

**MINUTES
OF THE
LONG-RANGE VINEYARD TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA’S VINEYARD
AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

March 18, 2021

Via the Zoom Video Conferencing App
First Floor Meeting Room (Room 103)
The SSA’s Administrative Offices
228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts

<u>Task Force Member</u>	<u>Appointing Authority</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>
Leon Brathwaite	Dukes County Commissioners	Present
Doug Brown	Falmouth Select Board	Present
John Cahill	Tisbury Select Board	Present
Keith Chatinover	Dukes County Commissioners	Present
Robert Davis	Steamship Authority	Present
Jesse Law III	Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen	Absent
Mark Rozum	Steamship Authority	Present
Michael Santoro	Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen	Absent
Douglas Sederholm	Martha’s Vineyard Commission	Present
Julian Suso	Falmouth Select Board	Present
James Vercruysse	Martha’s Vineyard Commission	Present

Also participating:

Ed DeWitt	Chair, Falmouth Transportation Management Committee
Steven Sayers	Steamship Authority

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. by announcing that the Steamship Authority (SSA) was making an audio and video recording of the meeting, and he asked whether anyone else was making a recording as well. No one responded.
2. Mr. Sayers then announced that, in response to Governor Baker’s executive orders concerning the necessity to conduct public meetings in line with social distancing guidelines during the current state of emergency involving the COVID-19 pandemic, all Task Force members that day were participating remotely in the meeting because their physical attendances that day would be unreasonably difficult. Mr. Sayers also stated that all Task Force members were participating in the meeting by the Zoom video conferencing app and that all members will be clearly audible to each other.

3. Mr. Sayers noted that, at the Task Force’s last meeting, the members had agreed to invite Edward Anthes-Washburn, who was then Executive Director of the New Bedford Port Authority, to participate in their next meeting. But Mr. Sayers recounted how Mr. Anthes-Washburn had resigned from that position effective February 1, 2021, and how Mr. Davis had asked his successor, George Krikorian, who is now the Interim Executive Director of the New Bedford Port Authority, to participate in his place, but that Mr. Krikorian was not able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Sayers stated that then, by chance, the SSA learned of a proposal from the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee for the SSA, in partnership with the port communities and MassDOT, to develop an appropriate grant application for funding to carry out an investigation of freight options and improvements to provide a reliable, and adequate system to move freight between Martha's Vineyard and the mainland. Mr. Sayers observed that this seemed to be something in which the Task Force would be interested; that he and Mr. Davis therefore had invited the Chair of that Committee, Ed DeWitt, to participate in today's meeting; and that Mr. DeWitt had graciously accepted. Mr. Sayers announced that Mr. DeWitt was with them that day and was prepared to present the Committee’s recommendations.

**The Falmouth Transportation Management Committee’s
Recommendations regarding the SSA’s Freight Operations**

4. Mr. DeWitt then stated that he would like to begin with three premises or questions that he hoped he could have a discussion about with the Task Force to give them a sense of how the Committee put its report and recommendations together, as follows:
 - i. Can the SSA move more freight with fewer trips?
 - ii. If one thinks about the SSA’s freight operations as a transportation system instead of just boats and boat trips, one sees a system ideally designed for 1921 and not 2021.
 - iii. Does the SSA currently incentivize waste and inefficiency because that is the easiest way to operate? It's the motto of the SSA. “We have always done it that way. We're good at it.”

Mr. DeWitt stated that he thinks the Committee has no dispute that the SSA is good at what it does now, but that the Committee’s concern is whether the SSA is doing it as well as it possibly could be done. Mr. DeWitt then told the Task Force a little bit about the Committee, as follows:

- The Committee was reconvened by the Falmouth Select Board in 2020 to investigate, evaluate, and update town transportation policy and practices, to essentially advise the Select Board on all things transportation.
- To a large extent, the Committee is complaint-driven. It has been responding to a number of issues that center around complaints of Falmouth citizens related to transportation. The Committee is made up of members from various boards, the

planning, disabilities, bicycle, and pedestrian committees, as well as at-large members, and the Committee is fortunate to have members with transportation backgrounds.

