PRESENT: Ed DeWitt, Alison Leschen, Chris McGuire, Paul Dreyer, Ralph Herbst, Paul Grunden (at 7:30); Guests Doug Brown – Select Board, Ben Muller – Mass DOT, Kristin Uiterwyk – Urban Harbors Institute UMass Boston

1. Chairman DeWitt called the meeting to order at 7pm. He read the Governor’s order about Open Meeting Law changes. Chris McGuire stated the meeting was being recorded for town records.

2. The minutes of 1/28/21 were approved as read after the attachment was deleted.

3. Mr. Muller and Ms. Uiterwyk then presented their work on reducing gas emissions and the utilization of New Bedford for freight to Martha’s Vineyard. Mr. Muller works on SE Mass issues. He is concerned about the roads and the replacement of the canal bridges. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has no authority over the Steamship Authority (SSA) agreements for moving freight. Ms. Uiterwyk is working on a report for DOT concerning local, state and federal issues about freight at Mass ports and greenhouse gases. She mentioned the number of trucks involved going to Martha’s Vineyard (M/V) and said the SSA had a failed program in 2001 (due to rate changes and round-trip timing), which needed reorganization to succeed. The SSA has not been successful in finding a company to move freight from NB to M/V. Most coastal property in NB is privately owned, which presents a problem for use other than the state pier. Some of it needs environmental clean-up to be considered as a port. NB is not all that enthusiastic about having a shipping program to M/V. Fall River and Somerset are possibilities but are farther away from M/V. There are 38 million vehicles/year going over the Bourne bridge and trucks are about 1% of that. Ms. Uiterwyk is still working on traffic data. Her next step is to examine alternate ports.

ALSO DISCUSSED: Roll-on and roll-off freight is inefficient because trucks are empty going one way. Political input in NB is important due to possible concerns in M/V for unknown reasons. Mr. Brown asked about moving freight without trucks, which is possible. Mr. DeWitt asked Mr. Muller about connecting interstate highways to marine routes. There is some parking in NB for passengers but it depends on which facility is
used. M/V is trying to become more “green” and reduce vehicle traffic. Urban Harbors hopes to complete their report by early summer.

4. The white paper concerning downtown parking, developed by Alison, was approved unanimously. Mr. Brown suggested we present the paper in person at a Select Board meeting with copies sent in advance to Select Board members. We will do a presentation dry run at our next meeting. The actual presentation will probably be sometime in early March.

5. Alison reported the downtown parking and traffic survey has received about a dozen responses. We voted to move forward with the survey and will put it on our web page and send it to the Enterprise, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Village Association, asking readers to respond.

6. Complete Streets (CS) one year review. Paul Dreyer has issues as to who is responsible for the evaluation. Ed feels it is appropriate for the Transportation Management Committee (TMC) to do it. There seems to be a continuing lack of coordination about CS issues among town players. Mr. Suso, Town Manager, does not agree with the TMC doing the evaluation. Mr. Bott, Town Planner, said the DPW and Planning Board opted to have the Cape Cod Commission provide assistance. It was agreed that financing is a big issue in prioritizing and implementing CS. We decided to redo the letter, add something about grant writing, and review it again at our next meeting, keeping in mind that CS does not always apply to every transportation situation.

7. Correspondence consisted of a memo from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee concerning downtown parking and street design. Ed will set up a joint meeting with them in the near future. All agreed.

8. There were no other items or comments to be read into the record.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, 2/5/2021 at 7pm.

Submitted by Ralph Herbst, Recorder