

Gay Head Lighthouse Advisory Board
Notes of Meeting 1-3-18
Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Len Butler, Richard Skidmore, Elise LeBovit, Jim Pickman*, Kathy Rainey *, Betsey Mayhew
*on conference phone

Others Present: Selectman Gary Haley, Phil Wallis, Ally Reed, Sandra Melkonian, Jay Macleod

- The meeting began at 4:35pm

- First on the agenda was a review of the 12/7/17 minutes. There was brief discussion on amendments to the minutes. Len stated that minutes are supposed to reflect only what is said at the meeting and not how people remember the meeting afterwards. Kathy stated that she had intended to relay the Condo Association's comments on the Planning Board's decision for the Lighthouse operation/management. Len asked for Kathy to forward any letter from the Condo Association to the Committee so that it can be read into the meeting and taken under advisement. Kathy said that it wasn't a formal letter but will relay this to the Condo Association to see if they want to send a statement. Elise didn't remember Richard stating that he would take responsibility of the donation jars and felt that it should be discussed. Len entertained a motion to table the minutes to the next meeting. Motion was moved by Richard and seconded by Elise.
The Board voted 5-0. The motion passed.

- Next on the agenda under Old Business was a review of accounts. Len noted that Jim was traveling and would be calling in later to the meeting. Jim had emailed Len his report for the accounts. Len reported that there had been a \$125.00 contribution from somewhere and that there was not much change to the account with approximately \$14,800.00 in the bank. In addition, there is \$3,000.00 being held by the Permanent Endowment that can be drawn from. Len also informed everyone that there is \$30,000.00 in CPC funds to put towards restoration.

- Next under Old Business, Richard gave a Lighthouse and Park report. There was not much to report on. Richard noted that the New Year's celebration went well aside from the cold weather. He still has concern with the lack of grass growth. Len will schedule a meeting with Landscape to discuss remedies. Len discussed the LUCIP inspection form that needs to be completed. Richard and Len will get the form to Jeffrey to complete and submit. Betsey asked if the Town had been contacted by the National Parks Service concerning the annual report for Lighthouse visitation and programming. The Board will inform Jeffrey to be on the lookout for this.

- Next under Old Business was a restoration update. Len informed everyone that International Chimney Corp. will most likely begin phase 2 of the restoration in late March or early April of this year. Richard hopes that part of the third phase will include glass work in the light room. There was discussion on what needs to be done to stabilize the Lighthouse. The Board at this time held off on discussion to call Jim. Jim entered the meeting at 4:50pm. The meeting resumed. There was discussion on where a \$125.00 contribution came from. Sibel had informed Jim that the money came from Elise. Elise said she had brought in more than \$125.00.

- Next under Old Business, the Board discussed fund raising and grant research. The Board briefly discussed Kathy Olsen's grant calendar. Len discussed and answered the questions that Kathy had asked of the Board at the previous meeting. In response to Kathy's questions the Board agreed on the following: The Town would be applying for the funds/grants, restoration is the top priority for funds right now, past grantors have been Mass Historic, Mass Cultural Council, Farm Neck and Permanent Endowment, the only two grantors that denied the Town are National Park Service (Marine Preservation Grants) and the Lighthouse Society. The Board will schedule a meeting with Kathy at the next meeting. Kathy's invoice of \$360.00 was reviewed. Richard noted that Kathy felt that the grant calendar was complete. Richard made a motion to approve and pay Kathy Olsen's invoice in the amount of \$360.00. Elise seconded. The Board voted 6-0. The motion passed. Len will sign the invoice and submit it for payment. Elise asked if Kathy had indicated if she had time to work on the grants. Richard said that she hadn't mentioned that, but she had implied that if she had time she would like to try and help apply for the grants. Len informed the Board that Liz Witham could not give her t-shirt sales report and will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

- Next on the agenda under New Business was the review of the financial analysis for the 2018 season visitor operations. The Board reviewed the reports comparing the 2017 season revenue and expenses with the Museum operating the Lighthouse and a projection of 2018 revenue if the Town were to take over Lighthouse operations. Elise stated that she didn't agree with how the reports were compiled. Elise passed out her report comparing the projected budget of the Lighthouse for 2018 without Museum management and the 2017 Museum budget. She noted that her reports only focused on expenses associated with running the tours (advertising, payroll, salaries and supplies). Elise continued to state that the Board should focus only on expenses and revenue of the tours and what the cost and profit could be for another entity to run the tours. She felt that the DPW grounds and maintenance and the Light Keeper salary didn't relate to the cost of running tours because the Town owns the Lighthouse and those expenses are out of the Town budget and a different category from tours. Len stated that the Board should be focusing on what it fiscally means to the Town in terms of revenue if another entity took over Lighthouse operations, which would include analyzing management and maintenance costs. There was discussion on Elise's report and a brief discussion on the breakdown of the Museum's 2017 budget. Len noted that he had projected \$10,000.00 for administration and that Elise had cut that budget in half in her report. Elise explained that she had given raises to the employees (increasing the salary budget) assuming that, one of the employees would be administrating as well but that her numbers were close to Len's report. Jim asked if Len and Elise's reports were comparable, to which the answer was no because Elise's report did not include maintenance expenses. There was a brief discussion regarding the differential amount between the Museum budget and the projected Towns budget if the Town were to manage the Lighthouse. Jim noted that the differential amount would be approximately \$15,000.00 to \$16,000.00 and he questioned whether that amount would be the key point in the Selectmen's decision and whether the amount is worth the Town taking over operations. Elise stated that it is time for the Town to run the Lighthouse. She added that the Lighthouse management wasn't run well under the Museum. In addition, she noted that there would be more flexibility and creativity in generating revenue from the Lighthouse if the Town took over management. Betsey clarified that the license fee that the Town pays the Museum is for visitor operations only and that Town is wide open for other revenue opportunities separate from the Museum and of course within the guidelines of the Planning Board. There was more discussion on the differential amount between the Town and another entity running the Lighthouse. Richard noted the difference is roughly \$19,500.00. Elise stated that it was more like \$20,000.00.