- In the Committee's investigation of the SSA's freight operations, it was responding to the three S's of complaints, which are speed, sound, and smell of trucks, primarily in the Woods Hole Road corridor. The Committee investigated other issues as well, such as:
 - Watson's Corner, which is the 90-degree intersection that runs between North Main Street and Locust Street where trucks, especially large trucks, cannot make it around the corner without swinging out into the opposing lane.
 - Through truck traffic beyond Woods Hole Road going down Main Street in Falmouth, which is signed for "no through trucks"; and
 - pavement management related issues.
- The Committee looked at the system and saw a host of issues: Two-lane road dependency; the distance from the interstate highway; the number of empty trucks that are transported; the number of partially loaded trucks that are transported; limited movement of freight; the principal product leaving the Island is trash; exclusive reliance on roll-on, roll-off technology; zero use of containerization; lack of warehousing and freight forwarding capability; the current tariff system; and the lack of truck enforcement related to the three S's.
- The Committee came up with the idea that the SSA can move more freight with fewer trips because of how space is allocated, how space is used, and with emerging technologies in transportation. In particular, small containerized marine stackable containers that can be loaded and don't need tractors to go with each container, and particularly containers that might be compatible with a Ford F 150 type of truck for delivery on the other end.
- The Committee also noted that, in 1921, most of the freight arrived via rail and was directly railed to the docks, whether it was in New Bedford or Woods Hole. Rail links ran directly to the harbors in 1921. Two-lane roads were the norm in 1921. Multi-lane highways really did not come into existence until the 1930s and various other types of things, smaller trucks and those kinds of issues. That is how the Committee came up with the conclusion that the current system is a 1921 system, as opposed to a 2021 system.
- Mr. DeWitt talked to a UPS tractor-trailer driver and asked, "How often are you full?" He said, "Very rarely." The incentives aren't there to optimize loading of trucks, and there are some management things that can be done for that. The Committee said, "Well, what can we do about this?" The Committee does not really have the expertise to say, "What's the best way to do this."
- The Committee thinks a hybrid system of moving bulk, a roll-on roll-off, and containerized cargo might be an option of trying to do that. Particularly, if the SSA could tie it to a freight forwarding facility and an on-the-pier facility where cargo can be sorted and prepared for shipping on vessels, the SSA would ultimately end up with freight moving on full vessels, and vessels loaded to capacity and stacked

in smaller space, and it can work out. But the Committee does not know how practical this is, and what all of the other types of things it might entail.

- The Committee investigated how the SSA would go about determining what the best way is to move freight from the mainland to the islands, and engaged in a number of conversations with state and federal maritime officials to see what they would suggest. The Committee learned about a number of funding opportunities. The Federal Government, in particular, is interested in moving freight from the Interstate Highway System to the Maritime Highway System directly with direct links.
- Obviously, the SSA cannot do that going through Woods Hole because the interstate highways do not conveniently serve Woods Hole. They do serve New Bedford, both 495 and 195 are convenient to New Bedford, so the Committee came up with the idea of recommending that the SSA join with local communities, local ports, MassDOT, and whatever, to apply for a grant to look at what would be the way to move freight with a 2021 design, as opposed to a 1921 design.

Mr. DeWitt stated that he has tried to give the Task Force the highlights of the Committee's idea and that the Committee was not suggesting this is what the SSA should do. Rather, Mr. DeWitt said, the Committee is suggesting that this is something important to look at and examine because, clearly, if the SSA can reduce the number of ships that are traveling between the islands and carry more freight, there are savings and efficiencies, there is more reliable freight to the islands, and it benefits everybody all around. Mr. DeWitt then stated that he would be happy to have questions or a discussion, or to share with the Task Force some of the things the Committee found or did not find.

5. Mr. Vercruysse observed that one way to go forward would be to go back to having rail service to Woods Hole, and that it was unfortunate that that rail system was taken away because it is a very efficient way to move material. Mr. Vercruysse noted that he was not saying that he was advocating for that now, but that it was ironic when Mr. DeWitt says the SSA is operating a 1921 system when, in some ways, that system was better by having the rail connection there to Woods Hole.

In response, Mr. DeWitt noted that freight rail into New Bedford does exist and that, even if rail service were returned to Woods Hole (which he thinks is dubious because of the status of the Shining Sea Bikeway), it would be a long time before that could happen, based upon the length of time it has taken to bring South Coast rail to the South Coast and to extend the Middleborough line to Buzzards Bay. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, rail-transported freight is different than it was in 1921 because virtually everything went by rail in 1921, and that is no longer the case; a lot more freight is being moved by truck at this time, so the transportation system has shifted quite a bit as well.

