



# Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION  
MEETING OF DECEMBER 2, 2024

via remote technology

CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 pm

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Steven Ewing, Frederick Khedouri, Wesley Mott, Kristen Reimann, Sarah Thulin,  
Nancy Weaver, Peter Wells

LAND BANK COMMISSIONERS ABSENT AT CALL TO ORDER

None

STAFF PRESENT AT CALL TO ORDER

Winston Bell, Harrison Kisiel, James Lengyel, Julie Russell

OTHERS PRESENT DURING THE SESSION

Addison Antonoff (*Vineyard Gazette*), Roger Becker, Eunki Seonwoo (*Martha's  
Vineyard Times*)

PRESENTATION OF THE WARRANT

Warrant no. 2025-24 was made available for the Commission's inspection.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Hearing no proposed additions, Mr. Mott declared the agenda approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2024

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted in a roll call vote six in favor, none opposed and Mrs. Reimann abstaining to approve the minutes as written.

COUNTY AND LAND BANK COMMISSION TREASURERS' REPORTS

1. Agency Administration: Fiscal Year 2024 Audit

Staff reminded Commissioners that auditors Withum Smith+Brown PC, who prepared the financial statements for the previous fiscal year which were the subject of discussion at the Commission's November 18, 2024 meeting, had recommended at that time that the agency adopt a policy on capitalization. Upon investigation, staff realized that the auditors were unaware that such a policy already exists. Having then reviewed the existing policy, Withum Smith+Brown declared it satisfactory.

As no action was necessary, the Commission took none.

TRANSFER FEE REVENUES

Revenues for the week ending November 22, 2024: \$664,640.00

Revenues for the week ending November 29, 2024: \$155,427.00

NEW BUSINESS

1. Agency Administration: 2025 Edgartown Annual Town Meeting

Roger Becker was present. He has drafted a warrant article asking Edgartown voters to transfer into conservation an abutting 3.0-acre tax-taking lot (tax parcel no. 34-238) that otherwise would be used for affordable housing, on the grounds that Chappaquiddick Island is not a suitable place for such housing owing to expenses such as the ferry crossing.

The article calls for a sale price of \$279,900, which is the lot's current assessed value. He would arrange for fundraising so that there would be no acquisition expense for the land bank. He asked if the land bank would be willing to accept such property under such circumstances.

Discussion variously occurred as to (1.) Mr. Becker's stated intention to seek to purchase, and conserve, the abutting lot to the north owned by Allen Slater, which would more effectively connect the locus and the nearby conservation lands; (2.) the lot's likely fair market value, as juxtaposed against its assessed value; (3.) whether the town would, were it to prove receptive to a disposition, opt for a highest-bid auction; and (4.) the locus' strategic siting, between the Trentfield Farm and the Three Ponds Reservation.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to refer this matter to its Edgartown Town Advisory Board without recommendation.

2. Agency Land Management: Livestock Grazing Program

The Commission reviewed the sole bid received, solicited in accordance with its September 4, 2024 vote, for the disposition of its entire goat herd: \$10 per head, from Derick Costa.

Livestock manager Winston Bell characterized the bid as “strong” and noted that he expected the animals to be sent to a butcher; he stated that they would therefore be “used for something” and that that “is a pretty good outcome.” He recommended that the Commission accept the bid.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to accept Mr. Bell’s recommendation.

3. Agency Land Management: Farmland Leases

The Commission conducted its annual review of its farmland leases. They are: (1.) Simon Athearn et al. at the Norton Fields Preserve and the Peaked Hill Reservation and the Sweetened Water Preserve; (2.) Brian Cioffi at the Blue Barque Preserve; (3.) Krishana Collins at Tea Lane Farm (including a sublease to Joshua Scott) and at, with Matthew Dix, the Peaked Hill Reservation; (4.) Johanna Douglas at the Quenomica Preserve (north) and the Wapatequa Woods Reservation; (5.) Arnold Fischer, Jr. et al. at the Short Cove Preserve (north and south); (6.) Fred Fisher III at the Little Field Preserve; (7.) Eric Glasgow at Arrowhead Farm; (8.) Allen Healy at the Tiasquam Valley Reservation (east and west); (9.) Gary Stead at Featherstone Farm; (10.) John Thurgood at Tea Lane Farm; and (11.) Lillian Walter at the Poucha Pond Reservation and Three Ponds Reservation (including a sublease to Collins Heavener).

Commissioners discussed Arrowhead Farm. The life-estate arrangement there allows the land bank to “farm hay and similar crops, being fodder (excluding crucifers and root vegetables)” on the 4.7-acre west field. Mr. Glasgow does not wish to continue with his lease; he is not satisfied with the quality of his crop and finds the location inconvenient. Commissioners agreed that staff should return with options.

As for the balance of the leases, Mr. Kisiel stated that he conferred with each of the lessees as to their activities in 2024 and recommended that they all be continued. He spotlighted certain successes this year, e.g., seven cows in the first full year of grazing at the Quenomica North Preserve and the Wapatequa Woods Reservation; 120 chickens and the creation of a new 6000 square foot arable area at Tea Lane Farm; and 250 chickens and eight sheep, plus 500 pounds of potatoes, at the Three Ponds Reservation.

After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission

voted unanimously in a roll call vote to accept Mr. Kisiel's recommendation. Mr. Bell and Ms. Russell departed the meeting at this time.

4. Chappy Point Beach (Town of Edgartown)

The Commission, per its lease with the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group (MVSG) for the beach-house here, conducted its annual review of whether the public interest is served by this lease and whether MVSG's use of the premises is compatible with the goals and objectives of the land bank. The beach-house has been leased to the MVSG since April 1, 1995.

Mr. Kisiel reported that MVSG has remedied problems associated with the following items on the lease's punch-list (notations here follow the notations in the lease): [b] wall support; [c] windows and doors; [d] roof system; [e] exterior decks; [g] exterior walls; and [h] vegetation. Improvements to the following have not been completed: [a] foundation; and [f] septic system. He recommended renewal of the lease, with these final two items to be included.

Commissioners considered the fitting term of such a lease and agreed upon five years. After discussion and by a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to enter into a lease with MVSG that ends on December 31, 2029 and includes all of the matters itemized by Mr. Kisiel.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

ENDORSEMENT OF THE WARRANT

The Commission endorsed Warrant no. 2025-24.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

By a motion made and seconded, the Commission voted unanimously in a roll call vote to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, lease, exchange or value of real property. Mr. Mott stated that the subjects to be discussed are the purchase or value of real property and declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commission. He further announced that the Commission would not reconvene in regular session after the conclusion of the executive session. The Commission entered executive session at 3:45 pm.

certification:



Kristen Reimann, Secretary