

Edgartown Planning Board Meeting
Selectmen's Meeting Room – 1st Floor, Town Hall
Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 5:30 PM
Minutes

Members in Attendance: Chairman Michael McCourt, Robert Cavallo, Fred Mascolo, and Alan Wilson
Absent: Robert Sparks
Staff in Attendance: Georgiana Greenough, Assistant; and Lucy Morrison, Clerk

Chairman Michael McCourt called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

5:32 PM: MRK Mullen Realty LLC – Form G: Performance Security & Form G Escrow account for development of 19 Mullen Way

Ms. Greenough presented the escrow forms and check for \$461,000.00 to secure funding for the installation of the roads and utilities. The Board voted to accept and sign the escrow agreement. Michele Cassavant, attorney for the applicant, notarized the Board's signatures.

5:35 PM: Public Hearing: Edgartown LLC/Sutphin, 25 Dunham Rd (29B-67) SP: Surface Water District. Request a SP to license and maintain an existing pier, construct a 20-ft "L," add two 5' x 18' removable floats, remove two piles and add two piles.

The applicant, represented by Tracey, Schofield Barbini & Hoehn, Inc., was asked if she wanted to proceed with four board members. She agreed.

The Board conducted a site visit to the property the morning before the meeting. There is an existing timber pier on the property; the application calls for the addition of an "L" within the faired pier line.

The Board asked how many boats the pier would be serving, and why so much pier space is required. Tracey replied that the pier could accommodate up to four boats, and that the boats will be parking parallel to the dock. She mentioned that the property is owned by a large family, and that they own several boats.

Mr. McCourt noted that there is a spile further out from the dock that is not located on plan. He was concerned about the distance, to make sure it was far enough away so that a boat could not swing into it. Tracey said she would look into it. Mr. Mascolo asked if anyone had a picture from the site visit. Ms. Greenough presented several pictures taken the morning of the hearing. It was determined to be a town-owned spile, which is why it was not located on the plan, and it was determined that there was adequate distance between the spile and the proposed additions to the pier so as not to pose a safety threat. Mr. Mascolo noted that the lighting on the dock was not downward shielded. Downward shielded lighting is a standard condition for piers, in order to prevent interference with the navigation of other boats in the harbor. It was also noted that there is already a ladder on the end of the pier, as a part of the *Ewing Amendment*.

There was no one present in the audience to speak either for or against the project. The Division of Fisheries of the Commonwealth sent a letter stating that due to shallow water, any motorized vehicle should be required to dock bow-in to prevent propeller dredging. The Board agreed to adopt this provision into the conditions.

Mr. Mascolo moved to approve as presented, with the standard pier conditions including the Wilson amendment, that the lighting be changed to downward-shielded, and that any motorized vessels are required to dock bow-in. Mr. Cavallo seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

All Island Planning Board Meeting

Ms. Greenough reminded the Board that the All-Island Planning Board meeting will be held on May 20th and 6 PM. The topic of the meeting is tiny house communities. Keith Smith will do a presentation on structural paneling to make more substantial tiny house, and Marina Lent will help explain regulations. It has also been requested that each town bring a list of municipal land that could potentially be developed into a tiny house community.

Edgartown Lofts – Parking Lot Construction

The Board discussed the construction at the post office square. Mr. Mascolo noted that the hardscaping includes abrupt cement curbs, and urged the Board to encourage that they be rounded so as to avoid tire punctures. The Board will also check with the tree warden about the plans to replant the locust trees. It was noted that locusts are suitable for parking lots since they are resilient and do well under harsh conditions.

The Planning Board congratulated Officer Rossi on his recent promotion to Chief of Police.

5:57 PM: Continuation of a Public Hearing: Chappy Ferry/Simpson's Lane

Mr. McCourt recapped the last hearing on the Chappy Ferry/Simpson's Lane issues. The objective of the hearings is to collect ideas and thoughts to improve the current situation. The Board will then organize these ideas into a list of suggestions to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to rectify some of the problems that are occurring. These hearings are not meant to be a direct solution, but an open discussion where citizens can make suggestions. Mr. McCourt said that a lot of questions were answered last week; and thanked Chief Rossi and Peter Wells for their help. On Monday, May 10th, at 9 AM, the Board collaborated with the Chief and Mr. Wells to try staging the cars as a double line on Daggett Ave. There are still a lot of questions about the potential solution; but it was staged, and the Board observed and took mental notes. Mr. McCourt said that the final report will be available to the public, and will probably be ready in a month. He said that the Board wants to be as thorough and accurate as possible, and does not want to make recommendations that won't make a positive impact.

