

# Martha's Vineyard Beach Management Plan Working Group

## Meeting Summary

Session 1 | October 17, 2022 | 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM ET

### Meeting Objectives

- Introduction to the Beach Management Plan (BMP) Working Group (WG) members
- Establishment of group norms
- Collaborative Discussion and Input for for Working Group Process and Timeline

### Welcome & Overview of the Evening

Dorit Price-Levine, Consensus Building Institute, welcomes Working Group members to the first session of the BMP WG. She thanked everyone for their time to this process, and explained that everyone's participation will be important for rebuilding trust in the Trustees' BMP process. She reviewed the agenda, gave everyone an opportunity to introduce themselves and explain what community or organization they will represent on the WG. She then reviewed the agenda for the evening.

*To see the full list of WG members, attendance, and WG staff please see Appendix A.*

### Getting to Know One Another and Our Relationships on the Vineyard

Dorit then asked the WG members and Trustees staff to write down three moments in their lives that have shaped their relationship to Martha's Vineyard. After the silent reflection, WG members and Trustees moved into three breakout groups to discuss their memories, ask each other questions, and reflect on the importance on the island to everyone's lives.

One member noted that the most important thing is the ability to share perspectives, and that this was the beginning of what everyone hoped would be a process where we could move through the conflict with a shared understanding and respecting different opinions. Another member shared that he appreciated hearing one member's story about his children's experiences on the island, and that one reason the island is special is because kids can grow up in an environment that allows them to explore in a way that is reminiscent of older times. Another member agreed, noting that living on Cape Poge is transformational.

### Group Norms

Dorit thanked everyone for sharing their stories and willingness to be vulnerable during the first exercise. She then highlighted the importance of the working group having shared norms so people can feel comfortable, supported, and productive. She opened the conversation to the group, asking them “what makes you feel welcome and supported in the group?” and “what makes you feel like a group is productive?”

The question of anonymity of the group and their discussions was a large topic of conversation. While some felt it was incredibly important to be completely transparent with the community and what happens in meetings and what was said, others were worried that members of the group could mischaracterize their points and create tension between themselves and their neighbors. Ultimately, the group thought it was important that while the public has access to the discussion in the meetings through detailed but anonymous meeting summaries, WG members will only share what was said in the meeting without attribution.

*To see the full list of WG norms, please see Appendix B.*

The WG then took a break.

### **Where We Have Been**

After the break, Dorit invited the Trustees to speak about this process from their perspective. Darci Schofield, Island Director, Trustees, thanked everyone for their willingness to join the WG, and for giving part of their trust to this process. She appreciated people taking the time, in collaboration with The Trustees, to try and resolve this issue for the sake of the Island everyone loves. She acknowledged the amount of time the WG members were taking out of their life to do this, but that this process is a priority not just for the Island Trustees but for the whole statewide organization. Elizabeth noted that this input process is what should have been done from the outset, and that despite it not having initially happened, the Trustees are grateful to everyone for showing up and engaging now. She noted how invested the Trustees are in gathering input from the community and that they are willing to take however long it takes to get it right.

### **Where We Are Going**

Dorit thanked Darci and Elizabeth for their comments. She then gave an overview of the WG process and shared with the group that they would be moving into small breakout groups to provide input on the Draft Sessions document. She explained that the large spaces on the document were intended to denote space for feedback and that she hoped WG members would mark up the draft, cross pieces out, add new pieces, and move pieces around.

Everything in the document would be subject to change, as the hope was that decisions around the process would be collaborative. Before moving the group into breakout groups, she opened up the room for Q&A:

- Will there be opportunities for participation during the meetings with town officials and people coming in to teach us about the topics?
  - Dorit: Yes, we have also listed town staff and topic experts on the topic to come in and give a presentation.
- What is the time limit for the presenters?
  - Dorit: There is not a set time, but the conversation will be structured and they will have a time limit.
- Could the Trustees provide us the town regulations and guidelines we will be discussing ahead of time? Example, the State Wetlands Protection Act.
- All of the state and federal regulations can be found online, but these are incredibly exhaustive documents and it could be hard for people to know where to look for the relevant information.
  - Darci: we have a lot of expertise, so we can highlight the relevant parts of the guidelines so WG members know what pages to look at.
- A member noted that the DCPC has a 25 page document on their website that overlays all of the regulations and topics, and outlines how the previous BMP documents were written. This document only references Cape Poge.
- It is important to hear from the regulatory bodies what the laws are. What are the things we have to do, and what is the difference between a suggested guideline versus a hard guidepost that cannot be crossed? This way, we do not waste time talking about the hard guideposts, and we can focus on discussing guidelines that will answer questions for the public. Norton Point is different from the other points. Finally, we should remember that the town might make their own Beach Management Plan if this process is not successful.
- Who will be drafting this plan at the end of the day?
  - Dorit: The Trustees.
- A member emphasized that a concern of some WG members and the community is that the island is going to see a breakup of its entire management system. There are options and decisions for property owners who do not agree or like the Trustees' plan. The Trustees' should really think about the risk of losing our cohesive management system, because that would be a great loss.
- When does the first draft plan come into this process?

