



TISBURY SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 4:00 PM
Roy Cutrer, John Cahill, Abbe Burt
HYBRID MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Cutrer called the meeting to order 4:00PM

DISCUSSION SESSION AND POSSIBLE VOTES

Appointment Water Resource Committee-Sheri Caseau, John Best, Gerard Hokanson

Member Cahill made a motion to increase the number of Water Resource Committee members from 5 to 7.

Member Burt seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.

Gerard Hokanson introduced himself. He has a background in science and water testing. He has been on several boards related to storm water and wastewater.

Sherri Caseau introduced herself as well. She has a degree in marine biology and has been doing water quality work for over 20 years. Also worked as a park ranger. She has been the water resource planner for the Martha's Vineyard Commission for the last 12 years.

John Best introduced himself. He has been involved in wastewater, professionally and on different town boards. He is well versed in the CWMP project.

Member Burt made a motion to appoint all three candidates to the Committee. Member Cahill seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.

Lake Tashmoo Anchorage Moratorium

Mr. Cutrer explained that this is a continued agenda item. All letters of correspondence have been posted on the Town's website.

John Crocker gave a brief history of how this matter started. 5-6 years ago, the Select Board made a decision to restrict anchoring in eel grass areas. The Division of Marine Fisheries conducted a site scan sonar of the area and found eel grass in a large portion of lake Tashmoo. Mr. Crocker stated there are a lot of boats coming at the weekends. He proposed to place a half a dozen pilings spread out in the lake. This will still let people enjoy the lake, it will protect the eel grass and will provide some relief to the homeowners in the area.

Ms. Burt asked how many town moorings are in the area now.

Mr. Crocker responded that there aren't any transient vendor moorings in lake Tashmoo at the moment. There are 4 commercial fishermen moorings and 290 moorings. Anyone that lives in the United States can apply for a mooring and be put on the waiting list. There are about 60 people on the wait list at the moment. The Tashmoo boat yard rents moorings for a 2-week minimum. The annual fee for the 290 moorings depends on the size of the vessel and varies between less than \$200 to \$400.

Matt Hobart stated that The Waterways committee recommended following the Harbormasters suggestion and let some moorings in the far end of lake Tashmoo.

As a resident he is against the moratorium. He believes there are not that many vessels for the large portion of the year. If it is an eel grass concern a far more difficult and destructive issue is septic systems. The areas of anchoring were drastically reduced to account for eel grass. He believes boating is not the issue.

Mac Schilcher stated that the Division of Marine Fisheries drove over the area they did not dive. He disagrees with the Harbormasters proposal of six pilings. He believes pilings are dangerous and unsuitable for the area. Mr. Schilcher suggested banning anchoring on the weekends. He believes there are management and enforcement issues with the Natural resource department. There should be a smaller anchoring area with a special permit from the Harbormaster. Mr. Schilcher stated that there are also green crabs snapping the eel grass off and Shellfish constable needs more support to deal with the issue. He proposed to appoint a committee reporting to the Select Board and find a better solution based on research and contacting the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Louise Paciello stated he lives in Edgartown but has a house on Lake Tashmoo. In his opinion the only way he can enjoy Tashmoo is anchoring. The proposal from the Harbormaster is really restrictive. Every year the island becomes more restricted to our children. He suggested coming up with an idea so islanders are able to use this body of water. Lynne Fraker believes there needs to be a public hearing. She stated anchorage was established in 2016. It was established because there was no eel grass in the area. She stated there is no change so there is no problem of boats anchoring. The management of the area was bad, and it went from bad to worse. There is a problem of enforcement. Ms. Fraker proposed an online anchorage permit program, in it there could be certain restrictions on dates and size. The town can have a financial benefit from those permits as well. She stated there is no data on Tashmoo. Mr. Fraker believes the boats are not the problem.

Michael Jamphel has lived on Tashmoo for over 40 years. He was a member of the eel grass committee and the Harbor management committee. He used to look at the bottom of the lake with a camera. He stated there is actually a lot of eel grass in the pond. If there was eel grass in an area and there isn't now it is still considered an eel grass area. He stated in the current anchorage area there was no eel grass, that is why anchorage was allowed. Mr. Jamphel proposed installing conservation moorings in the area rather than piling. The moorings that are there now to be changed to environmental moorings.