Mr. Mascolo asked what Mr. Wells thought of the double lane experiment. Mr. Wells replied that he thought the double line was labor intensive and risky. He did not think it was worth the trouble to try to fit a large truck with a trailer into the line when it was doubled, and noted that he would have to pay for any damage caused to vehicles waiting in the line. He was also concerned about how people were trapped in their cars, since there was not enough room to open the door and get out; nor could pedestrians walk up or down the street. He noted that he recognized everyone who participated in the experiment, that they were experienced with the Chappy ferry. A major determining factor of the success of any new staging will be the response of the tourists, or those who have never been in the line before. Mr. Wells stated that it is very easy for the whole operation to come to a standstill when there is confusion, and that the ideal solution will be as simple and straightforward as possible. He said that it is a difficult situation, but his goal is to have the line be self-regulating, so as to reduce the manpower required to monitor it.

Chief Rossi mirrored Mr. Wells' concerns and comments, stating that the double line crowds up a public way; and questioned the legality of causing such an obstruction. He also noted that it was labor intensive for Mr. Wells and the traffic officers to organize and maintain. Chief Rossi offered to have a couple more traffic officers stationed on Simpson's Lane to monitor the line for the summer.

Mr. McCourt opened the hearing to statements from the audience.

Andria Ross, the owner of property on North Water St, is the only person that uses Daggett Ave as an entrance or exit to her property. She said that doubling up of the ferry line severely and completely impedes her access to those three driveways. She also stated that by filling Daggett Ave with cars, the foot traffic is completely blocked, which will have a negative effect on the overall pedestrian traffic flow of downtown. She did not think that the double line would impact the number of cars in the ferry line on Simpson's Lane much, and stated that the line is tricky enough as it is.

Monty Baxter mentioned that he was driving by on the day of the experiment, and thought it was claustrophobic and chaotic. It made him very uncomfortable to know that people could not get out of their vehicles. He said that the lack of access would have a detrimental effect on pedestrians with strollers and young children, or those who need to walk with a cane or have other difficulties with mobility.

One member of the audience (Heidi Reinhofer, manager of the Inn) claimed to have been cut in line; a car that arrived after her was directed to board the ferry before she did. Chief Rossi apologized for the mix-up. It stood as a testament to how easily the double lane can get befuddled.

Tuna Kiersted suggested reconfiguring Winter St to stage the line. There is only one residential property on the street, and the access is located on Summer St. The direction of Simpson's Lane could then be reversed to be a one way exit out of town. She also recommended that Mr. Wells have an employee collect the fare and give tickets while the vehicle is waiting in line. She said that it might help to speed up the process if the driver had already paid.

Peter Getsinger asked why public transportation isn't being considered. He suggested that during the busy season, a bus run every 30 minutes or so to drop people off at the ferry. It was commented that once the people walk over on the ferry, there's nowhere to go, and that a bus on Chappaquiddick would also be necessary. Mr. Getsinger estimated that about a quarter of the people going to Chappaquiddick are day-trippers. He commented that some form of public transportation would be beneficial to this large portion of the visitors to Chappaquiddick.

Chris Kennedy stated that he has spent 25 years looking at options for public transport on Chappy. The VTA is reluctant to drive on dirt roads. He said that the public transportation would serve people going to the beach, but also residents who don't want to deal with the ferry traffic. He stated that a bus or van service, or some other option for public transportation, should be seriously considered.

Roger Becker stated that it was clear that no pedestrians or bikes could get through the double line of cars. He noted that the signs currently direct the bike route to Chappy via Daggett Ave. He said that if the line was doubled up, the route would obviously need to be changed. This change of route could lead to some confusion; and if anyone were to get lost, it would mean bikes riding in the wrong direction down one way streets, which is extremely dangerous. He mentioned that driving on the beach seems to be one of the biggest attractions on Chappaquiddick, and that having public transportation would not make an impact, since such a small percentage of the ferry-users are participating in an activity that does not require a vehicle.

Chris Kennedy recalled from the survey conducted in 2002 that about 25% of the people going to Chappaquiddick between 9 AM and 5 PM in July and August were going to visit Wasque and the Dyke Bridge. This percentage did not distinguish between those with vehicles and those who walked over; more research would need to be done to divide the statistic between drivers and pedestrians.

Mr. Wilson had some concerns about the buses. He noted that most people going to the beach have chairs and coolers, which could be a hassle to load onto public transportation. He also noted that fishing gear, like squid in a bucket, would be especially inconvenient on public transportation.

