



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
MEETING OF JUNE 13, 2022

via remote technology

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 pm

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Pamela Goff, Wesley Mott, Kristen Reimann, Sarah Thulin, Nancy Weaver, Peter Wells

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS ABSENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Steven Ewing

STAFF PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Harrison Kisiel, Cynthia Krauss, James Lengyel, Julie Russell

OTHERS PRESENT DURING THE SESSION

Sharon Cooke, Philip Cordella, Eunki Seonwoo (*Martha's Vineyard Times*)

PRESENTATION OF THE WARRANT

Warrant no. 2022-47 was made available for the Commission's inspection.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hearing no proposed changes, Mrs. Goff declared the agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2022

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the minutes as written.

COUNTY AND LAND BANK COMMISSION TREASURERS' REPORTS

None

TRANSFER FEE REVENUES

Revenues for the week ending June 10, 2022: \$147,200.00

NEW BUSINESS

1. Agency Administration: Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

Staff reported that each of the Town Advisory Boards had approved the budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2022. After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to do likewise.

2. Agency Land Management : Research Study

The Commission discussed a June 6, 2022 request from Stephen Rich of the University of Massachusetts to study infection rates in ticks. He seeks permission to gather >400 ticks from the Farm Pond Preserve, Squibnocket Pond Reservation and/or the Tisbury Meadow Preserve. Ecologist Julie Russell has no objections.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the request, subject to Ms. Russell's oversight and with the understanding that all data will be supplied to the land bank.

Commissioner Steven Ewing joined the meeting during the following discussion.

3. John Presbury Norton Farm (Town of West Tisbury)

The Commission discussed the two bids received for removal of the buildings located on this property: (1.) Options in Education, Inc. and the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School, dated June 3, 2022; and (2.) Hilary Dreyer, dated June 2, 2022. This matter had been most recently discussed at the Commission's April 25, 2022 meeting.

Mrs. Thulin disclosed for the public record that her grand-daughters had attended the charter school and that she had made donations to Options in Education. Mrs. Goff disclosed for the public record that her son-in-law is a teacher at the school. Mr. Ewing disclosed for the public record that his wife worked at the school for many years. No benefits would accrue to any Commissioners by their actions with regard to the bids.

Discussion occurred as to (1.) the need to allot time to the successful bidder to allow for removal; (2.) the delay that will be occasioned in any event by the need to remove the electric meters; (3.) the status of the charter school as a public school and the land bank's history of preferencing public entities in these situations; and (4.) the Commission's April 25, 2022 vote, which called for staff to dispose as it sees fit of any buildings that are not otherwise disposed of via request-for-proposals (RFP).

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to offer the buildings to the charter school, failing which the building sought by Ms. Dreyer will be offer to her. The school will have six months to relocate the buildings.

4. Southern Woodlands Reservation (Town of Oak Bluffs)

The Commission discussed its Oak Bluffs Town Advisory Board's June 8, 2022 vote (1.) to inform the Commission that it supports the general concept of a campground on this property and its location in the area of the former Webb's Camping Area off the Barnes Road; and (2.) to urge the Commission to do due-diligence in studying the May 19, 2022 proposal advanced by Jacob Weaver, consulting as needed with the commonwealth's natural heritage office and issuing as needed a request-for-proposals.

Mrs. Thulin asked Ms. Russell to outline how the management plan would need to change in order to proceed; Ms. Russell cited issues relating to the plan's and agency's expectation that any campground (1.) would be of a primitive nature; (2.) would generally be accessed via the County Road and via bicycle or public transportation; (3.) would avoid pitch-pine habitat; and (4.) would be subject to a short-term lease. She added that recent wildfire planning for the island would also be a concern.

Mrs. Thulin stated that support for a campground here seems to be coming from a "place of nostalgia" for Webb's but that the island is now under pressure that didn't exist in the 1990s and that, additionally, neighborhoods have now been established near the site. Mr. Ewing spoke to tailoring an RFP to the land bank's goals and his preference for "starting small" and observing what unfolds. Mrs. Goff noted (1.) that the agency management workshop is located at the Webb's site and that the land bank had previously declined to pursue staff housing there because of possible lagoon impacts; and (2.) that camping would be an intense use of a property that the land bank had conserved in order to keep it in its natural state. Mrs. Reimann registered concern about comments she has heard that a campground here could help serve as a solution for the island's housing problem — she stated that any such use would instead be recreational and noted that the environmental issues (e.g., no matter where it is located it would affect a watershed) would need to be addressed. Mrs. Thulin stated that she was concerned that the land bank "may be losing its way" — the land bank is a conservation organization and was not created to supply, for instance, camping, affordable housing or dog parks.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted in a roll call vote to refer this matter to staff for thorough investigation, with a December 31, 2022 timetable for a report.

5. Tashmoo Preserve (Town of Tisbury)

The Commission reviewed notice received of an application filed with the Tisbury Conservation Commission by the town of Tisbury for the "installation and maintenance of a geogrid in the Tashmoo beach parking area." The land bank staffs this parking area via an intergovernmental agreement with the town.

Commissioners discussed the nature of geogrids and their maintenance and long-range impacts; and took no action. Ms. Weaver, a member of the Conservation Commission, will bring these matters to the hearing.

6. Tisbury Meadow Preserve (Town of Tisbury)

Staff reported that no bids were received for an agricultural lease here, most recently discussed at the Commission's April 25, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Kisiel noted that this is not an ideal site for farming: thin soil, slope, no well. Mrs. Goff stated that if this area is not farmed it may be lost for that purpose. Commissioners agreed that staff should study this matter and return with proposals.

PUBLIC INPUT

1. Agency Administration: Public Input

Philip Cordella spoke to the warrant and the credit-card charges.


ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANT

The Commission endorsed Warrant no. 2022-47.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, lease, exchange or value of real property. Mrs. Goff stated that the subjects to be discussed are the purchase or value of real property and declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commission. She further announced that the Commission would not reconvene in regular session after the conclusion of the executive session. The Commission entered executive session at 3:55 pm.

certification:



Nancy Weaver, Secretary