

Aquinnah Planning Board Plan Review Committee Meeting – February 8th, 2022

Members Present: Sarah Thulin, Jim Mahoney, Jim Wallen, Berta Welch, Jo Ann Eccher, Isaac Taylor
Not Present: Tom Murphy, Jim Newman

Also Present: Peter Dourmashkin, Leonard Bell, Matt Knipmeyer, Carlos Montoya, Lawrence Bell, Nathaniel Wice, Peter Temple, Naomi Camper, Marsha Shifrin, Tom Seeman, David & Betsy Wice, Clarke Camper, Jack Fruchtmann, Jill Gross, Nancy Slate

Meeting was held via videoconference on Zoom

Meeting opened at 6:36pm

Public Hearing: Town of Aquinnah within the Moshup Trail Right of Way Special Permit request to selectively clear and mow fifteen (15) oceanside segments within the Moshup Trail right of way to increase oceanside vistas within the Moshup Trail DCPC.

Berta was recused. On behalf of the Select Board/Town (owner and applicant), Carlos Montoya and Peter Temple presented the proposed project: selective cutting and mowing of 13 view channels within the Moshup Trail town owned 20ft right of way; proposed locations were between the old Stevenson driveway and MV Land Bank beach entrance; only 8 that are potentially actionable are between Maple Hill Drive and the old Stevenson driveway; all native plants would be saved and protected (Carlos Montoya will flag all species of interest); proposed view channels would receive one mowing per year when plants are dormant; mowing equipment will be a tractor with a boom mower reaching as far into the areas as needed; next permitting steps include approval from Select Board for approval of warrant article, review by Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program (NHESP) and Conservation Commission; work would begin December 2022 into January 2023 when plants are dormant. Peter reminded the Committee that a similar project had been approved and completed in 2004 but was a onetime only project and the vegetation has since grown back, and the view channels have been blocked again. The new proposal seeks to open up channels all along Moshup Trail, is a more thorough clearing, will go further in where necessary and will provide ongoing maintenance so that the view channels will be maintained in perpetuity.

The Committee made the following comments and concerns: project is an opportunity to make a long-lasting improvement to the community and for visitors and will allow people to appreciate the natural and sensitive environment that the community values; potential miss perception from town residents that the project will enhance the view for people who live on Moshup Trail given that the project is being presented by Moshup Trail residents, however, the people who travel on that road the most value the views the most and most residences are set back from the road and already have a view; potential areas and shoulders that would create safety issues (steep drop offs); supervision of cutting to make sure cutting falls with the delineated areas (Carlos volunteered to be supervisor); NHESP needs to be part of the notice of intent to Con Comm; minimizing exposure of parking lots; and clearing of curve area near the old Stevenson property and existing safety issues.

Abutters expressed the following concerns: sensitivity of cutting/mowing to streambeds (areas are already off limit to cutting); potential creation of traffic hazards (drivers not paying attention to road and cars stopping in road).

Hearing no other comments, Jim W entertained a motion to approve the project with the following conditions: approval by Conservation Commission and NHESP, supervision of cutting by Carlos Montoya identifying native species not to be touched under any circumstances (all species to be saved will be flagged), clearing/cutting will be done as needed within the town Moshup Trail Right of Way, and protection of opening areas of manmade areas such as parking lots. Motion was moved by Jo Ann and seconded by Jim M. The PBPRC voted 5-0-1, motioned passed. Berta abstained.

Public Hearing: Island Housing Trust (applicant) of 939 State Road Map 5 Lot 170. Special Permit request to site and construct two affordable duplexes each consisting of one 2-bedroom apartment and one 1-bedroom apartment where total footprint on the lot will exceed 2,000sf. Jo Ann was recused. Applicant requested to continue the hearing to the next available meeting. Sarah motioned to continue hearing to March 15th, 2022, at 6:30pm (time not definite). Jim M seconded. The PBPRC voted 5-0-1, motioned passed. Jo Ann abstained.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:16pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Welch, Board Administrative Assistant*