peter Goodale – Mr. Goodale stated that in relation to the discussion around the Energy Committee, he recently learned about potentially commercially available flywheel batteries, and indicated that there is a Massachusetts utility company that is in the business of installing them.

Adjourn

Member Cleary made a motion to adjourn. Member Lambert seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Minutes approved March 9, 2023

Documents on File:

Agenda; Board Packet; Zoom Video