

Chappy Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting
January 13, 2021
6:00 pm

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

The minutes of the meeting of December 18 meeting were approved.

Biros led a discussion of an analysis of the results of the initial survey, which, as of the meeting, had received 226 responses. The top 3 concerns of respondents were: impact of rising sea levels, the long term financial health of the ferry, and ferry rates. The Committee reviewed the response to the “cut line” policy. Wells agreed to circulate a proposed written policy for consideration at the next meeting. Hagerty, Tilghman and Biros agreed to endeavor to solicit additional input from ferry users who are not Chappy residents by reaching out to various tradesmen and further publicizing the survey.

The Committee discussed consideration of various topics that could be included in the next survey. No determination was made.

The Committee then discussed the status of the Woods Hole Group’s MVP Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Project for which the Chappy Ferry has now been designated as a critical piece of infrastructure for Edgartown. Further analysis on potential next steps is expected by the end of February.

The Committee discussed the possibility of implementing a short term measure to address frequent high water around the ramp on the Edgartown side. Brines suggested that adding six inches of asphalt in the area immediately surrounding the ramp could provide some relief in the near term. Wells and Hagerty agreed to measure the precise area to be covered and Hagerty would then solicit a cost estimate from the Highway Department. The Committee could then consider at its next meeting a request to include a provision for this item in the next Town Warrant.

Schifter briefly reported on the legal analysis regarding possible future ownership of the Ferry by a group of Chappy residents. In short, the likely best path would be for such a group to acquire the equity in Chappaquiddick Ferry, Inc., the entity which currently holds the lease and license pursuant to which the Ferry operates. Such an acquisition would likely be conditioned upon providing greater certainty regarding the basis on which rates could be modified. Further work will be required on this topic.

Given the topics currently contemplated for the February meeting (cut line policy and request for funding to address the high water issue), it was suggested that the March meeting focus on Ferry rates.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.