6. Mr. DeWitt stated that the Committee thinks this is a no-lose, no-brainer type of situation that the SSA should think about, observing that, even if the SSA obtains a grant to do a study, the SSA will still be the one to figure out whether and how to implement whatever the recommendations are. But Mr. DeWitt noted that a study might identify things that are certainly beyond the Committee's capability which can largely improve the inefficiencies

that exist in the system. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thought it was hard to argue that there are not inefficiencies in the system right now. For example, Mr. DeWitt said, when the SSA is loading a Kenworth Tractor with a trailer, it is wasting 20 feet of space on every vessel that it pulls that Kenworth Tractor with the trailer over to the island.

But Mr. Brathwaite observed that, when the trailer gets to the island without a tractor, in either Oak Bluffs or Vineyard Haven there is no parking space for a tractor that would be needed to pick the trailer up and take it off the boat. Accordingly, Mr. Brathwaite said, one thing that the Task Force has looked at is the possibility of compacting the island's trash, bailing and storing it, and then putting the bales on a barge and taking them to New Bedford or wherever. But Mr. Brathwaite stated that he had found out there is an issue with that idea too when he reviewed a report on the study that had been done by the Towns of Tisbury and Oak Bluffs several years ago, namely, that when trash is compacted, a slurry or a sludge gets squeezed out of it, and something needs to be done with the juice that's been produced. On the other hand, Mr. Brathwaite noted that the island, as a rural community, qualifies for some major grants that could look at compacting as a way to help mitigate the need for trucks to take the trash off the island.

In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that basically that was what the Committee was suggesting the SSA do, namely, think about the SSA is doing right now and, what would the SSA do if it were going to start new with nothing going on to have the most efficient way of doing this. Mr. DeWitt also stated that he thinks there are some technologies, including some hybrid models of moving maritime freight, where the SSA might be able to mix bulk cargo, roll-on roll-off, and some containerized cargo, and optimize that. Although Mr. DeWitt acknowledged that the SSA probably would need some pure types of infrastructure that do not exist to carry it out, he stated that, in the long run, this might actually be advantageous to the island and provide it with the ability to have a reserve of the goods and services that it really needs which come over in the freight system.

Mr. DeWitt stated that this was really one of the important things that the Committee was asking the SSA to do, namely, to look at this all as a system and not simply as a ferry boat that it puts trucks on, because the system has impacts in Falmouth, it has impacts in Bourne and on the bridges, and it has impacts within Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, Edgartown, and West Tisbury. Mr. DeWitt declared that the more the SSA thinks about it as a system, the more savings can be made, the more efficiencies can be added, the better the product will be for everyone, and the less impact there will be on some of the communities that are along the way of the current system.

7. Mr. Sayers then noted that Mr. DeWitt's proposal was for the SSA to seek grants for this study, and he asked whether the grants would be coming from the Maritime Administration (MARAD) or from somewhere else. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that MARAD was certainly one of the sources that the Committee had found, although he thinks there are other sources for such a grant. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt noted that the Urban Harbors Institute currently has a grant with MassDOT to look at greenhouse gas emissions associated with the SSA's freight operations, although he did not know what the source of

that funding is, and that the information which comes out of that study might be able to be used to support the idea of getting additional grants from different sources.

8. Mr. Cahill then stated that, in listening to the Committee's proposal, he had two concerns: one is the significant capital investment that would have to be involved; and second and just as important, he did not see where there would be any savings on the SSA's side. In response, Mr. DeWitt observed that the SSA would save money if it were able to reduce the number of trips it makes from carrying freight more efficiently than what it does now, which Mr. DeWitt stated he thought was the SSA's biggest expense. But Mr. Cahill stated that, if the SSA were to go forward with carrying freight other than on a roll-on/roll-off basis, there would be a significant associated labor cost both on the mainland and on the island. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that this would be a reason for doing a study, namely, to identify what those costs are.

Mr. DeWitt further observed that the SSA currently is moving a lot of air because trucks themselves have a lot of air both underneath and above them. If the SSA could put cargo on stackable small size containers, Mr. DeWitt said, it would not be moving air except coming back, but then it would be stacking the air differently and even more efficiently with perhaps trash in those containers. Although Mr. DeWitt noted that there has always been the argument that freight containers cannot be used for those kinds of things, ocean-going vessels have used containers for hazardous material sailing in one direction and consumer goods in the other direction, although there is a cost to that.

Mr. DeWitt stated that he did not know what would be the best way to do this, but that he thinks it really is a good idea to start thinking about this because the sooner the SSA starts thinking about it, the sooner it can implement this. Mr. DeWitt also noted that this represents a long-range capital investment program and that there may be federal funds, particularly from this idea of linking the interstate highway to the maritime highway, for some of the capital expenses at both sides that would be needed. In particular, Mr. DeWitt said, clearly in the next few years, reduction of greenhouse gases is going to be an important consideration for the federal government and more funds may be available if the SSA were able to connect its requests with a reduction in greenhouse gases.

