



P. O. Box 121
Cotuit, MA 02635

Minutes
Concerns of Cotuit Meeting, Wednesday May 18, 8:30 AM
Freedom Hall

Present: James Dannhauser, Carol Zais, Natalie Spence, **Tom** Burgess, Lallie Lloyd, Phil Oence, Mark Stranberg, Kris Sexton, Lisa Vasiloff

Absent: Len Carter, Mike Scanlon

Guests: Mark Ells, Town Manager; Matt Levesque, Town Council President; Jessica Rapp Grasseti, Precinct 7 Town Councilor; Dan Santos, DPW Administrator; David Anthony, Asset Management; Elizabeth Jenkins, Planning and Development; Derek Lawson, Marine Affairs; John Gleason, Recreation Dept.; Matthew Sonnabend, Chief of Police; Police Sergeants McKenna and Perry, Traffic Control.

Jim Dannhauser welcomed Mark Ells and other guests to the meeting at 8:30 AM.

Staffing: Mark Ells prefaced comments on the “Concerns of Cotuit” with a review of the staffing shortage which the Town is currently experiencing. Many departments are staffed significantly less than capacity, and the prospects for gaining full staffing are not good, despite active advertising of openings. The Town will do everything it can to provide services, but there will be lag times and gaps because of this reality.

- 1. Cotuit Elementary School Property:** The Town continues to be actively involved in these negotiations. The cost of demolition of the building was still estimated in the last CIP prepared by the Town at circa \$960,000. A more accurate figure may be obtained from comparison with the actual cost of demolishing the Marstons Mills School. Board members expressed concern about the state of the field at this site. It was suggested that volunteers might be able to help repair the damage to the field and help maintain it. Town officials welcomed this suggestion with the proviso that safety and insurance considerations had to be addressed when any project was proposed.
- 2. Local Comprehensive Planning Committee:** Mark Ells explained that the composition of the committee was entirely his doing: a format of 1 representative from each village and then representatives from various boards and committees regardless of locale in the Town. Board members suggested that poor optics resulted from the fact that 3 villages had only 1 representative on the LCPC. Discussion ensued concerning the role of the committee and opportunities for public input. The Committee is charged with producing the document to be reviewed and accepted by the Town Council prior to submission to the Cape Cod Commission. The document will be drafted by consultants and members of the Town Planning and Development Dept. after comprehensive and multi-faceted outreach to all sectors of the Town, geographical, social, industrial etc. It will then be reviewed and edited by the LCPC. Planning and Development will ensure that there are many opportunities for the public to give input both in public meetings and via communication with local Town Councilors and others.
- 3. Beaches:** Lallie Lloyd will contact Conservation to review what a volunteer group might be able to

do to clear the public beach area of Ropes from unwanted vegetation. Mark Stranberg will form a volunteer plan for Riley's to rake the beach. Dan Santos can provide for removal of the shells as necessary. The Town is undertaking to staff the beaches with lifeguards, but staffing issues are significant in this area despite the fact the Town offers competitive salaries. It is hoped that there will be lifeguards at Loop Beach and a parking attendant, but that will depend on staffing levels achieved. At a minimum, there will be an attendant. It was suggested that signage be added to that existing at Ropes, Town Dock and Loop advising of State restrictions on idling vehicles. Mark Ells asked that the Town DPW take a look at that possibility.

4. **Town Dock:** Funds are available, and designs are in process to structurally enhance the dock for heavy vehicles. This will go in the next Town CIP. Businesses using the dock have adapted to the presence of the bollard preventing vehicle access and have developed useable workarounds for the time being.
5. **Traffic and Noise:** New stop signs and crosswalks have helped slow traffic somewhat. Raised crosswalks may come but do present their own traffic problems. Metrics on traffic, speeding, noise etc. are developed through phone calls to the police. The general number for the police is 508-775-0812. Police are short staffed and required to work over extra terrain; thus, timely communication via phone is the best way to get attention. For other concerns, communication via the Town's website is efficient and should generate a response. Emails to the Town Manager are referred to departments and will generate acknowledgement.
 - A. **Landscaper vehicles:** In cases where these are really a dangerous obstruction, inform the police by phone.
 - B. **Rte. 28/Santuit-Newtown Road:** This is a state project, but the Town is pushing to get this moving, considering the availability of infrastructure funds. Local input and support from the Civic Association is necessary and appreciated. It was also observed that some attention needs to be paid as well to the intersections of Main Street and Route 28.
 - C. **Lowell/Putnam traffic island:** Large vehicles and vehicles with trailers either ignore the signage here or ride up over the southern corner of the island to make a left turn from Lowell onto Putnam. The island is a Veteran's Memorial and cannot be moved. Dan Santos recommends removing the current signage. Board members suggested that simply removing the southern edge of the island somewhat would alleviate the problem. David Anthony and Carol Zais visited the site after the meeting, and David will pass on some ideas for improvement to Dan Santos
 - D. **Sidewalk repair:** This is done as funds and staffing allow. Board members will undertake to notify DPW of areas that need attention in this regard.

Noise: Phil Oden presented his review of noise ordinances in other Massachusetts towns and his solicitation of input from other villages in the Town of Barnstable. The primary offenders are leaf blowers. Matt Levesque noted that each village in Barnstable has such a distinct geography and building pattern that finding unanimity on this subject would be difficult. There was some agreement that working locally with neighbors and landscapers might help alleviate the overuse of leaf blowers and other noisy equipment.

6. **Salt on roads:** Salt is used on Town roads to clear them of snow and provide a bare surface for vehicles, which is the stated goal of the Town. Sand is not used as it bounces off the road and is only useful where snow-packed roads are allowed. Other melting agents than salt cannot be used as they contain nitrogen, which is our major fouling agent. The Town is aware of Cotuit Water District concerns in areas where it presents an impact on wells.
7. **Private Roads:** The Town undertakes to plow all public ways and provide emergency maintenance

to private roads where necessary. This is an area where use of the Town website to report problems can be very helpful. 40% of the roads in the Town are private and many are poorly maintained. This presents a real challenge to the Town. The last time the Town took private roads and made them public, the Council failed to provide the funds for their maintenance in the budget. This effectively lessened the willingness to take roads public. The Town will hold a workshop on private roads this summer as the impact of infrastructure/sewer development in this sector is significant. Public input will be solicited and encouraged.

8. **Memorial Park:** This is in the queue for refurbishment. Mark Ells will investigate getting a final design developed in order that application may be made to the Community Preservation Committee for funds to support this project.
9. **July 4th Parade:** Jim Dannhauser thanked the chief for his support in the past. Traffic control will be on hand for this year's parade. Dan Santos will have DPW deliver the cones and barriers to the Fire Station ahead of the date.
10. **Joint Base Cape Cod:** The company with which the Town is working to take over the sewage facility at this site is moving toward purchase as evidenced by the federal register. At the moment studies are being undertaken to see whether and where the wastewater from this proposed facility might be disposed. The Town continues to be invested in these studies but will make a choice to do what is the most economical. Communication to our state representative, Kip Diggs, is important to push forward state funding and permitting for embayment remediation.