

1 VTA CHURCH STREET REVIEW COMMITTEE
2 TOWN OF EDGARTOWN

3
4 MINUTES OF ZOOM MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2020
5 AND
6 CONTINUED ON OCTOBER 5, 2020 AND OCTOBER 13, 2020
7

8 Alan Strahler, the chair of the committee, opened the meeting at 11:07 AM.
9

10 All members of the committee were present on zoom, as follows:

- 11 Keith Chatinover
- 12 Angie Gompert (non-voting member)
- 13 Julia Livingston
- 14 Mark Snider
- 15 Alan Strahler
- 16 Bill Venio
- 17 Doris Ward

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19 The first order of business was public comment. No members of the public were in attendance
20 on zoom, and no new written public comment had been submitted, but Alan Strahler
21 recommended that five electronic documents previously submitted by former committee
22 member, Jane Chittick, be attached to the minutes of this meeting as public comment. Jane
23 had requested, after the last committee meeting she attended as a member, that these five
24 documents be attached to committee minutes. In addition, Jane sent an email on September
25 28 entitled "Corrections to be made to September 8th Zoom Meeting." None of these six
26 electronic documents was within the 300 word limit for written public comment that was
27 specified in the public notices of this committee's meetings, but, under the Massachusetts
28 open meeting regulations, public comment is at the discretion of the committee chair. All
29 committee members expressed agreement with Alan's recommendation, and the six
30 documents are attached to these minutes. In addition, Alan decided that a seventh document,
31 which Jane sent but did not explicitly ask to be attached, should also be attached.
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33 The next order of business was a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The
34 motion was unanimously approved in a roll call vote.
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36 Next, Alan Strahler said that he had spoken with James Hagerty, the Town Administrator, and
37 James had told Alan that a special town meeting in the fall of 2020 now seems unlikely for
38 reasons having nothing to do with the work of this committee. A general discussion among
39 committee members then ensued about possible ramifications of delaying a decision on the
40 Church Street inductive charging project until after the winter 2020-2012 construction season.
41 Angie was asked whether this would force the VTA to buy new diesel buses. She answered

42 that she could probably wait a year before buying new diesel buses by delaying the retirement
43 of 4 existing diesel buses and operating for the summer of 2021 with 16 electric buses and 20
44 diesel buses for a total of 36 buses, as opposed to the optimal number of 32 buses. This
45 would involve an increase in operating costs for the labor, fuel, and maintenance for the extra 4
46 buses, but might be an acceptable temporary solution. Angie was asked whether any part of
47 the project, perhaps the Eversource work, could start before the project as a whole was
48 approved. She replied that this would not be possible under the terms of the federal grant.
49 She was asked whether she would be able to go forward with inductive chargers in West
50 Tisbury, and she said she is in the process of refocusing her efforts in this direction.

51
52 Several committee members asked about possible alternatives to a fall 2020 town meeting.
53 Several committee members expressed the thought that it is important for the Board of
54 Selectmen to understand the grave concern of members of this committee about the future of
55 the VTA conversion to an all electric system if this project is not approved in time for
56 construction in the winter of 2020-2021. There was general agreement that this committee
57 should finish its report to the Board of Selectmen with all deliberate speed, submit it to the
58 Board of Selectmen, and ask the Board of Selectmen whether they would like to meet with us
59 as a committee or have the committee disband.

60
61 Next, there was a discussion of what should be on the first page of the committee report. In
62 addition, various suggestions were made about the organization of some of the sections of the
63 draft report. The draft report was not shared on zoom or discussed in detail.

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65 At 12:25 PM, the committee unanimously agreed to recess the meeting and resume on
66 Monday, October 5, 2020 at 11:00 AM.

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70 At 11:03 AM on October 5, 2020, the meeting resumed with all committee members on zoom.

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72 No members of the public were in attendance on zoom, and no new written public comment
73 had been submitted.

