



OAK BLUFFS PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, July 27, 2023

5:00 p.m. | Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance: Ewell Hopkins, JoJo Lambert, Sean DeBettencourt

Members Absent: Mark Crossland, Erik Albert

Staff in Attendance: None

Attendees: Llewellyn Rogers, Brian Patrick Hall

Chair Hopkins opened the meeting at 5:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the July 13, 2023 meeting will be approved at the next meeting on August 10, 2023.

The Oak Bluffs Water District – Water System Master Plan

With respect to the Water Department meeting, the Chairperson stated that the Town Administrator, representatives from the Parks Department, the Planning Board, the Select Board, the Board of Health, and the Building Department were present. The Superintendent walked through the current state of water consumption and water capacity in the Town, and each of the departments indicated at the conclusion of the meeting that they would go back to their respective boards and discuss immediate and long-term steps. The Chairperson stated that since the meeting, the Parks Department has gotten together and talked extensively about the consumption of water in the town parks and what steps could be taken.

A discussion followed regarding development and the number of new units coming online, as well as the fact that the Board needs to improve communication with the water department on those issues. One idea is to formally invite the Superintendent to all Site Plan and Special Permit applications as we do with the other departments on a regular basis. A discussion followed regarding factors that could be considered in making a plan to achieve the desired result. One idea is to explore what the bylaws would allow in terms of a solution. Another avenue is enforcement – especially with respect to the water ban.

The Chairperson expressed a need to be aware of clear cutting and other practices that impact water usage, as well as coexistence of septic systems and private wells, and

whether the guidance with respect to these matters is antiquated or in line with modern considerations.

The Chairperson then opened the floor to public comment.

Brian Patrick Hall inquired as to whether, with the increase in units and resulting high demand for water, it would make sense to put in grass fields. The Chairperson explained that they did not discuss any specific projects or patterns of usage. What they discussed was the current state of affairs and what could be done at the department level to make changes.

Update and Discussion on Request for Clarification: Martha's Vineyard Commission DRI Procedures

The Chairperson explained that the goal is to always improve the working relationship with the Commission. Two categories of issues have arisen recently that have caused concern with respect to Decisions of Regional Impact: Surrender of DRI and Continuation of DRI. The Chairperson stated that the Commission recently granted a request for surrender of a DRI relating to Shearer Cottage. The withdrawal removes any encumbrances on the property that may have arisen if the DRI had not been surrendered. He explained that the concern is that allowing the surrender does not consider the local implications that might result. The Chairperson expressed that he informed the Commission he would get the Board's opinions on how relations could be improved to alleviate that concern. Additionally, the expiration dates for Site Plan Reviews (1 year) and Special Permits (2 years) are in place because circumstances change over time. For instance, the High School DRI is set to expire on August 26th. A lot has transpired over the last two years, and the question is whether the Town or the Board(s) will have an opportunity to comment on any request for modification. The Chairperson then opened the floor to the Board in order to hear concerns.

Member Lambert inquired as to how the surrender process works. The Chairperson explained that it is essentially an annulment – as though it never happened – and that the property is no longer encumbered by a DRI.

Member DeBettencourt stated that if public and Board input is sought to grant a DRI, then it should also be sought as part of the surrender.

The Chairperson stated that he made a formal request for clarification on whether there will be involvement on the local level for surrender and/or modification. There is no answer yet, but he stated that he expects one in the near future.

Board Updates

Member DeBettencourt stated that FinCom is exploring ways in which Island Towns can collaborate to ensure they are not providing redundant services. He further reported that the Zoning Reform Subcommittee continues to meet, with one of the subgroups meeting with Laura Silber at the MVC.

Member Lambert stated that she continues to work on zoning reform.

The Chairperson stated that the ZBA referred the 3 Uncas Ave. project to the MVC, and Copeland held an executive session with respect to that property at their last meeting. He further stated that there was a hearing in Land Court relating to the Four Sisters project regarding timelines. The division of Harvard University involved in city planning is interested in interviewing several people in the Island with respect to decision-making at the municipal level, and the Chairperson stated that he will be part of that process on behalf of the Planning Board. He will be asking the Board if they are interested in follow-up interviews. He then opened the floor to public comment.

Brian Patrick Hall inquired as to whether the Chairperson was stating that if the Chairperson was stating that when an applicant seeks an extension of a DRI (or a modification), he would like the Planning Boards to be involved in that process. The Chairperson stated that there should be public or Town input in the process of surrendering or modifying a DRI, and that he has asked the Commission for clarification on that point. Mr. Hall stated that he believes there should be involvement at the point of project creation but not necessarily upon application for extension.

Adjourn

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

Minutes approved August 24, 2023

Documents on File:

Agenda; Board Packet; Zoom Video