Melinda Loberg is the president of Tisbury Waterways Inc. She stated that TWI is all about water quality and promoting good practices in the area. There is a TMDL target for the pond and has been measured. It will get longer to get to the target goal. She pointed that the way we will judge the health of the pond is the health of the eel grass. TWI has the goal to preserve it for the next generations. We agree with the harbormaster about stopping anchoring. Visitors sprinkled through to the pond rather than in one area because the area may be closed to shell fishing per regulations. Ms. Loberg stated that TWI is in favor of the harbormaster's proposal but with a change to conservation moorings and sprinkle them through the pond.

Danielle Ewart clarified that in the summertime the area is off limits for shell fishing because of the amount of boats there. If there are less boats, the area will be open.

Tom Hopkins lives very close to the pond and has been a user of the pond for the last 40 years. He supports the creation of a committee.

Chair Cutrer closed the public portion of this discussion.

Member Cahill stated that by taking action on anchoring the Town is sending the right message that we are serious about our quality of life and the environment here in Tisbury and on Martha's Vineyard. He believes the Town needs to take immediate action to preserve lake Tashmoo. Anchoring is just one aspect of helping Tashmoo. We do need a plan to preserve the water through a dramatic reduction in wastewater and nitrogen. Steps have already been taken in that direction by approving and funding a targeted watershed plan for Tashmoo. Mr. Cahill gave a little history of similar problems on the Cape and actions being taken by the Governor and state administration towards water management. He urged everybody to contribute by doing their own part: upgrading septic systems, using proper fertilizers. Mr. Cahill stated he is open to considering a limited amount of guest Conservation Moorings and exceptions for town residents who have a boat.

Member Cahill made a motion to direct the Harbormaster of the town of Tisbury to make Tashmoo a no anchorage area. Member Burt seconded the motion.

Mac Schilcher and Lynne Fraker believe there should be a public hearing and the Town is not following the correct legal process.

Mr. Grande responded that the harbormaster has authority without public hearing, and he has consulted with the town attorney that this is the proper process.

Ms. Burt stated that her main concern is for the Town of Tisbury and its natural resources. It is critical to make sure that the natural resources are healthy. She is concerned about the number of boats in Tashmoo. Ms. Burt stated she is not in favor of total moratorium but maybe modified to no anchoring in the months of July and August.

Chair Cutrer stated he is willing to consider the options of conservation moorings. He sees a bigger problem in the boats anchoring for a day at the opening than the boats anchoring further in Tashmo for several days. The day visitors do not help the town in any way. They do not go and shop in town, they do not even use the proper facilities.

Mr. Cutrer believes that this decision is also about reducing nitrogen. He stated he feels used by these day trippers. He believes there has been negative effects on Tashmoo.

Cahill stated that if the board does not do something tonight nothing will get done. A moratorium is a strong statement that we are serious about this, and it will give us time to work out a proper plan.
Chair Cutrer stated the Board is open to public input and is tasking the committees to help.
Member Burt withdrew the amendment. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.
Member Cahill urged the formation of a plan and a resolution without delay.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Closing

Member Burt made a motion to close the Annual town meeting warrant subject to final revision by the Town Council. Member Cahill seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained:

Special Town Meeting Warrant Closing

Member Burt made a motion to change the Special town meeting warrant subject to final revision by Town Council. Cahill seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.

PROSPECTIVE MEETINGS SCHEDULE AND AGENDA ITEMS

Meeting on 3.29.23

Coastal Zoning Resilience meeting to which the Board was invited on 3.27.23

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Member Cahill made a motion to adjourn. Member Burt seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstained.


The meeting was adjourned at 5:22PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Executive Assistant Elena De Foe

Meeting Minutes Approved April 12, 2023


Roy Cutrer
Chair


John Cahill
Vice Chair


Abbe Burt
Clerk