- Dorit: After Session 6, before the last public meeting. WG members will have an opportunity to submit electronic comments.
- Public safety, Harbor Master, and Municipal Harbor Planner need to be included in the sessions because they also have hard lines we need to follow. It is disappointing that it is not until Session 6 that we really talk about the priority topics.
- Is there a deadline in mind the Trustees have for the new plan?
  - Darci: March or April as stated on the Draft Sessions might be ambitious. We want to create enough space for this process to see itself through, and we will need some time to review all of this internally as an organization. We hope that people will give us grace if it is not ready by then.
- So, to confirm, there is no deadline other than ASAP?
  - No, that is the earliest deadline.
- Do you have an idea of how you will take electronic comments yet, like Google Docs?
  - We have not confirmed that.
- My concern is that in the WG we will come to a consensus on a topic, but then it will say something different in the draft BMP and we won't know until it's already drafted. We are concerned that the Trustees are not held to what we talk about here.
- One member suggested that we take the first draft, parse out the topics that were contentious to discuss in the working group, and leave the other things that were working well. I wish this was more of a drafting process as a group. We should be working off of the original document, not completely starting from scratch.
  - Darci: There were objections across the board, so we thought it would be a good idea to take a step back and start again. Many people do not want to work from the original plan.
- The original plan was not complete because there were things missing. It will be important for this group to define a finished plan as we give input.
- One member suggested we begin by starting with the things the group actually agrees on, because with the topics proposed, it's hard to see how a plan will be drafted at the end of this.

*To see the Draft Sessions document, please see Appendix C.*

Dorit thanked everyone for their feedback. She gave the group three minutes to silently mark up their copy of the Draft Sessions, and then broke everyone into three breakout groups to discuss their final thoughts. Here are the takeaways from the small group discussions:

*Process:*

- We need to be seeing some type of work product throughout so we know there is a tangible thing happening with our thoughts.
- There is an imbalance of meetings before vs. after the release of the new draft. There should be more WG meetings after the new draft plan is developed to allow for feedback and discussion.
- There is too much time listening and learning, and not enough time for us to share our thoughts and have discussions.
- The Trustees and WG should look at comparison cases to look for ideas and solutions.
- Being flexible with our time is good and important so that we can be adaptive to different issues and conversations.
- We need to focus discussion on the already named points of contention on the plan. Focusing so much on regulations will be a waste of time.
- Let's discuss lack of staff and current signage on the properties.

### *Regulation*

- We should hear from the state first, because the town is bound by the state.
- Because all the regulations will interlink, we should hear from everyone at the first session so we have all the regulations as a baseline for conversation.
- The term "regulation" needs to be clarified. What is the difference between regulation, rules, guidelines, etc.

### *Values*

- The town should tell us their values in terms of resource protection, as should the county and state.
- We need to hear from The Trustees their set of values, their mission, their role and responsibility in stewardship, and their mandate to stop at the low water.
- The Trustees need to be considerate of all of the people they invite to Cape Poge and how they will hold them accountable to being respectful to the land and residents.

### *Resilience + Data Needs*

- Knowing what to expect with climate change is crucial (both the sea level rise and the wildlife)
- We need to know how much beach will be left in the next 25 years.
- If sea level rise is going to happen, is there any flexibility in moving the train systems?
- The plan should look at and be responsive to the current usage data and future usage projections for MV beaches.

- We need to look at the impacts of the Trustees facilities, operations, and property visitors on local communities and residents.
- We should identify species that have to be protected, and only focus on those.
- Some WG members requested information from The Trustees about the revenues and costs of managing the beach.

### *Public Engagement*

- Important that the public know what we are doing.
- What about the original inhabitants of Chappaquiddick - specifically the indigenous community - how will they be involved?

### **Close and Next Steps**

Dorit thanked everyone for their thoughtful feedback and considerations on the topics discussed in the meeting. For the last activity, she asked everyone to go around and name an intention they had for themselves in this process, or a hope they have for the WG.

