

Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority Advisory Board

Present: Lenny Jason*, Chilmark; Mark Snider, Edgartown; Elaine Miller*, Tisbury; Bob Wasserman, West Tisbury; Angela Gompert, VTA; Lauren Thomas, VTA; Phillipe Jordi*, Island Housing Trust

With the absence of a chairperson, Ms. Gompert called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

Public Comments: None, no members of the public present.

Election of Officers:

Ms. Gompert updated the Board that Alice Butler had retired from her position at the Town of Oak Bluffs effective 6/30/22 and that we no longer had a chairperson. Ms. Gompert stated that Oak Bluffs and Aquinnah do not have representation on the Board. Ms. Miller stated she did not find that acceptable, and would like to push to get those seats filled. After discussion, it was determined that the Board will revisit this next month, now that the busy summer season is ending, with a tentative deadline of 11/1/2022 for the seats to be filled.

Ms. Gompert stated that the Advisory Board needed to elect a Chair and a Clerk. After a brief discussion, Mr. Snider made a motion to elect Elaine Miller as the Chair of the Board, Mr. Wasserman 2nd. [MSC] Ms. Miller made a motion to elect Bob Wasserman as the Clerk of the Advisory Board, Mr. Snider 2nd. [MSC]

Lenny Jason arrived at 9:12 AM.

Minutes:

Ms. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of November 5, 2021. Mr. Wasserman 2nd. [MSC]

Ms. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2022. Mr. Wasserman 2nd. Mr. Jason abstained. [MSC]

Old/New Business

Year Round Employee Housing: Ms. Gompert introduced Phillipe Jordi of Island Housing Trust (IHT). She stated that the previously discussed Plantingfield Way site in Edgartown fell through, but another opportunity arose in Tisbury at 25 Lobster Alley. Ms. Gompert said the property has great potential for the VTA, as it is in a good location, has parking and the ability to build future dwellings. Currently, the property has a four bedroom dwelling that needs work; the tentative arrangement is that IHT would purchase the property from the seller; VTA would then purchase the physical dwelling for \$1.1M from IHT which would include a ground lease and complete the needed repairs. The VTA would then work with IHT to develop up to four other dwellings on the property, to be purchased at cost at a later date. These dwellings would be for year-round employee housing, not short term. Discussion followed.

Mr. Snider offered the following specifications to the agreement between VTA and IHT:

1. VTA has ability to expand septic to accommodate six (6) bedrooms;
2. VTA has the right of first refusal if IHT sells any of its interest with the following terms:
 - \$475,000 for the full land purchase
 - VTA would pay cost of construction only, plus some interest factor
 - No additional charges to VTA
 - Ninety-nine (99) year lease at \$1.00/year
3. If any bedroom restrictions are assigned to the property in the future, the VTA's six bedrooms come first;
4. IHT will not oppose any efforts by VTA to develop six bedrooms;
5. State how much time VTA have to purchase given its funding sources;
6. IHT has option to purchase VTA property, should VTA decide to sell.

Ms. Gompert stated that Board approval was not needed for this agreement, but she felt it best to have it – Mr. Snider proposed a vote to support the agreement between VTA and IHT, subject to the Board being able to review the

purchase and sale agreement. Mr. Jordi stated that the IHT Board has already approved the purchase and sale agreement between the seller and IHT, contingent upon the VTA approval of the a Purchase and Sales Agreement, between VTA and IHT prior to September 14, 2022 – as that is the financing deadline. Ms. Gompert stated that IHT Attorney, Caroline Flanders, has begun work on the agreement. Mr. Jason inquired if the lease was renewable after the initial ninety-nine years, and would the VTA be able to get out of the lease – Mr. Jordi replied that it was renewable, and IHT has an option to purchase back at cost, plus any improvements. Mr. Snider inquired about the restriction on seasonal use as outlined in the agreement - he would like to see the wording softened to be able to include seasonal employees if needed, Ms. Gompert concurred.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve a Purchase and Sales Agreement, subject to approval of said Purchase and Sales Agreement between VTA and IHT for 25 Lobster Alley, Tisbury, MA with a deadline for approval of on September 12, 2022 at 11:00am via Zoom meeting. Mr. Wasserman 2nd. **[MSC]**

Mr. Jordi left the meeting at 10:25 AM.

Ridership

Ms. Gompert presented an FY22 vs FY19 Ridership comparison. Mr. Snider inquired if July’s numbers are available yet – Ms. Gompert responded they were not. Mr. Snider commented that the winter months have had less of a decline than the in-season and asked how farebox revenue compared to ridership. Ms. Gompert stated that revenue expectations were exceeded. Mr. Snider suggested more marketing efforts to increase ridership. Ms. Gompert responded the issue is capacity – that due to labor shortages the VTA does not currently have the capacity to carry more passengers during the in season. Mr. Snider asked if it was possible to reallocate buses from underutilized routes to ones that need more capacity – Ms. Gompert responded that she had done that during this current in-season by cutting some up-island service, so those drivers could be used on busier routes. Ms. Gompert commented that it’s a double-edged sword, as you have to balance the needs of all towns and when service gets cut up-island, even though ridership justifies the cuts, residents take to social media to complain VTA is catering only to tourists. Ms. Miller suggested the Board Members go their respective Towns quarterly and give them updates on ridership and other issues.

Ms. Miller left the meeting at 10:40 AM.

Discussion on ridership and marketing possibilities followed. Ms. Gompert spoke to the issue of CDL driver shortage and how she is working with MassDOT and the other MA Transit Authorities on solutions to this.

Ms. Gompert asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wasserman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Snider 2nd. **[MSC]**

Ms. Gompert declared the meeting closed at 11:05 AM.

*Indicates joined late or left early

Date

Signed