Ally Reed, Museum employee and Lighthouse guide, spoke about the 2017 Lighthouse season and

discussed the minutes of the previous GHLAB meeting. In reviewing the minutes, Ally discussed the efficiency and dedication of the staff. As for the ability of taking credit cards which was spoken about in the last meeting, Ally stated that once the retail sales went away there was less need for a credit card machine. Ally also informed the Board that the staff did keep a detailed tally sheet for visitor numbers. She showed the Board a copy of the sheet pointing out the different columns. In addition, she stated that the Museum was a great employer and is always discussing ways to collaborate with the ACC and Aquinnah's Cultural District. Len stated that he felt that the staff this past season was exceptional. He asked Ally how she would characterize how the Lighthouse was managed in the 2017 season. Ally stated that one of the challenges was scheduling. In addition, Ally felt that it was difficult finding volunteers for sunset and that maybe there was a conversation to be had on paying staff for those hours. Len agreed and discussed his hope for the Town to manage the Lighthouse. He discussed the idea that the Lighthouse could be managed in conjunction with the Aquinnah Cultural District and perhaps the Selectmen would hire someone to administer all the activities in the Circle. Ultimately, Len stated that the decision on who runs the Lighthouse in the coming year is before the Selectmen and that the Board's responsibility is to present the facts to the Selectmen. Elise asked Len why he felt that the Town wasn't ready to manage the Lighthouse. Elise continued to state that the Board should be given the opportunity to make a business plan to present to the Town. Elise then asked Ally and Sandra why the guides couldn't count the number of paying visitors and if there was a way to implement a checks and balance system. Jim stated that he didn't understand why the Board was discussing these matters. Elise stated that it was a good opportunity to ask the guides their opinions on what worked and didn't work this season. Ally answered Elise's question and stated that she didn't know how to improve the system in terms of counting people other than what they already do. Sandra felt that another staffer would have to be hired to manage a cash register and give receipts. Again, Len stated that the Board is only tasked with giving the Selectmen the facts and that the decision is in the hands of the Selectmen. He further stated that what Elise was discussing was more appropriate for the Selectmen at their meeting. Elise felt that once the Town takes over the Lighthouse management there will be a whole new sense of pride and involvement and she stated that the Lighthouse is like the Statue of Liberty to the Town. Elise stated that she knew people for a fact that want to work for the Town and do not want to work for the Museum and that it is nothing personal. She stated that the Town had told taxpayers that it wouldn't be asking for money when the Lighthouse was purchased and in turn it has been that the Town has had to use that money. Len stated that the Lighthouse is not costing taxpayers money.

Jay Macleod asked for clarification on the lease with the museum. Len discussed the process of the license and stated that if the Selectmen decided not to take over the Lighthouse then the management/operation would have to go back out to bid. Jay felt that if another entity, other than the Town, managed the Lighthouse then the synergy in the Aquinnah Cultural District is somewhat lost. Richard informed Jay that the Town was approved as a Cultural District and that everything with the Circle gets promoted as such and it will not change regardless of who runs the Lighthouse. There was discussion on the 2018 Museum budget, specifically the advertising line item and whether it included promotion of the Aquinnah Cultural District. It was noted that the Museum's budget for advertising is prorated. However, Ally and Sandra informed Jay that they do hand out pamphlets to visitors including the Town's Aquinnah Cultural District pamphlet and that they promote the Town. Jay expressed concern with the Museum running the Lighthouse and promoting it separately from the Aquinnah Cultural District. Richard told Jay that entities within the circle will promote themselves but that the Town is working on a pamphlet to promote all activities within the circle and Cultural District. Phil Wallis, MV Museum, stated that the role of the Museum is to promote the Lighthouse, the Town, and all the elements within the Town. He further stated that the Museums roll is to help drive traffic up to Aquinnah. Phil stated that the Museum is here to help

the Town in any way the Town sees fit. Elise asked Phil why there isn't someone on site if the Town is paying the Museum to administer the Lighthouse. Elise stated that the Museum should support the Town in running the Lighthouse and any extra money to be made should go to the Town who is supporting the Lighthouse. Len stated that the Town is looking for an amicable separation of management and not a divorce from the Museum. He continued to state that the Town is about to lose a very valued Town employee who managed a lot of material in the Town and there will be a void that will need to be filled by the current administration. Len continued to state that there is a new Town Administrator who has a lot on his plate already. Len stated that this decision is up to the Selectmen and whether they feel the staff is ready to add this responsibility to the administration and if they feel they can get the right people in place 6 months from now. Elise stated that the Clerk and the Town Administrator don't have anything to do with the Lighthouse and Len's statement wasn't fair. Len asked who would be in charge to administer this all, to which Elise responded the person that the Selectmen would hire. Elise stated that it is sad that Len has not given encouragement for the Town to run the Lighthouse. Len stated that it is not his decision and he does hope to see the Town run the Lighthouse.

- With no other business to discuss the Board agreed to meet again Wednesday, January 31st, 2018 at 4:00 pm. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

The Board voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

- The meeting ended at 6:06 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Welch
Board Administrative Assistant*