Mr. Cahill stated that he liked the concept, but he asked whether Mr. DeWitt was talking about stackable containers in Woods Hole or just in New Bedford or some other port. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that the type of stackable containers he was talking about was the type that get loaded on airplanes filled with luggage. Mr. DeWitt noted that the type of containers he has seen can go on the back of a pickup truck, then be stacked three on top of each other on the boat, and then be offloaded onto a truck body for delivery on the islands. Although Mr. DeWitt acknowledged that he was not sure that is the best model, he stated that it is a different way of doing it where the SSA would be much better in utilizing space and it would also make deliveries more efficient because the SSA could target a cargo to be delivered in Menemsha, one to be delivered in Gay Head and two or three that are going to Edgartown. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, not all freight has to go immediately, so by having a freight forwarding facility, the SSA can hold and load up freight. Although Mr. DeWitt acknowledged that some of this is already being done by

Cape Cod Express, he stated that he thinks there are more efficiencies that can be built into the system as the SSA goes forward.

After Mr. Cahill again asked whether Mr. DeWitt was talking about doing those services out of Woods Hole, Mr. DeWitt stated that his sense is that Woods Hole would not be the ideal location to do a system like this because of the two-lane road connection. Instead, Mr. DeWitt said, he thought the most logical place is probably a place like New Bedford or Fall River, which are on the Interstate Highway System and where the SSA would get that bang for the buck from the federal government to not only put in for the study money but for the capital investment.

9. Mr. Cahill then noted that Mr. DeWitt had talked about the three S's of complaints and that one of the S's was smell. But Mr. Cahill observed that in all of the Woods Hole/Falmouth Noise and Traffic Mitigation Working Group meetings in which he had participated, he had never heard of any issues about smell. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that those complaints had been made with respect to trash trucks, although there had been some other complaints of smell that the Committee had uncovered. Mr. Brown stated that he also had heard that the island's waste treatment plant was currently at capacity and that effluent is being trucked off-island, and he asked if that were true. In response, Mr. Sederholm stated that, while the plant is not at capacity, the Town of Edgartown is no longer accepting sewage from other towns. Therefore, Mr. Sederholm said, he thought that if someone from another town on the island wants his or her septic pumped, after it is pumped it is stored in a separate facility and then shipped off-island to be treated.

Although Mr. DeWitt repeated that the Committee had received odor complaints, which he said was why they put "smell" in the three S's, Mr. Brathwaite stated that he had not noticed any smell from the vehicles on the ferries because of the way the stainless steel trucks that are taking it off are covered and there is nothing leaking out of them. Therefore, Mr. Brathwaite said, he was not sure where the smell would be coming from. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that he could not tell him and that all of the complaints the Committee had received were anecdotal, but that he could tell him that the Committee receives a lot of complaints about truck driving on Woods Hole Road.

10. Mr. Brathwaite then noted that Mr. DeWitt had mentioned talking with a UPS or FedEx driver who said that his truck was not full. But Mr. Brathwaite observed that those companies have a commitment to their senders to deliver stuff within certain time frames and that the amount of UPS packages being delivered to the island has grown substantially. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that the issue was whether those companies can use a smaller truck to carry the same things, which would free up more space on the boat. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt acknowledged that, when he talked to the UPS driver, the driver had said, "It's basically one size fits all," and that the incentives of "one size fits all" is a good way for UPS to do it because it makes sense for them; but Mr. DeWitt stated that it may not make sense where there is a limited resource of space on a boat and that there may be better ways to allocate that space and provide incentives for that.

11. Mr. DeWitt then recounted how, when he was on the SSA's Board, the SSA changed from charging by a vehicle's weight to charging by its length in order to promote efficiencies. But Mr. DeWitt stated that maybe there needs to be some balance between weight and length, or some penalty for emptiness, which is something that probably should be considered. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt said, one of the interesting things he has found is that the cost of goods on the island is minimally impacted by transportation costs; instead, the cost of goods is much more impacted by seasonality, real estate, rent, and those kinds of things. Mr. DeWitt observed that, for UPS, paying for the extra length of their trucks is the cost of doing business, although maybe it shouldn't be because that extra space can be used to create more capacity within the system.

