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8 **Steering Committee**

9 **Minutes of Meeting of May 12 2007, MVC Offices**

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11 *Present - Members: Jim Athearn (Chair), John Abrams, Tom Chase, Ray Laporte, Ned Orleans, Linda*
12 *Sibley, Henry Stephenson, Paul Strauss, Richard Toole, Susan Wasserman*

13 *Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Bill Veno, Christine Flynn*
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15 The meeting started at 8:15 am.
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17 **1. Status Report and Outline of Morning Program**

18 John reminded everyone that we are working towards preparing four-page discussion papers for each
19 of the five Work Group topics as well as for development and land use for use in summer program. The
20 one on development will be different from the others, in that we are less advanced. There will also be a
21 general overview document.

22 In all documents, we need to make clear that these are representations of where we are at a point of
23 time. They are works in progress, not final documents.

24 The purpose of today's meeting is to identify priorities and concerns as well as possible combinations
25 and contradictions, in order to give feedback to the Work Groups. Over the next month, the Steering
26 Committee and Work Group Cores will work together to resolve any issues and to finish the documents.

27 We should make made clear that people have a right to put out all kinds of ideas in brainstorming
28 sessions; these do not represent the whole process. We should not let the fact that there were some
29 misrepresentations of some statements deter us. We should put ideas forward, get feedback, make
30 adjustments, and move on. It is the planning effort's responsibility to be somewhat ahead of the public.
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32 **2. Updates**

33 The following are updates since the working documents were sent out on Wednesday.

- 34 ▪ Susan said that the Energy and Waste has spent most of its time on its 16-page working
35 document and not all of its ideas have been incorporated in the Promising Initiatives, which are
36 now several months old. The group would now like to put more emphasis on achieving bold
37 targets with bold ideas, and also on living local.
- 38 ▪ John said that the Livelihood and Commerce Core met on Wednesday and revised its document
39 but it has substantially the same content.

- 40 ▪ Tom said that the Natural Environment met yesterday, agreed to strengthen the statements about
41 fire and invasive species, and to use the language about the minimum viable area from Part 1
42 (goals and objectives) in the Promising Initiatives.

43 **3. Dotting of proposals**

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45 The condensed proposals were on the wall, made up of Part 1 (goals, objectives, and possible
46 strategies) and of Part 2 (promising initiatives; formerly short and long-term actions). Participants
47 indicated priorities, items needing discussion, initiatives that could be combined, and initiatives that
48 contradicted each other. Members were asked to explain their concerns on paper, especially for Part 1,
49 because we wouldn't have time to discuss all of them.
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51 **4. Discussion of Promising Initiatives**

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53 The largest number of selections as priorities, without any concerns expressed, were for: Replace
54 Incandescent Bulbs, Eco/Cultural Tourism, Buy and Produce Locally, Habitat Restoration Initiative,
55 Roadside Vegetation Initiative, and Landscaping the Vineyard Way.
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57 S1. Replace Incandescent Bulbs. There was general agreement; however, this seems too small to be an
58 item on its own. The initiative could be "An Incandescent-Free Island", with the replacement of 15 bulbs
59 being the short-term first step. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of calling for 15 bulbs rather
60 than a percentage.
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62 S2. Solar-Heater Pools. No comments
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64 S3. SSA Recycling. No comments
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66 S4. Hybrid Car Rental – There was some question as to whether it should say "require" rather than
67 encourage. It could be a requirement since they need a license from the Board of Selectmen. It could go
68 farther and suggest that much or most of the fleet be hybrids. It should be clear that this is part of an
69 overall effort to encourage all Island cars to be hybrids that could include getting all town governments
70 to replace their fleets with hybrids.. There could also be a limit on the size of rental fleet; there is no
71 point on limiting the capacity of the ferry if there are so many cars rented that we end up with the same
72 traffic.
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74 S5. Accessory Housing Units in Homes. It was noted that this idea is better explained here than in part
75 1. Most towns already allow this through a permit process; should it be as of right? The Housing Core
76 thought that the need for year-round housing is so great it is justified allowing a second housing unit on
77 a property as long as it is year-round. Several Steering Committee members thought that we should only
78 consider violating zoning regulations if truly affordable units are created. There was also a concern
79 about enforceability, and the danger that people would create second units on their properties and end
80 up just renting them out for the summer. There could be a requirement that if an accessory unit is
81 created, people can only rent one. In West Tisbury, it clearly spells out the specific conditions, is only
82 for affordable or family housing, and needs a special permit. Most people seemed to think that this was
83 a good model that could be expanded to the whole Island.

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This item and the next one raise the question of whether we really want to be more densely housed and populated. Zoning is devised to limit the amount of development. If we increase density, we increase population and make the Island less sustainable. If we doubled the number of people on every lot, there could be a great increase in population. (See continued discussion under S6.) This should be tied into the work on Development Management and Land Use.

