

Special Commission on County Governance

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Approved Minutes

Co-chair Henri Rauschenbach convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. in Superior Courthouse conference room 11/12.

Minutes of the November 30 meeting of the Special Commission were approved, but the accuracy of the Provincetown room tax claim at that meeting was questioned, and Co-chair Rauschenbach asked the Minutes Clerk to clarify it. [A note was subsequently added to the November 30 minutes indicating Provincetown room tax collection of \$1.5 million in calendar year 2010, 12% of the \$12.5 million County total, per MA Dept. of Revenue data -

<http://www.statscapecod.org/towndata/roomtax.html>]

Copies of the Statement of the Cape Cod Business Round Table before the Barnstable County Special Commission on County Governance, December 14, 2011, were distributed.

Cape Cod Mosquito Control Project Superintendent John Doane and Assistant Superintendent Gabrielle Sakolsky discussed the origin and operation of their agency, tracing it to Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce efforts in the 1920s to promote tourism by controlling saltmarsh mosquito infestation. In 1928, Cape donations totaling \$250,000 funded mosquito control efforts involving all Cape towns. The current agency was established by State legislation in 1930 and funded by all 15 Cape towns. Its five Commissioners must include a Selectman and Town Manager, and the present board includes Special Commissioner Charles Sumner, Yarmouth Selectman James H. Quirk, Jr., and former Barnstable Town Councilor J. Gregory Milne.

Agency Asst. Superintendent and Entomologist Gabrielle Sakolsky detailed the labor-intensive efforts required for integrated pest management in targeting mosquitoes at developmental stages, including monitoring habitat sites for three saltmarsh and 22 freshwater species. She explained that targeting developmental stages avoids

spraying of adult mosquitoes. Ditches in marshes drain water and allow predator access, she said, but they must be maintained to keep them open. Most work is done by hand on 30,000 feet of saltwater and 30,000 feet of freshwater ditches, along with opening culverts and pipes. This aid to towns in draining stagnant water also helps stabilize flood insurance rates, she added. Black box traps throughout the Cape also allow arbovirus - Eastern equine encephalitis and West Nile - surveillance for the State Department of Public Health. Larvicide applications, such as BT, are part of Integrated Pest Management, she said, and mosquito control education is also offered at schools, etc. Standing water in catch basins is treated, she added, and Mosquito Control staff work with the Extension Service and also with Nstar in vegetation management.

In reply to a query on why the Extension Service is concerned with tick infestation, Ms. Sakolsky explained that control approaches are different from mosquitoes and that tick control is a new issue, while mosquito control has been in effect for over 80 years.

Regarding the agency's connection with the County, Ms. Sakolsky said Mosquito Control is funded through State Cherry Sheet assessment to the towns, and Mr. Doane elaborated that Mosquito Control involves fulltime employees in a tailored program that is labor-intensive but avoids spraying. He felt the State Reclamation Board seeks override of local control, adding that he thought Mosquito Control could fit into the County structure as it does elsewhere in the U.S.

In reply to Co-chair O'Leary's question if legislation would be required for such a change, Mr. Doane replied in the affirmative, adding that the agency's Board, the County, and legal experts would have to confer. The agency owns its own building in Harwich, he said, so real estate transfer would be involved, as well as its self-insured vehicles. He added that pros and cons of County affiliation would have to be identified, including consideration of whether the County wants the added responsibility. With Cape towns funding 100% of the agency, Mr. Doane felt that County affiliation would make sense.

Mosquito Control assessments were considered reasonable as a fraction of other assessments such as the Regional Transit Authority's, and Mr. Doane explained that budgets are approved by the Mosquito Control

Board, which is appointed by the State Reclamation Board after nominations are sought from the towns.

Special Commissioner Marylou Petitt wondered if Mosquito Control should be under the County Health Department, and this question was deferred for later consideration.

Next, **Dave Schropfer** completed his November 30 presentation on the **Inter-municipal Cooperation Committee**, outlining obstacles to regionalization as loss of control and fear of the unknown. He explained that the Committee was established on October 14, 2008, in cooperation with the County and Cape Cod Commission, with voting by Selectmen rather than the Committee, and it involves sharing 5-year capital plans for specialized equipment and staff that could be shared, and considering procurement jointly or through the County. He felt the County could help towns with assessing/mapping, prosecutorial services (rather than relying on individual police departments), Nstar spraying issues (as the added County weight could be effective), personnel services, County dispatch (now the Sheriff's, with State affiliation), shared police (e.g., Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet), information technology and computer service and maintenance, as well as software (coordinating common software).

Mr. Schropfer thought the County could derive revenue from services and fees for inspectional services, joint fuel purchase, water/wastewater management, cable access negotiation, grant-writing, recycling coordination, housing and electronic permitting.

He also felt that the County should provide more shared services to towns, increase revenue for County services, and promote town cooperation. He favored equal town Assembly of Delegates votes, and five County Commissioners - not elected at large and with no party affiliation.

Mr. Schropfer called relationships with the County good, but felt the County could do more in providing and coordinating town services. He cited his experience with this in Stamford, CT, saying it's the same everywhere.

In reply to his equal Assembly vote preference, Special Commissioner Vicki Lowell reminded that the Assembly's weighted voting respects the "one man, one vote" requirement.