Mr. Davis then explained that, when the SSA switched from charging based upon a vehicle's weight to its length, it did so in part because the commodity the SSA has available is the space on its vessels' freight decks. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thought the SSA's move was the right move to make and that he was not saying it wasn't; he is just saying that it created some other issues that are associated with it. Mr. DeWitt further stated that it is important to look at how things are incentivized or not incentivized, that if the SSA can get an extra truck on every freight boat or every boat that's carrying freight that's a good thing for everyone all around, that what the Committee is talking about is trying to maximize the existing space so the SSA does not have to add, and that the SSA should not have to increase its freight operations to 24 hours a day if it really looks at trying to design a system for the era and everything that is known know about how best to move freight.

In this regard, Mr. DeWitt observed that there are other ways to look at this problem rather than to try to fix it incrementally, and that in all of the years he has had any association with the SSA, things have been done incrementally, which he said was not necessarily a criticism but the reality of the nature of the business. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, the Committee thinks that now is a great time to look at this issue as a freight system and how best to move freight to the islands. Finally, Mr. DeWitt noted that the Committee had made these recommendations to the Falmouth Select Board and had hoped that the Select Board would pass them along to the SSA; but he stated that they had not been passed along except informally largely because the SSA had asked for them.

12. Mr. Sayers then noted that Mr. DeWitt had said the available grant money to study the SSA's freight operations is tied to the federal government's interest in tying the national highway system to the marine highway system, and he observed that people, especially island residents, would think there might be a bias in such a study to try to get an answer that says having freight service from New Bedford is the best approach, and also there would be a concern that the legitimate interest of the islanders in having their transportation system be more efficient may not be given as much consideration as they think it should be. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers asked whether there could be a study of the system that not only looks at a New Bedford option, but also looks at the Woods Hole operations, even starting from scratch, and he ask how both islanders and mainland residents can be assured that such a study would be fair.

In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that arguably any study has some bias built into it, but he noted that grants to study how the interstate highway system can tie into the maritime highway is only one source of federal money that appears to be available and that there are other sources of grant money. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, if the SSA were to write the grant proposed with what the SSA really wants to study, which is why he thinks the grant proposal should come from the SSA, then the source of the grant will decide whether to award it based upon what it is that the SSA wants to do. But Mr. DeWitt stated that he could not conceive of any scenario where a new freight transportation system in 2021 that relies on nine miles of two-lane roads through residential areas would be considered the most efficient way of moving freight, although he acknowledged that was his personal bias and has no idea what might happen. However, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thought the handwriting was on the wall in light of MassDOT awarding a grant to the Urban Harbors Institute to perform its greenhouse gas study without consulting with the SSA.

13. Mr. Brown then stated that he hoped that any study that is done would consider all options, including whether there is a more efficient way to run out of Woods Hole, even on a short-term basis, and what he was really hoping for was to come up with the best idea of how to separate the commodities of freight, as some of them are not as time-sensitive as vegetables and restaurant supplies, which will probably continue to be trucked through Woods Hole. Mr. Brown observed that if freight which is not as time-sensitive could be staged in New Bedford and be transported on bigger, slower boats, he would like the costs of such an operation to be analyzed.
14. Mr. Brown reported that, the previous week, he had attended a meeting with U.S. Representative Bill Keating and State Senator Susan Moran, and that one of the subjects they discussed was the fact that some government assistance is needed with the planning and implementation of railway connections to places like Ralph Packer's property and the surrounding waterfront in New Bedford. Mr. Brown observed that some options are needed there to provide for the ability to even consider that location because right now a study would only say "if there was a place in New Bedford, maybe something could be done." In this regard, Mr. Brown stated that it is great that the Task Force is a long-range planning committee, because it is going to take a couple of years to get anything in place in order to achieve anything and that he thinks the Task Force should keep the door open to the possibility of some freight being shipped from New Bedford, even though it may cost more. Mr. Brown further reported that he had informed Representative Keating that some kind of subsidy will have to be considered and, noting that transportation all over the country is subsidized, asked why the SSA should have to pay its own way forever. In addition, Mr. Brown asked what options the SSA will have in the future, particularly since it is already boxed into such small facilities.

In this regard, Mr. Brown observed that the SSA's route between Hyannis and Nantucket is constricted and that its route between Woods Hole and Martha's Vineyard is going to get constricted no matter how effectively trucks are loaded onto the boats. Mr. Brown declared that there is going to be a point where the SSA reaches a limit and, although there appears to be a lot more potential for growth on Martha's Vineyard, there is not that much potential for growth out of Woods Hole. Accordingly, Mr. Brown said, it will be good that

the SSA will be prepared when it reaches that tipping point due to the work the Task Force is doing now.

