

Attendees:

Andy Herr	Scott Mullin	Phil Hale
Chief Habekost	Heather Wolfenden	Mary Ellen Larsen
Lt Bill Brigham	Crystal Thomas	Chief Habekost
Melissa Scammell	Kyle Byrne	Cheryl Doble
Jane Chandler	Rachel Baumrin	Elaine Miller
Taylor Stone	Althea Freeman Miller	Maddie?
CJ Rivard	Phil Wallis	Dan Doyle
Kate Ridenour	Brook Katzen	Teresa Kruszewski

Comments

- Create a stronger visual and physical cohesion between Main Street and the waterfront.
 - Use trees, planting, views, signs, materials, etc. to visually connect/integrate Water and Main Streets.
- Create public open space and strengthen pedestrian infrastructure
The area along Water Street can be very congested. Provide more public open space and shaded areas for people to sit.
 - Turn the Stop and shop parking lot into an open space/park.
 - Create a public open space near the ferry terminal and locate the visitor center in it.
 - Provide shaded seating areas.
 - Build a network of pedestrian walks connecting Water Street to Main Street and Union Street to State Road.
 - Develop signage and mapping to help visitors find their way.
 - Comment – no matter what we will never have enough parking. Provide pleasant walking routes to and between the commercial districts. Find ways to accommodate and people will adapt.
- Remove town services from the B1 and waterfront commercial districts.
Prioritize arrival and visitor accommodation in the waterfront and B1 business area. Move Town services to other areas in town.
 - Relocate the Police station.
 - The Post Office is in a terrible location, relocate.
- Reduce traffic congestion on Main Street
 - There was a suggestion to make Main Street a pedestrian corridor with deliveries at set before businesses open. This would require providing distant parking and pleasant pedestrian corridors to Main Street.
 - Variations of this proposal were suggested – blocking traffic from a portion of Main Street (possibly from Norton to Union) and eliminating traffic on special days to sponsor more events and special shopping days. Try shutting down one day a week to test.
 - Consider European pedestrian street strategies used in old sections of town where there is not much space. This could be effective on Beach Street Extension.
 - Conduct a traffic study and test options.

- Develop more options to bring people to the B1 and waterfront commercial district by water using water taxis.
- Future planning-
 - Traffic study
 - Form a Complete Streets Committee.
 - Include VHBA member on future studies.

Master Plan Steering Committee and Planning Board Community Outreach Roundtable at the Annex- notes prepared by Amy Upton Planning Board Administrator and Elaine Miller, PB member
June 13th, 2023 at 12:30 pm and modified by Dan Doyle, Master Plan Admin

Attendees: Jesse Steere, Debbie Packer, Adam Bresnick, Brook Katzen, Connie Alexander (Planning Board), Elaine Miller (Planning Board), Amy Upton (Planning Board Admin), Mary Ellen Larsen (Master Plan Steering C'tee), Dan Doyle (Master Plan Admin)

Dan Doyle opened the meeting and stressed that this session is focused on getting actionable feedback from the B2 Business owners and that the SC and PB are here to listen first and foremost.

Jesse Steere: Initially had a negative reaction to the first draft of the Master Plan concept drawings that were distributed. He has since been able to talk to a lot of people, not only about the problems but about possible solutions. He now recognizes that the way forward is to begin focusing on solutions rather than problems.

Adam Bresnick: Once all of the issues/problems have been listed and identified the next phase of progress is active problem solving and collaboration. Currently there are too many "camps" focusing on their own issues and concerns and losing track of what we all have in common- a desire to find workable solutions and initiate actionable processes. "If you want something to change, you have to change something".

He suggested keeping the focus on collaboration between owners/developers and the town and finding a place in the middle that all can agree upon and support going forward. He used the term give and take for the benefit of all.

He spoke about the IFP project prepared by Jen Goldson and funded by a grant acquired by the MVC which included mixed use of various types of housing, retail and the connector road. He pointed out that it addressed all the issues stated in the May 2, 2023 Master Plan principles for B2. It would incorporate a connector road and improve density and prevent sprawl.

Brooke Katzen: Identifies the main roadblocks to Business progress as outdated zoning regulations which limit and restrict what property owners can do with their properties. He is looking for more flexibility in the future and realizes that will only come about if the Town engages in a bylaw re-codification process, which he recognizes is slated for this upcoming year. He looks forward to participating and offering feedback.

