

Chappy Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting
June 19, 2020
3:00 pm

A meeting of the Committee was held on the above date and time via Zoom. Members present were: Rick Biros, John Dropick, Peter Getsinger, Rick Schifter, Sally Snipes, Dana Strayton, Tom Tilghman, and Town Administrator, James Hagerty.

Minutes of the meetings of April 4, April 8 and April 24 were approved.

The Committee discussed its purpose and plans to address the following topics:

1. Should the Committee solicit input from Chappy residents and other constituents on matters to be considered by the Committee?

There was general agreement that such input could be helpful. It was agreed that the input could be elicited through a survey tool such as Survey Monkey, possibly augmented by other means (e.g., forums, Chappy Chat). Rick Brios and Tom Tilghman agreed to take the lead in developing the survey approach.

2.. Should an effort be made to increase the throughput of vehicles/passengers between Edgartown and Chappy?

While several Committee members were skeptical of the desirability of increasing throughput, it was agreed that this was an issue that should be addressed after getting input from the community.

3. Should the ferry continue to be owned privately for the foreseeable future?

The Committee agreed that the next step to be taken on this topic was to consider the pros and cons of alternative forms of ownership. The following potential forms of ownership identified were: private, Town of Edgartown, Steamship Authority, Pied Piper, a hybrid model (nonprofit organization owns it, but with a for profit operator), Vineyard Transit Authority, a group of Chappaquiddickers. It was agreed that a list of pros and cons should be developed with respect to each form of ownership. The Committee discussed the relevance of understanding the financial performance of Ferry in developing a recommendation on this issue.

4. What level of disclosure of financial performance of the ferry is appropriate and to whom?

5. What steps can be taken to ensure the long term financial health of the ferry?

Points 4-5 were discussed collectively. A general sense was reached that some level of disclosure (potentially to a third party) could be of value. It was agreed that Rick Schifter would follow up with Peter and Sally on this topic. In this context, it was agreed that the Committee should consider whether a third ferry should be purchased and how it would be financed.

6. Should the town subsidize the ferry operation or should it continue to rely exclusively on revenue from fares?

The pros and cons of this were discussed and probably could not happen without a town warrant approving it.

7. What is the appropriate relationship between ferry rates (e.g., commercial, resident, non- resident, etc.) and how should that be determined?

A high level and mostly theoretical discussion of this topic took place. Additional information regarding the relative volume of different types of users will be required to move forward on this.

8. What steps should be taken now to address longer term consequences of rising sea levels/climate change?

While it is generally recognized that it will ultimately require Town involvement to address this issue, there was general agreement that the Committee and the Chappy community more broadly can help ensure that sufficient focus is brought to bear in the near term. James Hagerty agreed to request that Jane Varkonda circulate any studies on this topic to the Committee.

9. What issues should the town consider when evaluating renewal of relevant permits in 2023?

The Committee deferred discussion of this topic for a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.