Mr. Brown also reported that he had told Representative Keating that the SSA is not going to be able to pay for what is needed by increasing the ticket prices of people traveling to and from Martha's Vineyard because they are already overpaying. Indeed, Mr. Brown said, the fares those people are paying are probably more than double what the average subsidized fares are in Seattle. Mr. Brown observed that those Seattle fares are subsidized by the government, and he asked why the SSA's fares shouldn't be subsidized as well. In addition, Mr. Brown stated that if a study concludes that a freight operation from New Bedford is going to cost more, there also should be a study of how much islanders are paying for their transportation compared to what everyone else is paying, and he asked why the government is not contributing to this transportation initiative the way it contributes billions of dollars to the MBTA, Washington State Ferries and countless other entities.

15. Mr. Sayers asked Mr. DeWitt how the SSA would identify a firm in order to conduct such a study. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thinks the SSA would have to do this through a request for proposals (RFP), and that university think tanks that have multitudes of transportation engineers on staff would be very capable of conducting such a study, although it may be outside the scope of the Urban Harbors Institute. Mr. DeWitt also noted that MARAD probably would be a great source to talk to in order to find out who has conducted good studies on similar issues in the past.

In response to another question from Mr. Sayers as to whether there are annual deadlines for grant applications, Mr. DeWitt stated that it depends on which agency is providing the grants; some agencies have specific deadlines for grant applications while other agencies are open all of the time for applications. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, given the recent change in administrations, he thinks the SSA is in a more favorable climate for receiving grant money than it would have been last year, just because there is now more interest in reducing environmental and climate-related impacts by reducing trips, as well as making the system more efficient.

16. But Mr. Sederholm stated that he had a hard time believing that, even if a more efficient freight operation were implemented, the SSA would operate any fewer trips, observing that if more deck space is opened up on boats, it is going to get filled up by cars and that he, for one, is not particularly interested in having more cars on Martha's Vineyard. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that would be another management issue the SSA can deal with, and that other islands have dealt with those kinds of management issues by restricting the number of vehicles.

However, Mr. Brathwaite stated that such restrictions would be against the law and that the SSA cannot legislate who can bring a car to the island because, once the SSA does that, it is making a choice as to whether it is going to be a rich person, a white person or a Black person. Mr. Brathwaite noted that there is no subjective way to be able to determine who the SSA is going to bring to the island by limiting the number of cars and saying that people cannot come. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that the SSA can impose such a limit if it has

limited capacity and a rational basis for doing so. For example, Mr. DeWitt said, the SSA could allow residents to make reservations first, and then allow everyone else to make reservations on a first-come/first-served basis. But Mr. Brathwaite observed that, even then, some island residents cannot afford the fares as much as people with means can, and the SSA would be penalizing those island residents who do not have the means to buy their reservations earlier in time. In addition, Mr. Brathwaite said, under the Massachusetts public accommodations law, the SSA cannot distinguish between residents and non-residents. Nevertheless, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thought the SSA could come up with a system that could reduce the number of cars that are allowed on the island and that it could come up with a number of really good reasons why it wants to do that.

Mr. Brown then suggested that the island might have resident stickers that cost less and then a number of non-resident stickers that would be much more expensive, which would make it a luxury for tourists to bring their cars to the island and result in regular tourists relying on buses, taxis or bicycles to get around the island. In response, Mr. Brathwaite noted that a taxi on the island costs \$20 per person, which amounts to \$80 for a family of four. As a result, Mr. Brathwaite said, it is not practical for a visitor not to have a car on the island because every time a family wants to go somewhere they will have to spend another \$80 each way coming and going.

Mr. Chatinover observed that this was a conversation the Task Force has had in the past and which was worth continuing to have because there is going to be a point where it is simply not possible to put any more cars on the island and the Task Force needs to take a serious look at this. Indeed, Mr. Vercruysse noted that any truly comprehensive study of the system would have to conclude that the problem is the need to provide non-motorized vehicle ways for people to get to Woods Hole and then public transportation on the island as well, as providing a real way for people to travel and get around other than in a car is the only realistic disincentive for people to travel by car.

17. Mr. Brathwaite then stated that one of the other things he hoped the study would look at is the limited space that the SSA has at Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven for both parking and staging, and its inability to expand around those ports. As a result, Mr. Brathwaite said, a long-term solution may be to add another port, although Ralph Packer's facility, which is the nearest facility to the SSA's Vineyard Haven terminal, is going to be tied up for the next five years with the Vineyard Wind Project. Mr. Brathwaite also noted that there is no place to stage the containers that Mr. DeWitt was suggesting and that even Carroll's stages his materials almost one-half mile away, where he puts them into his trucks so that they can drive down and go right on the boats from his operation.