Furthermore, he believes the Town lacks appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the necessary changes which would be required to allow the private sector to operate more efficiently and achieve more progress in development. Underlying Zoning issues are a hurdle to progress, in his opinion. Going forward, one solution would be to tie some of the housing needs to the actual needs of Island businesses, sometimes referred to as "work force" housing. Jesse agreed that if there were available apartments to rent he would do so to be able to provide housing for his own employees.

Debbie Packer: Asks whether Brook's motive is financial or community-minded; Brook responded both. She reiterated her concerns regarding plans on private property without the express permission of the owners.

The conversation shifted to growing concerns regarding the intersection of the Business District, the Residential District, and the Town owned land: As development increases and this Town is running out of undeveloped spaces to build, work, live, and operate a municipality- the "lines on paper" which determine these districts are becoming increasingly stressed in regard to real people living real lives in real time. It is no longer an "on paper" problem. Rather than allowing these natural stressor points to be exacerbated, Town Boards need to examine ways in which to alleviate such pressures- sooner than later.

Most at the table agreed; We can't wait until x, y, and z to begin finding solutions that can help people in the community. Again, these solutions might be found in the utilization and implementation of existing by-laws, as well as the re-codification of by-laws that aren't serving the community in the most useful ways. An example of an existing by-law that is underutilized is Section 09.00 Special Ways District. One way for Residents who live on fragile ancient ways to protect and preserve their nature and character, with help from the Planning Board, would be to assign more of them as official Special Ways. This bylaw affords protections which are otherwise unavailable for private ways. There are also by-laws which are not well written or particularly clear which need to be looked at and rectified so they can be utilized to protect Business owners and Residents alike as they look to Develop their properties conscientiously and with respect for their neighbors and the Town. Currently there is too much ambiguity which allows people to skirt the intentions of the by-laws to their own personal benefit without consideration for the greater good.

Connie Alexander: Brought up the specific infrastructure that is currently in play as a central element in finding solutions across the board, ie Wastewater. She described the work of this department and the Board on which she serves as putting together the nuts and bolts of practical and comprehensive analysis, grant applications, and plans to implement solutions going forward. A centralized Town system would ultimately be more efficient and space saving than a multitude of nitrogen management systems. Switching away from septic systems when and where it is appropriate is a positive trend.

Elaine Miller: Mentioned that there is State money available for projects which increase viability of local projects. She asked if the zoning was in place to be able to ask for such grants.

The conversation next shifted to Mixed Use: We are all aware that the housing crisis is debilitating and has many ramifications across sectors; Town, Business and Residential alike. Mixed Use options could provide solutions in a variety of ways. Relationships between private property owners and the Town could be explored. Collaborative opportunities would benefit both parties and also the community as a whole.

For instance, Adam Bresnick is very interested in working with the Town of Tisbury, as well as the MVC to sort out a potential connector road from Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road through the back of his property, utilizing connecting Town owned parcels and securing a viable thruway to upper State Rd. Not only would this take some of the pressure off of the intersection at the bottom of Edg/VH rd where it connects to State, it would also open up possibilities for a series of mixed-use neighborhoods.

Debbie Packer feels that the connector road idea should be pursued through a corridor(s) where the Town already has ownership or easements, but not through other routes if the property owners are opposed. In particular, her sister's business – SBS – has DRI restrictions that would be impacted with any such road.

She also noted there are privacy concerns for participants utilizing the Vineyard House, a non-profit that provides temporary living accommodations to adults recovering from substance abuse addiction.

Jesse offers that he often uses Mud Puddle Road to get to his property. This prompted a discussion about homes owners on Mud Puddle Road who abut commercial properties. There is a need for a buffer zone providing separation from residential and commercial properties acknowledging that they exist in close proximity however the residential area who not be subjected to the traffic and noise of the commercial area wherever possible.

Such a connector road would require a thorough investigation of the affected properties, and conversations with the owners of private enterprise along with Town land. (The Sanborn well recharge area would have to be considered). Smart Growth research indicates that live/work development is more efficient practically, culturally, and environmentally, among other considerations. There is a delicate balance between Business owners, private property, and residential neighborhoods which has to be achieved for the greater good of the whole community.