Pam Lindgren mentioned that these hearings are being held in mid-May, and that it was estimated that it will be a month before the official report is complete. She said that if the Board is trying to make any significant changes, the timeline is crunched to see any impact made this summer. She recommended the Board focus on short-term solutions like signage, lines drawn on the pavement to clearly mark the driveways on Simpson's Lane, and providing more public information on how to behave in the Chappy ferry line to see if that helps for this summer.

Mr. McCourt agreed that no dramatic changes will be made this year, and thanked Ms. Lindgren for her suggestions.

Jonathan Chatinover, a resident of Simpson's Lane, reminded the audience that that Simpson's Lane is narrower than Daggett Ave.

Peter Getsinger suggested running the electricity underground on Simpson's Lane, which would allow for the telephone poles to be removed, which would increase the width of the street.

Ron Monterosso suggested changing Simpson's Lane to a no-thru street from June 15th to September 1st, which would create plenty of room for residents to get through. The other side of the street could also be open for pedestrians and bikers. This would require an additional officer to enforce the new traffic pattern, but Chief Rossi has already offered to station more traffic officers on the street. He mentioned that the ideas to stage the line at the school or elsewhere seem unworkable. It has been detailed that people get lost or stuck in traffic, and it creates gaps in the line. He stated that it does not work in practicality. He also suggested that the Board consider the current situation as the best solution, since all of the other alternatives appear to be falling short.

Andria Ross stated that she agreed with Mr. Monterosso about the problems with staging the line far away. She said that the pressure in the line changes rapidly and there is no way to predict when to begin asking people to come to the ferry, or how long it will take them to get there.

Tuna Kiersted stated that the Town is continuing to give out building permits on Chappaquiddick, which is rapidly increasing the number of houses, and only making the problems worse. She urged the Board to think of a good solution, and try to come up with a plan to help the ferry keep up with the growth.

Mr. McCourt reminded the audience that the Board is looking at both short and long term plans.

Mr. Mascolo proposed a site visit to stage the cars on Winter St. On the maps provided, it appears to be wider than Simpson's Lane. He added that staging the cars in front of shops could be good for business owners, and noted there is already a sidewalk.

Mr. McCourt commented that the large delivery trucks use Winter St to leave town, and would have a hard time using other roads.

Chief Rossi stated that there will be more traffic officers this year, and he will be able to rotate through them. This will allow for traffic officers to be assigned to Simpson's Lane, as opposed to people having to call when there is a problem. He agreed that there needs to be a long-term plan.

Tim O'Connell, a resident of Simpson's Lane, said that Daggett Ave is wider than two of the steamship authority waiting lines, and that they are able to fit two cars in a 16.5 foot way. He did not think that the double line was labor intensive. He agreed with Roger Becker that there needs to be an end to the line, and when it is closed, people are told to come back later. Mr. O'Connell emphasized how important it is to have someone directing traffic stationed on Simpson's Lane; since traffic ebbs and flows, there needs to be someone present who can deal with the people and tell them where to go when they show up all at once.

Mr. McCourt elaborated on the personnel required to control the line once it reaches Simpson's Lane. Currently, there is only one person stationed on Daggett Ave, who cannot see the Simpson's Lane line. The Board acknowledged that one person is being asked to do the job of at least three people, and that it is not an ideal situation. Mr. McCourt suggested that someone be located on the corner of Simpson's Lane and North Summer St, who monitors the line from North Water St. It was suggested that another person be available to help once the line exceeds past North Summer St.

Ron Monterosso disagreed with the idea that the line should have an end point. He stated that getting home is important, and that it is unfair to make Chappaquiddick residents drive around without knowing when they will be able to go home. He said that the comparisons to the steamship authority are misplaced. The steamship authority has a 90 minute wait for a scheduled 45 minute trip. The Chappy ferry has a dynamic line in constant movement with no set schedule.

Woody Filley, a resident of Chappaquiddick, stated that the situation is frustrating for everyone. He noted that there are a lot of good ideas being examined, but they all have a cause and effect. He said that this is not a simple problem, that all of downtown will be affected by any changes. He urged everyone to consider the larger picture, and suggested the Board utilize the services of people with more experience in traffic planning.

David Alger suggested that when the line gets to a certain point, Mr. Wells provide buzzers to let those drivers know when to return to the line.