Mr. Sederholm corrected Mr. Brathwaite's comment that Mr. Packer's facility will be tied up only for the next five years, observing that Vineyard Wind may be using that facility to service its turbines indefinitely. However, Mr. Brown noted that Mr. Packer had told them that there is a slip on the other side of his property which will not be used by Vineyard Wind where he plans to continue his freight operation. Mr. Sederholm agreed, saying that it is quite clear that Mr. Packer wants to expand his freight operation because, although he has not justified it, he is asking for permission to build two new ramps.

Mr. Brown then stated that he personally thought the SSA would not have to build more infrastructure to handle more freight if more freight were handled by Mr. Packer or other private haulers, and that he thought a study should take into consideration how much revenue the SSA would lose if it were to consider the options of allowing private haulers to take some of the load. And again, Mr. Brown said, that is where a subsidy has to come in, as he really believed that a subsidy is going to have to come into play to offset the losses and keep the SSA viable with this lost revenue.

But Mr. Sederholm stated that the problem with subsidies is that they become very political and susceptible to forces that aren't necessarily intended to create the best result. In this regard, Mr. Sederholm observed that the SSA is very unique and has done an admirable job given the fact that it does not receive money from anybody. In response, Mr. Brown stated that he did not disagree, but was just saying that he thinks that islanders pay the highest ticket prices and are also running out of space. In turn, Mr. Sederholm agreed that the island was definitely running out of space and observed that any infrastructure changes on the island will be very challenging because, other than Mr. Packer's facilities, there are no options. In this regard, Mr. Brown suggested that there might be an efficient and effective method for Mr. Packer to move more freight, as he can run more barges. Indeed, Mr. Brown said, Mr. Packer himself stated that he currently runs only two or three barges a week and that he could run more if he had the stuff to move.

18. Mr. Brathwaite then stated that the most effective way to make more use of Mr. Packer's barges would be to compact the refuse that is at the transfer station and barge that refuse off-island. But Mr. Brathwaite noted that such a compacting operation has an initial outlay of about \$600,000 for the machine, not counting the other essentials, and that it probably would cost around \$1,000,000 just to set that up. After Mr. Sederholm observed that this also did not include whatever it will cost to treat the slurry, Mr. Brown suggested that there may be another federal grant somewhere for such an operation.
19. Mr. Vercruysse then observed that the movement on the island is to try to reduce trash to zero by composting and recycling everything, and that the island is not going to be buying a trash compactor. Rather, Mr. Vercruysse said, he was almost positive that the island is going to be building a recycling and composting facility, and he thinks that it is in the works already. Accordingly, Mr. Vercruysse stated that in the future there will not be a lot of trash to haul off. However, Mr. Brown stated that he thinks Nantucket is getting ready to haul solid waste off-island again because it has not been able to process as much as they had hoped.

In response to a question from Mr. Cahill, Mr. Brown confirmed that Nantucket has been composting for more than 20 years, and stated that he had toured their facility last year. At that time, Mr. Brown said, Nantucket was faced with coming close to capacity for composting product because composting is not as effective or efficient as Nantucket had hoped it would be. Although Mr. Brown stated that Nantucket has done a good job, he observed that they are at the point where they are starting to realize that it is only a matter

of time before they will have to start trucking the stuff off-island, although the amount will be less because it is compacted.

Mr. Cahill then stated that he thought it would be great if the island built a composting and recycling facility, observing that literally thousands of tons of composting could be processed locally. Mr. Brown also noted that Martha's Vineyard probably has more capacity than Nantucket because it is a bigger island, and Mr. Sederholm observed that the island has a lot of local farms that would be happy to get it. Accordingly, Mr. Cahill asked whether the Task Force would be in favor of having composting as one of their topics for a future meeting, and Mr. Sayers stated that he would find out who might be able to make a presentation on that subject for their next meeting.

Mr. Brathwaite observed that, while composting may take care of paper and garbage, the island will still have an issue with plastic and cans, which may be another subject to explore at some point. In response, Mr. Brown suggested that the island could start banning those products and have people use corn starch instead, observing that there are now plates, knives, forks and spoons that are made out of cornstarch that can all be composted.