74
75 James Hagerty, the Town Administrator, joined the meeting, and he was asked several
76 questions about the next steps for the induction charger project and this committee, given that
77 a fall town meeting now seems unlikely. James explained the reasons why a fall town meeting
78 seems unlikely. Mark said that, if the construction work for the Church Street induction
79 charger project is not done this winter, the grant funding may be lost. He said the project is a
80 very positive thing for the town and asked if there are any alternative options that would move
81 it forward this year. Keith pointed out that the vote to reconsider the project was very close.
82 James said he thought people at the June town meeting may have been confused about what

83 they were voting on. Doris asked whether this committee could meet with the Board of
84 Selectmen. In expanding on the possibility of losing grant money, Angie said that she is in the
85 process of getting in touch with the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) to see if funds for the
86 Church Street project could be switched to an existing grant that has a later time deadline in
87 return for moving some electric bus purchase funds from that later grant to the grant with the
88 earlier time deadline. She said that, for the summer or 2021, there might continue to be lower
89 ridership because of COVID-19 and she might be able to hold onto some of the diesel buses
90 the VTA was planning to retire in 2021, so that the system could run in 2021 with the additional
91 4 electric buses due to be delivered to the VTA in the spring. James said he would look into
92 getting this committee onto an agenda for a meeting of the Board of Selectmen soon after our
93 report is submitted.

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95 At this point James left the meeting.

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97 Next, there was some discussion of this committee's possible role after submission of our
98 report. Alan said the Edgartown energy committee could sponsor a public meeting. Keith
99 noted that the people who come to town meetings are, in general, probably not riders of the
100 VTA buses, and, therefore, it may be hard to get a positive result at a town meeting. Alan said
101 it would help if the Board of Selectmen were to recommend approval at the town meeting. Bill
102 said we need to finish our report and then we can figure out if there are any next steps.

103

104 The next order of business was a discussion of the current draft of the committee's report.
105 Alan presented an outline of Bill's suggested revised ordering of the sections of the report.
106 Alan said he thinks the suggested new ordering makes a lot of sense. Mark said we need to
107 make page one more assertive. In looking at page one, Angie explained additional detail about
108 why the decision was made that the project should include putting the Church Street electric
109 power underground. Moving the water line under Church Street is necessary for the
110 installation of the inductive chargers, and, once the street is open for that purpose, it just
111 makes sense to put the electric power underground and get rid of the three utility poles. Angie
112 noted that the water line under Church Street is 100 years old. She also noted that the
113 inductive charger project requires increased electric power on Church Street, and, if the
114 electric power were not put underground, bigger utility poles would probably be required, but
115 this option was never considered because the street had to be opened anyway to move the
116 water line. Various specific comments were made about specific wording in specific sections
117 of the draft report.

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119 Julia, Angie, and Bill agreed to have a phone conversation about additional specific comments
120 from Angie and Bill. Julia undertook to provide a new draft before the next meeting along the
121 lines discussed by the committee.

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123 At 1:00 PM, the committee unanimously agreed to recess the meeting and resume on Tuesday,
124 October 13, 2020, at 3:00 PM.

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128 At 3:00 PM on October 13, 2020, the meeting resumed with all committee members on zoom.

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130 No members of the public were in attendance on zoom, and no new written public comment
131 had been submitted.

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133 The committee reviewed a new draft of the report with various members making comments
134 and asking questions about wording as Alan scrolled through the document. Julia undertook
135 to make changes based on the discussion.

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137 The next order of business was a discussion of the plan for presenting the finished report to
138 the Board of Selectmen. Mark agreed to lead the presentation, and there was general
139 agreement to ask our report to be on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen’s meeting (on
140 zoom) on November 9 at 4:00 PM. Several committee members expressed the wish that all
141 committee members be in attendance (on zoom) and be able to respond to questions.

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143 The committee unanimously agreed that the next meeting of this committee would be on zoom
144 on October 20, 2020 at 3:00 PM.

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146 At 5:00 PM, there was a motion to adjourn, a second, and a unanimous roll call vote.

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- 149 List of materials presented at the above meeting:
- 150 1. Proposed outline of the report being prepared by this committee
 - 151 2. October 1 draft report
 - 152 3. October 12 draft report

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154 List of public comments attached:
- 155 1. Document sent by Jane Chittick on September 6 at 10:27 AM, captioned 8-20-20 SHORT
156 VTA Presentation
 - 157 2. Email sent by Jane Chittick on September 6 at 10:27 AM, captioned FTA Grants
 - 158 3. Document sent by Jane Chittick on September 7 at 8:33 PM, captioned 8-25-20 VTA Talk
 - 159 4. Document sent by Jane Chittick on September 5 at 3:39 PM, captioned 9-08-20 “Historic”
160 (sic) Preservation
 - 161 5. Document sent by Jane Chittick on September 5 at 3:39 PM, captioned 9-08-20 HDC and
162 VTA Project

- 163 6. Email sent by Jane Chittick on September 28 at 12:38 PM, captioned Corrections to be
164 made to September 8th Zoom Meeting
165 7. Document sent by Jane Chittick on September 7 at 6:17 PM, captioned 9-08-20 Charging
166 per Tech Memos