

Selectmen's Meeting
July 26, 2010
4:00 pm

A meeting of the Board was held on the above date in the Fred B Morgan Jr. Meeting Room, Town Hall. Members present were Margaret E. Serpa, Chairman; Arthur Smadbeck; and Michael J. Donaroma. Also present was Ms. Pamela Dolby, Town Administrator.

At 4:00 p.m. Ms. Serpa opened the meeting and the public hearing for public comment on the request of MV Tours to have 15 passenger buses go downtown using a myriad of downtown streets not previously allowed for ticket tours to operate on. Mr. Ron Minkin, owner of MV Tours, was not present. Ms. Serpa opened the floor for comment.

First to speak was Ms. Parthenia Kiersted who expressed that the cabs going to and from the Harborview and along Fuller St. already drove too fast and endangered the public. More would just make a dangerous part of town worse. She felt Edgartown is a walking town.

Mr. Bailey Norton then got up to speak. He explained that the sightseeing bus issue had been going on for at least 30 years now. They have been quite a nuisance in the past. Such as running over and crushing sidewalks, damaging fences, and causing traffic tie ups.

In 1983 there was an agreement that all tour buses would not go further than Church St. into town. But, they have been gradually breaking that rule. The new company wants to use the most congested streets. These streets are already full of large trucks, ferry traffic, bikes, and pedestrians. It's already a dangerous situation.

Mr. Norton also pointed out that North Water St. just had extensive renovations and the buses would crowd the street and crush the new sidewalks. He did not see the benefit of inconveniencing and endangering the public for a private companies gain. He urged the Board to reject the request from the tour company and develop a bylaw to improve and preserve the downtown area.

Retiring Police Chief Paul Condlin then explained that there are differences between a ticketed tour and a charter.

Ms. Joan Norton stated that she sees lots of bicycles going the wrong way and it's dangerous. She felt that buses would increase that danger.

Ms. Caroline Cronson felt that Starbuck Neck is a blind curve and already dangerous and the buses would increase the danger there. She has seen buses take out neighbors' fences.

Ms. Lynn Alacer of Starbuck Neck and Thayer St., concurred with Ms. Cronson's observations.

Mr. Rob Hughes, of Katama, stated that he always walks in town and feels it is a walking town not a drive through town. He would like to encourage walking and stopping in shops as well as walking tours.

Ms. Allison Cannon remarked that the businesses depend on walkers and that a drive thought tour would not benefit them. She would like the Board to continue supporting walking in town.

Ms. O'Brien of 61 North Water St. remarked that it was already dangerous in the streets. There are frequently bicycles going the wrong way and pedestrians everywhere. A new tour would increase the danger.

Mr. Smadbeck observed that there were many people in attendance and that no one seemed in favor of the idea. He hears that those present feel that the tour buses would not be contributing or helping businesses and he takes note of that.

Mr. Donaroma added that the Board would also welcome written correspondence on the issue if someone could not attend.

Mr. Smadbeck thanked everyone for attending and taking time out of their summer day and pointed out how important it is for public involvement. If the applicant returns to the Board, they will definitely take these concerns into consideration.

Ms. Serpa explained that the applicant had appealed to the state and that he had been denied on a technicality in a recent hearing. The Board is not aware of his future plans to reapply or appeal the state's decision. He did not attend this public hearing.

Mr. Donaroma stated that the Board's hands are tied sometimes when it comes to the aesthetics of downtown. They need a good reason to turn down an applicant. The fact that it may be a safety issue and that there are concerns about tours being a danger to the public downtown is something that the Board takes very seriously.

Mr. Tim Connelly then gave an update on the Comcast Committee. He stated that they had met many times and were working toward meeting with an attorney. There has to be two public hearings per town to determine public concerns.

Mr. Jim Joyce asked if the contract was for the whole island or just Edgartown.

Mr. Connelly responded that it was for the whole island.

Ms. Christina Brown asked if the amount of money Comcast gives to MVTM is sufficient.

Mr. Connelly responded that it is set by the state. The state is looking at MVTM's records to determine whether they need more from the towns.

Mr. Smadbeck stated that it was important to continue to fund MVTM. He would hate to see towns reallocate the money elsewhere instead of giving it to MVTM, which is a very valuable service to the whole island.

Mr. Connelly stated that the person on the street and the members of the committee think MVTM is a worthwhile and valuable service. The RFP for the legal representation has gone out and it's estimated at \$2,000-\$3,000 per town.

At 4:40pm Ms. Serpa recognized Mr. Steve Barrett. Mr. Barrett is from Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. (HMMH) and is working on the town's Tidal Energy Project. He introduced Ms. Dina Aronson, also from HMMH, and Mr. John Miller from MREC. Mr. Barrett did a short review of what the project is and how the machine works for the people attending for the first time and then gave an update of where the project was now. He stated that they are doing tests in Transect 7 and 8.

Mr. Miller showed a map of the National Offshore Renewable Energy Information Zone (NOREIZ) which is where MREC is testing several different types of renewable energy. His group from UMass develop new energy technologies and this zone gives them somewhere to test.

Mr. Smadbeck thanked Mr. Miller for his help. The board is grateful that he helped find the best spot.

Mr. Connelly asked about a test he had read about in the East River in New York City.

Mr. Miller answered that there was a test going on in the East River of 6 underwater turbines and that it is going well.

Mr. Joyce asked about the cost of the project.

Mr. Barrett replied that there was no cost estimate yet.

Ms. Brown asked if the site was just a test site.

Mr. Barrett answered that it is a pilot site. The pilot is 8 years and the electricity will go to the town.

Mr. Charlie Blair, Harbormaster, stated that it is great that Kitt Johnson took up the initiative and that Edgartown took the lead. He and the group present have set Edgartown up on the leading edge.

Ms. Serpa thanked all for attending and for the update. She then recognized Mr. Kevin Kane. Mr. Kane was appealing the Police Department's denial of his application for a taxi license. He stated that he had an OUI 4 years ago and had been sober ever since. He cannot find work because construction jobs are slow right now.

Chief Bettencourt was present and stated that he had no issue with the Board approving a license for Mr. Kane.

Mr. Smadbeck moved to approve the license. Mr. Donaroma seconded. Unanimous.

Mr. James Joyce, MVC representative, then asked if there was anything the Board would like him to address with the Commission.

Mr. Smadbeck stated that he would like to see how the towns are assessed addressed.

Mr. Connelly asked what the current formula used is.

Mr. Smadbeck answered that they use the Equalized Valuation Formula. He would be happy with 50% population based and 50% EVF.

Ms. Serpa responded that it had nothing to do with services.

The Board then approved the following items:

The minutes from July 12, 2010

Three Travel Vouchers for the Highway Department.

Transient Vendor Licenses for the Boneyard and Nell.

A Yard Sale permit for Rush & Fisher at 45 Crocker Dr. for 7/31 & 8/1.

To appoint Adam Darack as the principal point of contact for "Open Cape" Corporation.

To sign the Project Manager Contract with Pomroy Associates for the library with approval from Town Council.

To allow Vineyard Golf to change the manager on their liquor license to Gerard D. Daly.

Mr. Donaroma moved to adjourn at 5:22pm. Mr. Smadbeck seconded. Unanimous.

Approved:

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Rose
Assistant

Margaret E. Serpa, Chairman

Arthur Smadbeck

Michael J. Donaroma
Board of Selectmen

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