20. Mr. Sayers observed that even the possibility of a study into the SSA's freight operations has opened up many more inquiries about the rest of the SSA's and the island's traffic situation. Therefore, Mr. Sayers asked Mr. DeWitt whether there could be a global or comprehensive study that would look not only into the SSA's basic freight operations for more efficiency but also into what the unintended consequences may be in terms of additional car traffic potential. In addition, Mr. Sayers asked whether, if the SSA were to start this process in order to decide what type of study to have, it would be a better idea for the SSA to partner with the Martha's Vineyard Commission or the Cape Cod Commission in order to increase the chances of funding with MARAD or other grant sources. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that he thought the SSA has to be careful because if it makes it too complex, it is going to be very difficult for a grant agency to say that it fits within its umbrella for funding. Accordingly, Mr. DeWitt said, the SSA may be better off if it were to think of the different elements of what it wants to study and then pursue them in a coordinated and phased way. Mr. DeWitt noted that, in his experience with grants, agencies have a particular mandate and agenda to carry out certain kinds of things, and grant applicants match their applications with what the agencies are trying to accomplish. Mr. DeWitt noted that this is why the Committee identified MARAD as one of the possible sources of grant funding because of the interstate to marine highway connection, which seemed to be a good fit for this particular system.

Public Comment

21. Mr. Sayers then reported that, in the Zoom chatbox, Mary Longacre has asked, "Has there been any investigation of moving freight by air rather than sea?" Mr. Sayers noted that this was another subject that the Task Force make look at, and he stated that Mr. DeWitt may know something about it as well. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that the airplanes flying to the island have really, really limited capacity so, while they are flying light

amounts of cargo that is generally high precious cargo, they cannot carry the volume that FedEx does, although FedEx does fly freight into the island. Mr. Cahill agreed, saying that he had learned that the FedEx plane currently averages 1,500 pounds a day, five days a week, during the off-season, and 2,500 pounds a day, six days a week, during the peak season, which was not a lot.

22. Mr. Sayers also reported that Ms. Longacre was encouraging the Task Force to talk to Rob McNeil, the head of the Public Works department on Nantucket, about how Nantucket handles trash now. In addition, Mr. Brown stated that there is a woman who works at that facility who is very knowledgeable and helpful, and that she would be very informative about how the machine works and doesn't work, and what challenges are involved.¹ In this regard, Mr. Brown stated that he would not mind hearing a presentation on composting at the Task Force's next meeting because he would like to see such an operation get started in Falmouth as well, and the other Task Force members agreed.
23. Mr. DeWitt then thanked the Task Force for inviting him to participate in this meeting, saying that, based upon their reactions, he thought they might now be more receptive to his ideas than when he started. Mr. DeWitt also thanked them for what they are doing because he thinks that this is really something important, not only to the island but the entire region. Mr. DeWitt observed that coming up with a good plan is really important, he thanked them again for all of the time and energy they have devoted to all of this, and he applauded them on their composting efforts, saying that he thought zero waste is a great goal to have.

Approval of the Minutes of the Task Force's January 14, 2021 Meeting

24. The Task Force then **voted** (with Messrs. Brathwaithe, Brown, Cahill, Chatinover, Sederholm, Suso and Vercruysse voting in favor) to approve the minutes of the Task Force's January 14, 2021 meeting in public session.

The Task Force's Next Meeting

25. The Task Force then agreed to leave open the date of their next meeting, which will begin at 4:30 p.m. on a Thursday based upon the availability of the appropriate people to make a presentation on Martha's Vineyard's composting initiatives and Nantucket's experience with its composting operations.

¹ **Reporter's Note:** Mr. Brown was remembering Graeme Durovich, the Recycling/Solid Waste Coordinator for the Nantucket Department of Public Works.

Then, at approximately 5:51 p.m., the Task Force unanimously voted (with Messrs. Brathwaite, Brown, Cahill, Chatinover, Sederholm, Suso and Vercruysse voting in favor) to adjourn their meeting that day.

A TRUE RECORD

Steven M. Sayers

Approved by the Task Force at their meeting
on April 29, 2021

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Task Force's March 18, 2021 Meeting

1. Draft Agenda for the Task Force's March 18, 2021 Meeting (dated March 12, 2021).
2. Draft letter from Ed DeWitt, Chair of the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee, regarding that committee's recommendation that the SSA, in partnership with port communities and MassDOT, develop appropriate grant applications for funding to carry out an investigation of freight options and improvements to provide a reliable and adequate system to move freight between Martha's Vineyard and the mainland. The committee's preliminary report in which that recommendation is made is included as part of that document
3. Draft Minutes of the Task Force's January 14, 2021 meeting in public session (dated March 9, 2021).