Next, **Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce CEO Wendy Northcross** presented comments supporting centralized, effective county government on behalf of the Chamber's 28-member board and 1,345 members. For marketing, they felt referring to the County as Cape Cod Regional Government could be effective in reducing confusion, and they favored electing a 5 or 7-member legislative body known as the Board of Cape Cod County Supervisors/Cape Cod County Legislators/ or other appropriate name, including two "at-large" members and five elected from the State Representative districts. For administration, the Chamber supported appointment of a strong County Manager or Executive Manager by the Board of Legislators. They also called for a Comprehensive Financial Advisory Council of town managers, rather than their designees, and they also advocated tapping municipal and Assembly of Delegates experience for various advisory committees.

Co-Chair Rauschenbach then outlined the procedure for compiling Special Commission conclusions, saying the Special Commission will discuss issues and the Co-chairs will draft conclusions where there is consensus, with volunteers welcome to participate, with function to be addressed before structure and governance, and with Bob Lawton offering towns' recommendations. Special Commissioner Dorothy Savarese cautioned against prioritizing and time-frame ratings, advising consideration of the level of difficulty in pursuing recommendations.

The question of moving the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) within the County was discussed as a means of improving coordination among transportation entities, considering its close involvement with the Cape Cod Commission (CCC) and its staff, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) and overlapping boards of town officials. But, while the goal of simplifying complex transportation planning and consolidating boards was thought to be useful, it was also assumed that the RTA Act would

have to be modified. Still, Co-chair O'Leary felt that better coordination, resources and result could make modification and integration worthwhile. After further discussion, he and Special Commissioners Sue Rohrbach and Julie Taylor were assigned to draft a proposal for consideration.

Whether the County could assume State responsibility was questioned, and Special Commissioner Mark Forest felt that assuming public works duties, e.g., highways, could be more efficient. Special Commissioner Margo Fenn noted that County Health and Environment responsibilities could be better integrated with the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Co-chair Rauschenbach said that a proposal would be drafted for further consideration, and Ms. Rohrbach advised considering retaining State funding.

Regarding Mosquito Control, Co-Chair Rauschenbach felt that State affiliation was inappropriate, and the agency should be in County government. Ms. Rohrbach suggested retaining a State connection to influence peers, and Special Commissioner Charles Sumner, who also serves on the Mosquito Control Board, replied that professional affiliations would persist. Co-Chair Rauschenbach then asked Mr. Sumner to outline the board structure.

In reviewing the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Co-chair Rauschenbach noted the importance of the lead elected official. Among the 16 WIBs, some are affiliated with community colleges, he said, but he felt the WIB should be within the County, where it would be more efficient for training and more cost-effective and transparent, while adding synergy with economic development.

Special Commissioner Bill Zammer, also representing the Chamber of Commerce, thought centralizing economic development important, and Ms. Savarese agreed that integrating economic development efforts would improve effectiveness. Co-chair O'Leary favored integrating with the community college and technical schools, as well.

Mr. Zammer asked if CCC economic development was relevant to the Special Commission, and Co-chair O'Leary replied that it is part of the County. Co-chair Rauschenbach added that it is also relevant in

the context of the license plate funds, reminding later that the Lower Cape Community Development Corporation also receives 20% of them.

In discussing economic development planning, Ms. Northcross reminded that public/private partnership and cooperation are important, and Special Commissioner Ron Bergstrom noted that projecting the economy is challenging. Ms. Savarese referred to the Chamber's strategic plan to be released on the following Monday, while Ms. Northcross added that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

provides the foundation for economic development. Mr. Bergstrom noted that attracting appropriate businesses for the Cape's unique assets is important, and Mr. Zammer said that the Regional Technical Development Corporation had sought companies and found interest. Ms. Savarese noted that the Open Cape infrastructure is powerful, and integration of economic development efforts will improve their effectiveness. Mr. Bergstrom cautioned against sacrificing long-term goals for short-term gains, and Ms. Pettitt wondered if integrating the WIB in County government could help involve related County departments, such as Human Services. Co-chair Rauschenbach said he would draft something on the WIB and a stronger role for economic development within the CCC.

Ms. Northcross reminded that government can do some things within a public/private partnership. Ms. Fenn noted that defining public and private-sector roles in economic development is critical, with providing infrastructure and demographic data appropriate for government, while marketing should be a private-sector role. Special Commissioner Maggie Geist called for the final report to clarify the distinctions of land-use planning and private marketing, and Ms. Fenn referred to the CCC Act for definition of the agency's economic development role, while Special Commissioner Florence Seldin reminded that the Regional Policy Plan and CEDS also detail economic development plans. Ms. Rohrbach said that the County should be the political advocate for economic development policies. Co-chair O'Leary asked Ms. Fenn and Ms. Northcross to collaborate on a draft for consideration.

Ms. Northcross wondered if an ombudsman might be effective or if a redevelopment authority was needed, and Ms. Geist noted that one of 16 CEDS projects would promote redevelopment (with eminent domain power) with the Town of Barnstable as leader. Ms. Northcross was asked to collaborate with the CCC Director on a draft for consideration.

Ms. Seldin felt that Open Cape should be in a County-coordinated Department of Strategic Information, while Special Commissioner Bert Jackson reminded that Dan Gallagher thought the County should manage the Regional Umbrella Services System (RUSS).

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 4, in Superior Courthouse conference room 11/12. Co-chair O'Leary reminded that Cape Light Compact and wastewater are important issues that remain to be addressed, and Ms. Lowell called for circulating ideas among the Special Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Fifield

Minutes Clerk