Elaine Miller suggested opening up a discussion on a Municipal Campus. Dan Doyle indicated the town is dealing with the issue and is focused on the fact that a lot of money has been put into rehabbing the Police Station, considering a lease situation with EduComp along with the town owned property on West William Street.

Amy Upton: This Island is losing its younger generations at an alarming rate, and is no longer supporting an influx of bright, young, entrepreneurial people who might want to live and work here for a time but aren't necessarily interested in buying property or staying forever. There are no opportunities for these potential members of the community to live and work without facing insurmountable struggles to find adequate living arrangements. This concern is often overlooked in favor of discussions around increasing subsidized housing. This perspective doesn't account for the demographic of younger modest wage earners who are not looking to be subsidized. Some people just want to rent an apartment, go to work, and live in a vibrant active community which they will help shape for the next generation of young people who might want to move to Martha's Vineyard but have been priced out of such a choice. Why aren't we talking about building modestly sized and priced apartment buildings in these proposed mixed-use areas?

Jesse Steere: Asked the table to consider the varied topography of the Shirley's side of the B2 State Rd. District which might lend itself well to taller buildings, like apartments buildings. The steep hill could absorb some of the height that would be less desirable in the flatter areas of the Town. Working with the existing topography could allow for denser development and less sprawl. Mixed use initiatives have to be incorporated into this district without encroaching too much on space that needs to remain available for new Businesses to expand in to.

Debbie Packer raised a concern for making sure the housing is going to Island residents and will not lure people from off Island to move to the Vineyard.

Concerns from other Planning Board members include: As sea level rises there will also have to be room to accommodate non water dependent businesses which may need to move "up the hill". A so called "managed retreat". We have to be careful not to fill up the limited space we have available so there is room to grow in the future as conditions present themselves.

Connie Alexander: Spoke about the elements of character this community is hoping to retain while simultaneously being open to new possibilities which are achievable through smart development and growth. Interestingly, the original wastewater system in Tisbury was designed specifically to be small, and thereby slow the rate of development. We have clearly outgrown those original intentions but is the solution to forge full steam ahead and pursue unbridled development? Depends on who you talk to. But a system of checks and balances is always at play, weighing costs and benefits of growth.

This is an Island, and it does have a carrying capacity. Rapidly accelerated growth will end us up more and more like Cape Cod. There is such a thing as too much, too big, too fast. The Martha's Vineyard Commission is preparing to do a study which will give all of the Towns on Island critical information to help make decisions going forward in regard to rate of development. In the meanwhile, pacing ourselves seems highly prudent.

Dan Doyle: The Master Plan process is just that, a process. There are many layers and iterations of conceptual planning which leads to drafts of practical applications in real time. All of these drafts are a matter of public record, along with the responses they illicit from the public. The goal of engaging in this process is to ultimately advance the collective goals of the Town. Three main conceptual visions for the B2 were initially floated as: **1) Enhancing Service Center, 2) A second Village center, and 3) A Place for Everyone.** A Second Village Center was eliminated as impractical given how paramount the existing services operating out of the B2. The first and third options are guiding the visioning process now, and it can be characterized as a Mixed Use district/vision.

From the feedback he has received thus far it is clear that residents of Tisbury are very much in support of crafting a carefully thought-out plan that will serve the Town for generations to come. This requires patience, time, and attention to details. They very much want to "get it right."

Master Plan Round Table- June 29th, 2023

Attendees

Property owners/Business reps: Phil Wallis (Desorcy property), Nicola Groh (Gannon & Benjamin), Althea Freeman-Miller (Althea Designs, on Beach Rd), Phil Hale (MV Shipyard & Steering C'tee member)

Others in Attendance: Cheryl Doble, Ben Robinson, Susannah Bristol, Mary Ellen Larsen, Sean Roach, Dan Doyle, Melinda Loberg (for part of the meeting)

Update from Dan Doyle on W/C District as it relates to MP looking forward 10, 15, 20 years. There are Challenges and opportunities in all three sectors including Downtown, W/C and B2 upper State Rd and relative connectivity and circulation. Considerations include Land use, sea level rise and flood risk.