Frank McPartland, a resident of Simpson's Lane, agreed and commented that with modern technology, it seemed an easily solved problem to use some sort of pager system or smart phone app. Mr. Wells commented that the traffic has to go somewhere, and having people drive around while waiting for the ferry could cause other traffic problems elsewhere around town.

Mr. Mascolo asked Mr. Wells about the size of the boats. Mr. Wells replied that the boats are 64 feet in length, and are capable of fitting three full-sized pick-up trucks. Mr. Wells mentioned that a lot of the laws change after the boat is larger than 64 feet. If the boats are made any larger, the Coast Guard will require re-crewing, which would involve an increase in the rates. Mr. Wells stated that so far, they have been able to get by with what they have. Mr. Mascolo suggested increasing the size of the boats to be able to hold five full-sized trucks. He mentioned that the Town draws a good tax base from Chappaquiddick residents, and that the Town could possibly look into subsidizing the new boat. Mr. Wells stated that he wasn't sure of the physics involved with fitting a larger boat into the current dock space.

Peter Getsinger commented that it wasn't appropriate to distinguish between Chappaquiddick taxes and Edgartown taxes. He would prefer to have it seen as all Edgartown money. Mr. Mascolo restated his assertion. The intention of his statement was that he did not want Mr. Wells to have to pay out of pocket for many of these expensive upgrades. He recommended the Board ask the Financial Advisory Committee to review the proposition of subsidizing a new ferry to see if it was feasible.

Ron Monterosso stated that he believes the Town of Edgartown deserves to spend money on Simpson's Lane and/or the Chappy ferry to make it more workable. He also stated that a subsidy for the ferry is an important idea that could significantly help to speed things up. He stated that these issues are a Town problem, not Mr. Wells' problem.

Mr. Wells stated that he loved the idea of looking into subsidies, and was excited to think about other ferries. Mr. Wells Ride ferries a lot; however, part of the problem is there's nothing like Chappy. Since he's owned the ferry, Mr. Wells has not wanted to make significant changes for fear that it will cause an unforetold problem elsewhere. He was in favor of having more boats and more slips, if the Town deems it an appropriate use of space and resources. Mr. Wells acknowledged the need for some short term solutions. He recommended that Simpson's Lane residents, and possibly Chappaquiddick residents, receive special parking spaces, or placards to place on their dashboards so as not to get ticketed if needing to park elsewhere in town.

Jonathan Chatinover recommended a modified reservation system with time slots reserved for Chappaquiddick residents. Mr. Chatinover requested that something be done to expedite the residents' waiting time, to make their lives easier. He commented that it can't be a pleasant experience to wait that long just to go home.

Mr. Wilson stated that as a resident of Chappaquiddick it is not uncommon to wait in line for a long time to leave or return home. He stated that the real problem is the capacity. In order to get over and back as fast as possible, larger ferries would be an answer. Having two slips on either side would also make a difference. He proposed adding another slip on the other side of memorial wharf, noting that there should be enough room to accommodate the fisherman as well. The traffic pattern of Dock St would need to change in order to adjust to the new arrangement.

Chris Kennedy reiterated that Mr. Wells in the best thing to happen to Chappaquiddick. It is a big challenge to get people and vehicles back and forth as fast as possible. He speculated that a new configuration for bike and pedestrians that was separate from cars and trucks would greatly increase the frequency of the trips.

Mr. Wells stated that a significant impact could be made with larger boats, but emphasized that the regulations would need to be examined further to ensure that it is a feasible solution. He also commented that the faster the line moves, the more quickly it will fill up. He speculated that if he moves the cars twice as fast, more people are going to get in line.

Mr. McCourt asked Mr. Wells of his opinion on using a pager system. Mr. Wells said that he has considered it in the past. He said that there are a number of differences between waiting for a table in a restaurant and waiting for space on the ferry, but said he would look into it. In terms of a form of public transportation, he said Angie at the VTA would need to be consulted, but was certainly willing to try it. Mr. Wells also suggested placing a camera on Simpson's Lane to monitor the line, so that the general public can gauge how long the line is, and the police could observe the line and evaluate when to show up.

Chief Rossi stated that a camera is allowable under fourth amendment rights and did not see a problem with installing another one. The police have cameras, but tend to spend their time looking around and observing the general public, instead of monitoring screens. Chief Rossi said that it would not be a problem, but did not think it would make a significant impact on the situation.

David Alger, a resident of Chappaquiddick, suggested an online reservation system, where a person can log on and get a number, which would help keep line short. The online system would create a queue that would reserve the spot from home.