- Objective at seeking clarity
- Seek to do the best things we can do with what we have available
- Work meaningfully to effectuate change
- Intend to come to each meeting with an open mind
- Community
- Speak out more
- Remain open to other people's opinions
- Understand the process
- Listen
- Listen + Learn
- Find shared understanding on the basic facts and rules/where we have boundaries
- Not interrupt other people
- Gain and continue momentum

Dorit closed the meeting with the following next steps:

- CBI and Trustees will rework the Draft Sessions based on everyone's feedback.
- CBI will write up a meeting summary and send it to WG members for review along with a link to the project website.
- Materials will be posted to the website for public access.

## **Appendix A: Working Group Members and Attendance**

### Working Group Members Present

Peter Sliwkowski, MV Beach Access Group

Liz Olson, BioDiversity Works

Mark Osler, Cape Poge Resident

Martina Thornton, MV Commission

Bill Brine, Partial Landowner, Cape Poge

Ross Kessler, MA Division of Marine Fisheries

Chris Kennedy, Consultant

Nina Coleman, Town of Barnstable

Ray Williams, Vice President, Tribal Council

Megan Landeck, Chappaquiddick Resident and Chappaquiddick Island Association

Rachel Self, DCPC Representative

Darci Schofield, The Trustees

Elizabeth McDonough, The Trustees

Russell Hopping, The Trustees

### **Working Group Staff**

Dorit Price-Levine, Consensus Building Institute

Nate Lash, Consensus Building Institute

Simenesh Semine, Consensus Building Institute

## Appendix B: Group Norms

### Martha's Vineyard Beach Management Plan Working Group

Fall/Winter 2022

Draft Group Norms

This list of group norms was developed after the first session of the Martha's Vineyard Beach Management Plan (BMP) Working Group (WG) based on input from members about what would make this group productive and how they would like to engage with each other and be supported as members.

This group will be most effective, collaborative, and successful if:

- The group is transparent with information to ensure members are working from the same set of facts and information.
- The group hears from everyone and members share airtime across the group.
- The group engages with curiosity while listening to others, especially dissenting voices.
- Members commit to working towards shared goals and objectives.
- Members allow themselves to be facilitated by CBI.

Group members agree to:

- Having one conversation at a time without interrupting or engaging in side conversations.
- Being open to disagreement and engaging in critical discourse about ideas without attacking people or getting personal.
- Assuming positive intent and good will from each other.
- Listening to others' perspectives with respect and curiosity.
- Maintaining anonymity when discussing Working Group activities with non-Working Group members - sharing what was said without identifiable information or attribution to the member who said it.

CBI agrees to:

- Regularly remind members of the group norms and agreements to keep the group accountable and promote positive and productive conversations.
- Develop a clear set of goals and objectives for each meeting.
- Make space for opposing views and diverse perspectives.
- Pause conversations on side topics or discussions that are not productive and put them on the "ferry" to return to at a later time.



- Create and share detailed meeting summaries with the group for members to review and provide comment on before they are posted publicly.

## **Appendix C: Draft Session**

### **DRAFT of Sessions for Beach Management Plan Working Group**

**Session 1 | Mon 10/17, 5:15-8:30 PM | In-person at the Old Whaling Church in Edgartown**

**Topic:** Relationship Building, Process Design

**Session 2 | Thurs 11/10, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Zoom**

**Topic:** Community Perspective and Compliance with Local Regulations

**Presenters:** Town of Edgartown (James Haggerty (Town Manager) and Jane Varkonda (Conservation Commission), Rob Morrison (Edgartown Shellfish Constable) and Ralph Peckham (Edgartown Deputy Shellfish Constable)

**Session 3 | Thurs 12/1, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Zoom**

**Topic:** State Regulations Regarding Coast and Wetlands

**Presenters:** Dan Gilmore (MA Dept. of Environmental Protection | Coastal Zone Mgmt. | Chief of Wetlands & Waterways, Bureau of Water Resources)

**Session 4 | Thurs 12/22, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Zoom**

**Topic:** State Regulations Regarding Climate Change and Beach Ecosystems

**Presenter:** Steve McKenna (Cape & Islands Regional Coordinator at Mass Coastal Zone Management)

**Session 5 | Thurs 1/12, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Zoom**

**Topic:** State Regulations Regarding Endangered Species

**Presenter:** Eve Schluter (Associate Director of MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program), Carolyn (Coastal Waterbird Ecologist)

**PUBLIC MEETING | One evening during week of 1/16 | Zoom**

**Session 6 | Thurs 2/2, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Zoom**

**Topic:** Areas of Consensus and Disagreement Regarding OSV Use, Dogs,, and more.

**PUBLIC MEETING | One evening in March or April | Zoom**

