

Meeting Summary: March 24, 2023
Master Plan commercial district open house
Town Hall Annex

Steering Committee members:

Rick Homans, Economic Development lead

Dan Doyle, Master Plan Admin

Planning Board members:

Ben Robinson, Chair

Connie Alexander

Amy Upton, Planning Board Admin

Business owners:

Liz Packer – SBS, Alan Wilson – Island Tire, Jesse Steere – Shirley’s Hardware, Debbie Packer – Tisbury Shell, Dorothy Packer

Themes

- Take any new concept schematics / plans off of private property
- limit Master Plan visioning to town owned properties
- if there are new ideas for specific private properties, approach those property owners first and have a “one on one” conversation
- recent history of eminent domain along Beach Road puts some business owners on high alert when plans suggest it might be pursued again
- affordable apartments needed in the B2 and across town
- liability concerns exist when there is public access across privately owned land despite existing protections from the state
- many islanders/workers presently forced to live in deplorable conditions
- it is far easier to draw a line on a plan, than it is to erase one; this fuels the concerns of the Packers

Specifics

- Even if a formal business association limited to the B2 does not exist in this commercial zone, an informal and very effective one is in place for neighboring businesses to assist one another.
- A harbor walk extending from Black Dog to Tisbury Shell station (“Shipwreck Corner”) is not worth pursuing; will be impractical
- If an existing paper street presently bisecting the Shirley’s Hardware lot (and shown on the commercial district visioning), ever came to fruition it would prompt the business to close; a modification at MVC would be needed to formally eliminate this paper street.
- Previous attempts to open a gas station in the B2 district have been denied (unclear why)
- A warehouse in the rear of Shirley’s lot (rather than existing storage containers) with 3-4 units of employee housing on top and access provided to the units from atop the retaining wall would be a great use of the property (shared by Jesse with Dan & Amy after the group dispersed)

Meeting Summary: March 27, 2023
Master Plan commercial district open house
Town Hall Annex

Steering Committee members:

Lyndsay Famariss (Chair), Phil Hale, Susannah Bristol

Dan Doyle, Master Plan Admin

Planning Board members:

Elaine Miller

Casey Hayward

Amy Upton, Planning Board Admin

Business owners:

Claudia Canerdy – Claudia Jewelers, Rachel Baumrin – MV Made, Morgan Schroeder Catboat Coffee, SBS, Alex, Brook Katzen -

Mainstreet B1:

Goals:

1. To invest in infrastructure for the buildings on main street
2. Prevent floods due to old pipes.
3. Repair broken and outdated heating systems.
4. Register historic buildings on Main Street
5. Repair facades and external features for public safety and attractiveness.
6. Increase revenue and create tax incentives.
7. Strengthen the activity of the Chamber of Commerce and VHBA to clearly represent the needs and goals of local businesses.
8. Encourage more communication between the VHBA, the VHHCD and Tisbury Planning Board for the purpose of working together
9. Focus on the buildings of the Bowl & Board and the Capawock theater as the anchors of Main Street and establish a plan for future use

Ideas:

1. Set up a financial support system for upkeep of buildings for businesses and landlords.
2. Have a way to communicate with landlords that don't live on island

3. Incentivize businesses to invest in their properties such as renovating apartments.

Revenue streams:

1. Business vacancy tax
2. Hold absent landlords accountable
3. Research if there is money from the historical/cultural council to maintain historic buildings.
4. Research eminent domain/buyout for buildings that are vacant and identify potential anchors of Main street. The group considered it positive to allow the town to take over two buildings, the Bowl & Board and the Capawock Theater, both owned by the Hall family, which was considered by this group as anchor buildings in town.

This is contrasted with the strong opposition by the prospect of eminent domain in the B2 and Waterfront Districts.

5. Might the Capawock Theatre be iconic / historic enough that the Vineyard Preservation Trust partnership could be interested in purchasing and operating it? If the Town indicated a strong enough interest / engagement would the VPT be more interested?
6. Cultural space run by non profit?
7. Tax breaks such as a commercial real estate tax cut for five years with a condition to renovate the facade for public safety or renovate the apartment.
8. Lead certified buildings tax break?
9. Research if businesses get a tax break if they have an apartment or employee housing?
10. Establish or enforce penalties for derelict buildings.