Open Discussion

Althea Miller: Describes a working waterfront with a handcraft sensibility which incorporates pedestrian access to the harbor and community intermingling. Interested in building community.

G+B representative: Expressed concerns around losing current accessibility to private landowners who might want to block access. The lack of adequate parking is an issue. Not only is there a need for walking access but it would be a good idea to make this accessibility known from the downtown area to attract pedestrian traffic.

Cheryl Doble: Current access is informal, what would a more formal approach look like?

Mr. Wallace: Let the room know that there are designs in the works for the DeSorcy building. He described the concept of a "green necklace" made up of public/private interactions which he referred to as "nuggets" which lend to connected gathering spaces both inside and out. Building a system of boardwalks won't work because of damage potential from storms. Hopes for design ideas that will incorporate working businesses, public gathering places, and organized social activities for fun. This will require a careful linking of public and private interests. Boch park deserves to be a part of this "necklace". Lists secondary uses like food trucks, food boats, farmers markets, and pop ups.

G+B: This area needs to be protected. The zoning is maritime commercial. How to preserve maritime year-round jobs. The harbor is full of boats because of the two working boatyards. Doesn't want corporate restaurant culture to threaten maritime culture.

Althea Miller: Describes the design idea of buildings on the front of properties for curb appeal, with parking in the back, lots which could be used for multiple purposes, not just parking cars. The Post office although convenient is outgrowing its location. Is relocation or redesign up for discussion?

Mary Ellen Larsen: If the Post Office moves what will go in its place? Would a new building be raised to accommodate sea level rise? Is this the direction all future building in this area needs to consider? ADA accessibility won't be possible without great expense.

Ben Robinson: The Federal Government will need to determine if and when the Post Office will be moved. But considering options ahead of that time is a good exercise. Some possible locations are in the upper state rd. corridor.

There is a seasonality to the water dependent businesses in the W/C district. Boats are worked on in the winter and go in the water in the summer. What types of activities could go on in the spaces where the boats are worked on- on land during the winter, once they are moved to their summer destinations. Primary and secondary uses could be explored such as food stalls, music events, art shows, and community activities.

Phil Hale: Small boats can be stored anywhere. Larger boats need to stay where they are, near the water because moving them is challenging. Are there inland spaces which could potentially absorb storage of smaller boats during the off season. He regrets that nothing has changed in 30 years as a result of zoning, which has stopped development, which was never the intention. The waterfront is run down in appearance which is not attracting businesses. The solution is to embrace a multi-use waterfront district. To counteract the "decrepit" look of the area requires a whole new approach. He expressed consternation that on the Thursday ahead of Fourth of July weekend there were 17 empty Town moorings in the inner Harbor. Each mooring has the potential to bring in \$71,000.00 per year. This is such a waste of potential revenue. He believes the main issue is that there is no online reservation system in place, a system which would cost the Town less than \$3,000.00 to implement. Private boats sail right past the VH harbor and on to other harbors which have online reservation systems in place. The Town also needs a launch system for ferry boaters into Town. The waterfront mixed use businesses would benefit from this influx of boating traffic. Updating this technology needs to be a priority for the Town. Boaters will need facilities including showers, bathrooms, and pump out stations. Build it and they will come. This is just one way to raise revenue without raising taxes, a concept that needs to be explored more.

Ben Robinson: We can control for supply but how do we control for demand? Martha's Vineyard has global cache. We need to capitalize on growing demand as an incoming revenue source for the Town. But just how much demand can Vineyard Haven service without sacrificing quality? What infrastructure does VH need to focus on to prioritize quality service? The Town can be a "door mat" or a "welcome mat" We can have some say in that assessment.

Additional topics of conversation:

- The MVC is engaging in a carrying capacity study for the whole Island.
- SSA embarkation fees are proposed to increase from 50 cents to Two Dollars
- Consider Landing fees for cruise ships docking in VH harbor
- Excursion vs. off island visitors could be required to pay fees to support the Town's extra expenses
- Other Towns use VH as access to and from the Island but don't provide any revenue, solutions?
- Effluent water flow at 5 corners- where should the runoff go?-We need solutions
- Local priorities vs. state priorities , OTP office, Mass DOT
- Long term flooding concerns