We should point out that this item and the next one would help achieve the 10% state-mandated threshold to allow a Town to deny an unacceptable hostile 40B.

S6 Multi-Unit Affordable Housing This should only be done in specific, limited areas. Higher densities in some areas must be coupled with conservation and undevelopment in other areas so that densification in some areas is offset by density reduction in others, with not necessarily a greater overall population. Although there are some issues related to building in town, including the impact of the cost of services on Down-Island towns, it is still better to build another house in town where there are already a lot of houses rather than plunked in the middle of a big farm field. The redistribution of land use and density should be a fundamental part of the Island Plan. Density needs to be appropriate with the visual and functional quality of each place. Higher density might be appropriate in some places for planning reasons, but shouldn't necessarily be tied into income level. However, if the community feels that there are some areas that could be higher density, rather than just rezone it so the owner makes a big windfall profit, it would be better to tie this into creation of affordable housing or preservation of open space.

S7 Dormitory Housing. No comments.

S8 Demolition Delay. There was a concern that 12 months may be too long. Nantucket now has a 6-month delay and is apparently thinking of changing it to 12. A long delay unless the owner moves the house, or deconstructs it if moving is clearly impossible, would act as a strong incentive to get houses saved. It would only work if there were a holding place for houses while land is secured.

S9 Island-Wide Cost Sharing. Island wide cost sharing may be a good philosophy but relates to governance and perhaps we should wait until the Governance Work Group looks at it. Alternatively, we could raise the idea to provoke discussion. Much of what has been suggested has Island-Wide and governance implications. If we keep infilling in Oak Bluffs, their taxes would go up because of the greater need for services; the greatest impact would be on those towns that are least able to deal with them.

S10 Eco/Cultural Tourism. Broad support. No comments.

S11 Food Production & Processing Infrastructure. We have to think these through to make sure that they are feasible and that we can explain them well. Although having lots of greenhouses would be needed if we wanted to grow most of our own food, this proposal raises questions about cost and about energy use. There is apparently a lot that can be done to limit energy use in greenhouses. Presently, they are viable for lettuce and spinach, but are too expensive for tomatoes. The dairy cooperative should be better explained.

129 S12 Buy and Produce Locally. Broad support. No comments.
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131 S13 Access Revival Initiative. No comments.
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133 S14 Habitat Restoration Initiative. Broad support. Should use wording from Part 1, related to Minimum
134 Viable Areas.
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136 S15. Agricultural Lands Initiative. No comments.
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138 S16. Roadside Vegetation Initiative. Broad support. This could be coupled with efforts to purchase the
139 development rights of small lots along the roadside, to keep the rural character along roads and prevent
140 development of a continuous row of houses along the road that make the Island look suburban.
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142 S17 Landscaping the Vineyard Way. Broad support. It was also suggested that there could be a
143 guideline booklet such as the Moshup Trail guidelines, which clearly outline for owners, builders, and
144 landscape architects what is appropriate in each area. People generally want to do the right thing; they
145 just need the information to help them to do it. It was pointed out that a large fertilized lawn could
146 produce as much nitrogen as a house. It was also suggested that we could use Town land for
147 propagation and as a nursery.
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149 S18 Reduce Housing Density in Impacted Watersheds. Broad support. However, the relation to water
150 quality is just one of many factors that could lead to wanting to change the density, as will be discussed
151 by the Development Management and Land Use group. It is not realistic to expect to reduce the
152 development potential of land for water quality reasons alone, since this could be solved by means far
153 less expensive than not building (i.e. costing perhaps \$25,000 for wastewater treatment rather than
154 losing \$500,000 in property value).
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156 S19. Pond Management Committees. No comments.
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158 S20. Mapping of Water Resources. Something we should do internally, but not an initiative to
159 announce to the public.
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161 S21 Septic systems. Seems too limited, behind the scenes, operational. Doesn't need to be presented to
162 public, we should just do it. Clarify it is for groundwater protection. Could be part of a proposal that
163 towns need better septic management programs. This is easily doable. However, if the result is to get a
164 lot more property owners to install new Title 5 systems, this might actually be worse for nitrogen loading
165 in coastal ponds.
166
167 There should be a Vineyard homeowners' manual, which explains various aspects of owning a home
168 on the Vineyard, including how to use a septic system and how to landscape. There could be a
169 sustainability property audit program, including energy, landscaping, etc., which would tell
170 homeowners how well their property rates now, and what they could do to improve. This could be
171 coupled with the very good GIS mapping of resources now available.
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173 S22. Divert Stormwater Runoff at Stream Crossings. No comments.