Mr. Wells stated that it could be difficult to gauge how long it would take a person to get to the ferry from home depending on the summer traffic, and that having people drive around instead of wait would likely contribute to a traffic problem elsewhere in town.

Ron Monterosso stated that people do not run their lives on reservations, and that spontaneity is important. He reiterated that whenever he rides the ferry from Edgartown to Chappaquiddick he is just trying to go home. He stated that it is the same idea as those who live on Simpson's Lane and would like to get into and out of their driveways. He did not like the idea of having a buzzer or an online reservation system run his life.

Heidi Reinhofer urged the Board to consider using the parking lot behind Butler Block as staging, since it is not in a residential area, and can accommodate more cars than any street that has previously been discussed.

Tuna Kiersted recommended that the Board look into staging the line at the Edgartown School, since there is a large enough area to accommodate a significant number of cars.

Mr. Wilson replied that staging at the school was attempted years ago. Chief Rossi explained that people got lost, or stuck in traffic, on their way back to the ferry and that it was a very labor intensive endeavor. He also noted that the school parking lot is only available when school is not in session. Due to the snow days, school is open much later this year, and will be opening earlier than usual as well.

Tim O'Connell said that he would like to meet with Chief Rossi to go over the short-term solutions. Chief Rossi agreed.

Mr. McCourt said that the Board will look into having some planners come to examine the issues, noting that there are several serious traffic problems downtown. It is apparent that some professional help will be needed; and the Board has worked with students from Northeastern University in the past. Unfortunately, their schedule usually means that they're analyzing the traffic patterns in January and February, when there are no traffic issues. The Board is also willing to work with the MVC. The Commission has the expertise and the networking capabilities to make a positive impact on this situation. Mr. McCourt speculated that it is possible for the Chappy ferry issues to be resolved when the bigger picture is examined. He stated that the long term solutions will probably be incorporated in phases.

Bill Veno replied that situations like these are what the Commission is for. He was involved with survey 2002, and remembered that there were a lot of issues with unpredictable variables involved.

The Board asked if Mr. Veno remembered any of the recommendations made from the survey. Mr. Veno didn't recall much, but said that there were a significant number of people that would consider using public transportation on Chappaquiddick.

Mr. Mascolo asked Mr. Wells if he ever noticed a difference in the volume of traffic when people could drive on the beach instead of taking the ferry. Mr. Wells has owned the ferry since 2008, and has yet to see if there will be any impact. Mr. Kennedy had previously stated that only about 7% of drivers came via the beach; and that it will be closed for 4-8 weeks this year due to nesting shorebirds.

Mr. Cavallo stated that the Board will certainly look into long and short term solutions. He echoed Mr. Monterosso's statement about how people should be able to get home, and not be turned away. In terms of short term solutions, he said that the Board will examine clearer signage, better markings on the pavement, as well as educating people. The long term solutions include a pedestrian boat and a second slip on both sides, as well as outside consultations from professional planners. Mr. Cavallo stated that he sympathizes with Ms. Ross and the residents of Simpson's Lane.

Mr. Wilson stated that as a resident of Chappaquiddick, the reservation systems sound awkward. There are many situations, like coming home from the hospital or the grocery store, that cannot be scheduled. He stated that the Town is all in this together, and that everyone wants a reasonable, logical solution.

Mr. Mascolo said that he thinks a larger boat will make the most impact. He said that it is important that whatever is done makes positive effect on the situation, and does not create a larger headache somewhere else in town. He said that by owning the ferry, Mr. Wells has made a commitment to Chappaquiddick residents, and that his heart and soul are in his business. Mr. Mascolo stated that better signage is an important factor, and that small fixes will be made until the situation gets better. He liked the idea of the Town subsidies, since Mr. Wells should not have to carry the cost of any large and expensive changes, and is anticipating some kind of cooperative deal to make the circumstances better. He said that there will be some good planning going forward.

Mr. McCourt stated that one of the greatest things about Martha's Vineyard is the community, and that people are really wonderful here. He said that by working together, the problems will be solved. He has seen some unbelievable things happen. These hearings have allowed the general public to get together and openly talk about the issues. He said that everyone present knows more than they did two weeks ago. He stated that the Board especially appreciates the Police Chief and Mr. Wells' time, and that the Board is interested in making the best of the situation at hand.

The Board will work on synthesizing these ideas into a cohesive list of recommendations to be given to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. McCourt thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy Morrison

Michael McCourt, Chairman

Robert Cavallo

Fred Mascolo

Robert Sparks

Alan O. Wilson

Egartown Planning Board
Date signed: _____