

Minutes of the meeting of the TOCI Sunset Committee, Monday January 20, 2014 at 5:30 at the Historical Society

Present: Donna Damon, Mary Holt (Chair), Beth Howe, Will Lund, Thor Peterson, Susan Stranahan, John Wilson

Absent: Paul Belesca, Tom Calder, Ken Hamilton, Sam McLean, Carol Sebastianski

The meeting was called to order at 5:40

Mary said she talked with Peter Maher and forwarded to him information regarding the Sunset property and committee's charge. Peter said we need to have accurate information regarding access to the property - where and what kind. He said evaluating the property would identify the limitations of the property, which would determine possible uses. Peter shared we could investigate the total cost of evaluating the property and the BOS could determine an amount they are willing to ask the community for in the 2014-2015 budget. However much we get in the next fiscal year's budget will determine how much we will be able to do.

She had an email from Paul Belesca who talked with Barney Baker who designs marine projects and has worked on Chebeague. Baker offered to put together a draft budget and outline of the early steps in the project. He said that the state has coastal planning grants. These may be the same as or different from the Federal government's planning grants for small harbors. Donna said that the grant cycle for that starts in the fall. The Town needs to provide a match, and that could be put in the budget this year.

Mary also talked with Michelle Clancy at Maine Title Search about the cost of a title search. Maine Title charges \$350 per property, which is significantly less than a title search Paul shared with the committee at the last meeting. We would probably have to do searches for both the Sunset Parcel and Stewart's parcel since the road easement is the complicated part and it runs through his land. Donna said she has all the title papers up to 2006. This would help whomever does the title search. Thor asked what the road easement issue is, and when the current road had been laid out or first used. Donna said she thought it might date back to when the initial subdivision plan was done. Elizabeth Street goes directly to the shore. The problem is that we do not know whether the existing road really follows any of the plotted streets in the subdivision.

Michelle also recommended talking with James Nadeau who is a land surveyor. So Mary did, and he has given us an estimate of from \$8,000 to \$11,000 for a long list of tasks included in a land survey. He said he could also find a marine surveyor to do that part, as well as oversee the work, but that would be an additional cost to the estimate he gave. Mary said that in general, she hoped for estimates for the land survey, the marine survey and the management of the survey process. Nadeau said he would be willing to come out to make a presentation to the Selectmen at a budget hearing.

John said that what we are doing is just preliminary. When we are ready, the selectmen will send the contract out to bid. Mary said Nadeau had said he would be interested in being on the list for a bid packet.

Donna said that the survey should not just focus on access to Sunset, but should survey all the paper streets beyond the Sunset parcel in the original subdivision so that the Town would have that information to make decisions on whether to assert or give up their claims in the various streets.

Thor asked what paper streets are. Donna explained that they are streets on a subdivision map that were never built. Mary said that there had actually been two different subdivision plans for this area that Donna had described at the first meeting.

Donna asked whether we should also talk with other firms like Royal River Surveying in order to get another ball-park estimate. John said he thought not. At this point we are only gathering information to make a budget estimate. He also said he thought that the marine survey might be less expensive since it would primarily involve developing the bathymetry, which would be fairly straightforward. This would also provide information about the surface of the bottom. Core samples going deeper would not be done until later in the process. Donna said she thought we should also include studying the winds in this budget.

The construction people would know what marine surveyors are around and their quality. Mary said that rather than make a specific list of what we think we may want surveyed, these professionals can really tell us what we need, including things we might not have thought about. And it may be possible to tell from their responses how good they might be.

Will said we should also think now about our presentation to the Selectmen. Are they likely to be resistant to spending this money? We can make the case for it being Town land so that whatever the Town may be interested in doing with the parcel, these surveys would tell them what it may and may not be suitable for.

Donna said she thought the land survey should be done first, before the marine one, since any marine use would depend on being able to use the land. But we should ask for all the surveying in this budget. It may be a lot of money, but if the surveys cost less, the money will not all be used. Otherwise, if we ask for part, the whole project will go along incrementally. Susan agreed, doing it in pieces would mean there would be a year in between each step.

John said that the process will be iterative. He would also like to see the committee do some early public opinion surveying about what island people would like to see done with the Sunset parcel. Of course that would depend partly on the cost of the options. Donna said we need concrete information about the costs for people to think clearly about their preferences. John said it would still be useful to get information about what people think is needed, not just for this parcel but for all Town lands. They can be asked about things like how important congestion at the Stone Wharf is and how much they think the Town needs to conserve land.

Both Mary and Donna said this committee should not go too far afield. Thor said he thought we should just ask bluntly what people want to see at Sunset.

Donna said that people always want to know the cost of options. There are probably a few people who would want a wharf regardless of the cost, and a few others who would want the land conserved forever wild. But most people are not so clear. This is a chicken and egg problem.

Mary said she thought the first public meeting would come after the surveys were done. We could lay out the characteristics of the land and water and what limiting factors there are. This would suggest what appropriate/feasible uses would be. Donna said that really the first public meeting will be Town Meeting this year. Donna said she did not want to lose track of John's idea of surveying people.

Susan said what we need most is real information on options for the selectmen and the community; not just hot air. Otherwise we will be going in circles. We need to advance the ball on this with modest expenditures to get information.

Donna said there is \$10,000 in the paper streets fund now. Maybe the thing to do would be to just start in March with that money and have the land survey done before Town Meeting. We could propose this at the February 12 meeting with the selectmen. John agreed. Donna said that doing this early work would help to sell the rest of the surveying, such as the marine survey.

Mary asked Donna what paper streets work she has done and what still needs to be done. Donna said that Sunset is the largest of the remaining paper street projects.

John asked whether the survey work could be included in a small harbors planning grant. Donna said that would take too long, we need to start sooner. And having the Town pay for survey work would show the Federal review panel that we have been willing to take the initial work on our own.

John moved to ask the Selectmen to use the paper street money for a survey, Will seconded the motion and everyone agreed with the idea.

Paul talked with Barney Baker who might be interested in providing an estimate for the marine survey work. Those present suggested other firms that might be contacted about this part of the survey:

- Prock, marine construction (Steve Durrell)
- Kleinschmidt, wind survey for Stone Wharf
- Waterman, construction like Prock
- Reed, another marine contractor
- Cimbro, though this would be very small for them
- Custom Float (Charley Poole), which does lots of work out here on private piers.

Mary said that between now and our February meeting someone has to call marine surveyors. **Sam McLean who could not come tonight had volunteered to do work for the next meeting. Thor said he would also be willing to work on this.** Donna suggested looking on the web, not for “marine surveyors” who do boats, but marine facilities planning and engineering. John suggested talking with Charley Poole at Custom Float. He works with lots of people and should be able to suggest people to do the survey. Mary suggested that Thor send the material we do have on Sunset to those interested in providing ballpark figures.

Donna asked John to flesh out his ideas about people surveys – what do people need and if we do Sunset as a landing, what should we be providing? We don’t want to repeat the problems that we have at the Stone Wharf – a wharf with many different users surrounded by a conservation area, for example. John said that at this time of year congestion at the Stone Wharf is not a problem, and summer people may have very different perceptions of need from year-round people. Donna countered that there can be parking congestion in the winter, too. Mary said that the Stone Wharf is also facing a real problem of flooding from climate change. The discussion became somewhat diffuse and Mary ended the meeting at 6:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Howe