Waterfront:

1. Research extension of Eastville breakwater as a way to create revenue for the town through the addition of added rental moorings.
2. Research if this could be financed through a resiliency grant or state/federal funding. FEMA?
3. Alleviate car traffic and increase pedestrian traffic to waterfront businesses.
4. Install town dock for dinghys to row out to daymoorings to bring boaters in; a 20 year old study was cited that day mooring users spent \$100 / day in town; moorings would cost ~\$2000 each to install.
5. Create a town launch.
6. Engage Vineyard Wind as partners in further development of the waterfront

B2:

1. Access is key.
2. The town should take over strategically identified private roads and turn them into public roads. For example: Mechanic Street.
3. Encourage the establishment of a more formal business association for the industrial stakeholders
4. Consider land use behind the businesses that front on State Road and the industrial area of the B2 for the development of housing.

Communication:

1. Create a master database with shared information such as emails for business owners and landlords.
2. Pool resources amongst committees and local business groups such as VHBA.

Meeting Summary: March 29, 2023
Master Plan commercial district open house
Town Hall Annex

Steering Committee members:

Mary Ellen Larsen
Cheryl Doble (also on Planning Board)

Dan Doyle, Master Plan Admin

Planning Board members:

Ben Robinson (Chair)

Amy Upton, Planning Board Admin

Business owners:

Elaine Barsa (Green Room), Peter Goodale (Goodale's), Josh Goldstein (Mansion House)

Other Attendees:

Mac Schiffler, Rachel Orr

Themes

B2

Connector Road must be done without encroaching on wellhead protection zone near Sanborn Way. Implications for Edgartown-VH (EVH) Rd must be better understood, including potential need for a storage pocket / turning lane onto the Connector as you head into VH.

Town ownership of roads in the B2

Evelyn Way will not get meaningful private investment on its own because some business owners along the road can afford it but others can't or won't invest in this infrastructure.

Goodale's explored housing on his property and the pro forma showed 70-80 units would be needed to make it economical. They are balk at displacing other businesses / uses on their property that have nowhere else to go.

Town should consider working with County government to make the Airport Business Park a more business friendly place to relocate if certain uses / businesses leave the B2 (ie. longer lease terms)

How can the town promote friendly 40B's (to both developers and the community/neighborhood)?

A diagram / chart showing where existing parking exists in the B2 would be very helpful.

A downtown Post Office is a big trip generator and helpful for surrounding businesses. Even if it moves out of the flood zone, this reality should be accounted for with more walkable approaches to/from a relocated Post Office

Downtown / Waterfront Comm

Parking: in the downtown, we need to ask just how much we are going to build parking to accommodate 2 months of serious demand?

VH contains fairly steady business, year round; this is a strength. We should spend less time focused on how to compete for summer business; December is the 3rd busiest month for the Green Room

Some businesses in Tisbury presently drive up to the Airport Business Park for electrical supplies vs. using competition in the Waterfront Commercial district, owing to congestion downtown

Keeping traffic cops on Main Street could help circulation in the summertime.

How much growth does the island want to accommodate? This should be an important question.

Stop N Shop's space is a disgrace and we need to enable them to improve their site.

The Tennis Courts on Center Street could have been 40 parking spaces. We spent too much CPC funding for courts that are not used.

There is so much concrete already beneath our roads and sidewalks in downtown VH that it makes sapling growth into mature trees impractical. Up to 15' height of young trees is realistic after which they need to be transplanted to the cemetery

Legacy of former DPW Director decision to run primary and secondary utility lines through the same boxes in Waterfront Commercial (and B1?) makes it very difficult to shift this type of infrastructure and constrains the town when doing work in these areas;

William Street used to be one way in the opposite direction; reversal took place circa 1980's?

Could Form Based Zoning help increase height / # of stories for buildings in our commercial districts? Leslie's building used to go up 3 stories.

Tisbury referred to affectionately as the "doormat" of the island

Tax incentive programs needed to increase investment by property owners in commercial districts

More day moorings as economic generators for the VH businesses should be explored.

First Fridays, MV Playhouse events and Film Center are great assets and really strong attractions that Tisbury should be proud of.

Town needs to invest in public restrooms in the downtown area; it should not rely so much on private businesses for this

Communication between the town and residents is critical, and it's key this continues during implementation of this Plan as well