

**Dukes County Commission (DCC)**

**Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 7, 2024  
4:00 PM  
Remote participation only**

Dukes County Commissioners present: Christine Todd, Doug Ruskin, Randy Milch, Don Leopold, Peter Wharton, \*Tristan Israel joined at 4:05

Staff: Martina Thornton, Juliet Mulinare, Paulo DeOliveira

Others: Steve Atwood, Haley Duffy, Ethan, Daniel Green

Christine called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

Minutes 7-3-2024 & 7-17-2024

**Doug /Randy moved to approve minutes of DCC meeting on 7-3-2024 and 7-17-2024. So voted.  
Randy – yes, Doug – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

**Public Hearing on Ordinance to lease out part of the New York Ave property in Oak Bluffs**

The chair opened the public hearing on the Ordinance. No public comments were made. Public hearing was closed. Discussion followed by DCC. It was confirmed that DCC will only entertain proposals for use for agricultural purposes & community benefit. It will be a 2-year lease with option to renew for 1 more year at County's discretion. Minimum rent to be \$1000/year.

**Randy/Tristan moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. So voted. Randy – yes, Doug – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Tristan- yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

**Animal Health Care Associates Lease Approval**

This lease was brought before the commissioners for approval. It is a 15-year lease with an option to renew for additional 15-years.

There was discussion at length on how the airport leases over 20 years will be processed/approved by the County going forward. It was said that the Land Use Committee will come up with a procedure of how this will get done.

**Tristan/Doug moved to approve the lease for Animal Health Care. So voted. Randy – yes, Doug – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Tristan- yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

**Regional Contracts to be approved:**

CORE- Counseling Outreach & Referral for Elders through MV Community Services

SUD- Substance Use Disorder Coalition Coordinator through MV Community Services

Homeless Prevention services with Harbor Homes MV

DCC already approved similar contracts for Center for Living and Healthy Aging. The County collects the money from towns and contracts out for these services. Looking to approve the new contracts for these 3 services.

**Doug/Tristan moved to approve all 3 contracts (CORE, SUD and Homeless prevention) as presented. So voted. Randy – yes, Doug – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

**Letter of Support for Project at 97 Spring Street to be referred to MV Commission for DRI review**

After much discussion, Commissioners decided not to send a letter of support as this project was already recommended for review by MV Commission.

**Letter to DCR regarding the eviction of homeless from the State Forest**

Doug would like to issue a strong letter to DCR stating that DCC is dismayed with the lack of communication in advance and demand advance notice from DCR to local officials before any future actions in the future.

He would also like to ask for DCR support in improving the fire prevention in State Forrest and would like again, to advocate for a ranger to be allowed to live in the house on the State Forest property.

Peter and Randy had concerns of the language and brought up another option of suppressing some concern of fire damage by controlled burns, forest brush clearing, replanting non pine species, and returning the forest to active recreational use by fixing bike paths. Also actively suggest that a ranger be allowed to live in and oversee the forest. Possibly a softer way to approach DCR.

The letter will be sent to local officials as well as the Governor directly.

**Tristan/Don moved to send a letter from DCC to be drafted by the communications committee to DCR as proposed and others as discussed. So voted. Randy – yes, Doug – yes, Don- yes, Peter-yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

**\*\*Randy left the meeting 5:35**

**ARPA Next Steps**

DCC allotted originally \$1,440,000 for septic installations and has so far earmarked \$810k for all projects as approved by the Boards of Health, that leaves the balance of \$626k to reallocate.

Deadline has passed for applications for the septic projects. The balance needs to be assigned and contracted by the end of 2024 - money needs to be spent by end of 2026. Some towns have requested to use funds for other municipality projects. Discussion followed.

Tristan would like to give the balance to the airport wastewater project.

**Doug/ moved to offer the remaining money to the towns for municipal projects if obligated by October 31, 2024 after that date the balance will go to the Airport.**

**No one seconded the motion.**

**Peter suggest table motion until Finance Committee can dive deeper into the numbers.**

**Motion was tabled.**

**\*\*\*\*\*Don left the meeting 6:15pm**

**Committee Updates:**

Finance Committee- Peter- FY25 budget is completed in IV

Waiting on final report from auditors – Martina commended that the report will not be available for some time as they just started the FY2024 audit. Their visit was just their initial field work visit.

Land Use Committee – Tristan – reported that the Committee was discussing how to approve airport leases longer than 20 years. It will be brought up in the next Land Use meeting how this procedure will take form.

The RFP for a consultant for long term planning is buttoned up.

Communication Committee – Doug reported that the committee created Letter in response to Woods Hole Residents regarding Steamship Authority traffic (Letter on file).

**Doug/Christine moved to send the letter as proposed. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter-yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

The committee also discussed and is recommending to Engage Z Studio for Phase I of proposed project which would cost \$4K.

**Doug/Tristan moved to engage Z Studio for Phase I of the project. So voted. Doug – yes, Peter-yes, Tristan – yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

The committee also proposed a letter to Department of Conservation and Recreation regarding the topics **discussed above**.

**Manager's Report** – Martina (document on file)

Martina reported that the Health Care Access hired two new bilingual employees, which will help to meet the workload for that office.

New business- none

Public Comment & Announcements- None

**Next DCC Meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2024 at 4pm**

**Doug/Tristan moved to adjourned at 6:32 pm. So voted Doug – yes, Peter- yes, Tristan- yes, Christine – yes. Motion carries.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32pm.

**Certified by:**



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T. George Davis, Clerk of Courts