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175 S23. Complete the Mass Estuaries Projects. No comments.
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177 S24. Wastewater Management Plan. No comments.
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179 S25. Stormwater Training Program. Doesn't rise to the level of other initiatives.
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181 L1. Island Energy Code. Broad support. No comments.
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183 L2. Building Materials Reuse Facility. Broad support. Should be combined with L8.
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185 L3 – Harness Enough Energy for Hot Water and Electric. This seems like a benign statement, but we
186 need a better idea of what this might mean, and be assured that we can implement this in a way that
187 will be acceptable. By endorsing this, does it mean accepting, say, a series of 400'-high turbines
188 somewhere on the Island? The Energy and Waste Core is outlining some scenarios of how this could be
189 done.
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191 L4. Energy Audit and Upgrade on Sale. This could be very expensive. The description in Part 1 better
192 explains how costs would be limited. We need to explain how it could be financed. This could be part
193 of the overall environmental/sustainability audit suggested earlier.
194
195 L5. Community-Owned Electric Utility. Broad support. No comments.
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197 L6. Growth Incentive Zones. Relates to Development Management and Land Use; should we be putting
198 this forward now?
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200 L7. Commercial and Agricultural Land Incentives and Mechanisms. Some of these relate to Development
201 Management and Land Use; should we be putting this forward now? We should eliminate the reference
202 to new town centers. The Airport Business Park and Blinker area don't have services but it is not clear
203 that it is feasible or desirable to turn these areas into mini town centers. There are areas that are
204 already developed that could probably benefit from being more like town centers. It is unlikely that the
205 community would want to create new villages in what is presently open space.
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207 L8. Make Waste into Products. Broad support. Should be combined with L2.
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209 L9 Undevelopment: Broad support. This relates to S14 (Minimum Viable Area), but in addition to
210 habitat reasons, could be for vista and character reasons. This needs to be explained more clearly. We
211 should refer to the examples of the Cape Cod National Seashore and Adirondack Park buying life
212 estates for key properties. See the book "Taking Back the Cape." On Cape Cod, it succeeded because
213 there was community buy-in to create the plan and to identify what areas were the priorities. This could
214 be combined with meeting affordable housing needs.
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216 Other suggestions:
217 ▪ It would be good to publish guidelines for building in an appropriate way for different areas in
218 the Vineyard.

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- If we use the idea of doing something “The Island Way”, we have to make sure that it doesn’t seem elitist. Some people come here from places like Denmark that are way ahead of us in many ways; others come from other places in the country and come here because they are comfortable. Should we be creating a special identity that sets us apart? If so, we should explain that we do things somewhat differently here, without elitist pretensions.
 - Some of the energy proposals are very provocative and some appear to be out of our control. We should make sure this is clear in the wording. We should avoid referring to a DCPC; this is merely one among many regulatory tools to achieve an objective; it is not an objective on its own. What is provocative is rapidly changing; when the energy group proposed changing light types a year ago, it was considered radical; now the idea is widely accepted.
 - We should continue working on the carrying capacity of the Island. What are the limiting factors? It is probably not water. Is it traffic?
 - We have to be clear as to what the possible redistribution of land use and density might have on property values.

234 **5. Next Steps**

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236 We will have several documents, with different levels of information for different groups.

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1. A general flyer going to all Vineyard households, similar to last year’s, which provides a basic overview. A photocopy version should be ready by June 15, and printed copy to be distributed during the summer.
 2. Discussion papers on each topic, which provides the next level of detail, for all members of the Work Group and others with a particular interest in that topic. The discussion paper on development and land use will be different from the others, in that we are less advanced. These should be ready by June 15.
 3. Technical supplements, which provide more in-depth information. These will be produced over time.

247 The following steps will be followed to prepare the discussion papers.

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- Each Work Group Core should prepare a first draft of their four-page discussion paper, in light of the Steering Commission discussions. There might be a few items where there will have to be some discussion between the Steering Committee and Cores (in person or via email).
 - The draft Discussion Papers should go to the Steering Committee in the week before the June 2 meeting. At the same time, they should go – clearly marked as working copies – to all members of the Work Group, to Selectmen, and to Planning Boards, asking for comments before June 2. We could also send them to a few constructive critics. When we send them to board members, we should make clear that we are asking for individual feedback, not formal board review or approval.
 - At the June 2 meeting, the Steering Committee should do its final review of the Discussion Papers.
 - After June 2, we should have a professional editor edit them for readability and consistency.

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261 We will set up a reading/editing group. Mimi and Mark expressed interest. [were there others?]

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263 In the discussion paper, we could include "Five things that you can do today". It could also include a list
264 of provocative questions; things we don't have answers to.

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266 Also for the June 2 meeting, the subcommittee of Ray, Henry, and Mark should draft a list of basic
267 principles for discussion.

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269 It would appear that the plan is connecting itself together. The ideas are consistent and interrelated.
270 Some basic ideas are to minimize competition over land and money, but to find ways to achieve goals
271 with development over time. The aim is to recognize the integration of all the issues, and to find creative
272 ways to articulate and deal with them.

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274 The meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.

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276 *Notes prepared by Mark London.*

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