



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
MEETING OF OCTOBER 24, 2022

via remote technology

CALL TO ORDER: 3:30 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

Janette Andrews, Harrison Kisiel, James Lengyel

PRESENTATION OF THE WARRANT

Warrant no. 2023-18 was made available for the Commission's inspection.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hearing no proposed additions, Mrs. Goff declared the agenda approved as printed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 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

Commissioner Steven Ewing joined the meeting at this time.

TRANSFER FEE REVENUES

Revenues for the week ending October 21, 2022: \$317,030.00

NEW BUSINESS

1. Agency Land Management: Farmland Leases

The Commission discussed its leases at the (1.) Peaked Hill Reservation; (2.) Short Cove Preserve; and (3.) Sweetened Water Preserve, which are all expiring at the end of the year; the lessees are, respectively, (1.) Krishana Collins, with a sublease to Matthew Dix, 3.0 acres; (2.) Arnold Fischer, 7.6 acres; and (3.) James Athearn, 0.5 acres.

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to issue a request-for-proposals (RFP) for each of the leaseholds; staff will, as a courtesy, inform the current lessees of the RFP.

2. Agency Land Management: Summer Use Reports

The Commission reviewed an October 21, 2022 package of summer use reports containing data and details about this season's public use of the (1.) Aquinnah Headlands Preserve; (2.) Chilmark Pond Preserve; (3.) Great Rock Bight Preserve; (4.) Manaquayak Preserve; (5.) Sepiessa Point Reservation; (6.) Tashmoo Preserve; and (7.) Wilfrid's Pond Preserve.

Mr. Kisiel reported that the land bank employed 13 summer rangers plus a ranger manager in 2022, housing them at the James Pond, Ocean View Farm and Quenomica Preserves. He said that the overarching theme of the summer was that numbers are, generally, up. General discussion occurred; Ms. Weaver noted that on a number of occasions she visited the Tashmoo Preserve, which includes some town land that the land bank manages as part of the larger preserve, and the land bank's work there "is an improvement for the town."

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to direct staff to distribute the report to the respective Town Advisory Boards.

3. Agency Administration: Election of Officers

The Commission conducted its annual election of officers.

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to renew its current slate, viz., Mrs. Goff as chairman, Mr. Mott as vice-chairman and Ms. Weaver as secretary-treasurer.

PUBLIC INPUT

1. Agency Administration: Public Input Session

The Commission conducted its biennial public input session, to take

comment on land acquisition priorities or any other matter of interest to the public. The following individuals were present: Jeffrey Agnoli, Signe Benjamin, Jennifer Blum, Prudence Burt, Sharon Cooke, Philip Cordella, Jeffrey DuBard, Susan Feller, Jack Fruchtman, Thomas Humphrey (*Vineyard Gazette*), Marcia Keegan, Samantha Look, Laurie Peter, Julia Reeve, Marc Rosenbaum, Andrew Storch and Robert Tignor. Mrs. Goff opened the meeting for comment.

Philip Cordella noted trash on Vineyard beaches and recommended that the land bank install water-bottle refill stations.

Marc Rosenbaum asked the land bank to continue to work on trail connectivity and cited the Kings Highway in Chilmark as an important link.

Samantha Look reported having been raised in West Tisbury when "open space was taken for granted" and stated that she cannot imagine what the quality of life on the Vineyard would be in the absence of the land bank; she expressed interest in the land bank's prospective role in planning for undevelopment associated with salt-marsh retreat.

Stating that everything is "absolutely, intimately connected," Jeffrey DuBard spoke to threats to the Lagoon Pond and water for aquaculture and the need to be "proactively protective of places that are unhealthy or threatened."

Jennifer Blum identified herself as an "enthusiastic walker" and noted the land bank's "good work in conserving important spaces for habitat and quality of life, trails and undevelopment."

Prudence Burt referred to an October 23, 2022 letter that she had sent in advance, which staff then read aloud, and continued by describing how her family was able, in 2021 and via the land bank, to attain its goal of undeveloping its homestead along the Tiasquam River; the land, currently subject to a life-estate, is part of the Music Street Fields. She urged the land bank to "remain undeterred" and do as much as it can.

Jeffrey Agnoli recommended pursuing smaller lots as "buffers" between developed properties.

Mr. Cordella stated that the Sailors' Burying Ground, which is partially owned by the land bank, needed some attention.

Ms. Look stated that she believes that more should be done to "amplify the importance of the work" that the land bank and the other conservation groups are doing. Mrs. Goff affirmed that the land bank continues to be committed

to its goals and that there is no dilution of that mission; she believes that conservation "is still in the forefront of a lot of members of the community." Mrs. Thulin remarked that "so much land is still out there and vulnerable."

Mr. Cordella asked about whether the land bank should have a community education component; Mrs. Goff replied that that would dilute the agency's efforts and that other groups are already doing that so well.

Jack Fruchtman stated that all of the island's conservation groups have the same goal: preserve what is left and have development occur in a smart way.

Apropos of education, Ms. Burt noted that Christine Seidel of the Martha's Vineyard Commission produced excellent maps for the Mill Brook Valley study report and that the Conservation Partnership may wish to work with her to "articulate to the public what is developable" today.

Laurie Peter asked if the land bank had heard concerns about land being conserved rather than being available for housing. Mrs. Goff responded (1.) that, generally speaking, the properties pursued by the land bank are those that would otherwise end up as second homes for summer visitors; (2.) that the land bank examines all prospective acquisitions to see if a portion could be, prior to closing, subdivided off for affordable housing; and (3.) that the land bank is very sympathetic to the housing crisis and that all are working together on it.

Susan Feller, on the subject of education, proposed the compilation of a history of case-studies — a record of how the island's conservation groups successfully worked together to conserve particular properties.

Hearing no additional comment, Mrs. Goff closed the public input session.

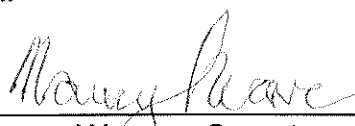
ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANT

The Commission endorsed Warrant no. 2023-18.

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 4:27 pm.

certification:



Nancy Weaver, Secretary