

**MINUTES
OF THE
WOODS HOLE/FALMOUTH NOISE & TRAFFIC MITIGATION WORKING GROUP
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA’S VINEYARD
AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

July 28, 2021

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

<u>Working Group Member</u>	<u>Appointing Authority</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>
Stephen Araujo	Tisbury Select Board	Present
John Cahill	Dukes County Commissioners	Absent
Alison Fletcher	Steamship Authority	Present
Doug Jones	Falmouth Select Board	Present
Mike Mauro	Martha’s Vineyard Commission	Present
Michael Santoro	Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen	Absent
Steven Sayers	Steamship Authority	Present
Nathaniel Trumbull	Falmouth Select Board	Present

Also Participating:

Peter McConarty, Director of Public Works for the Town of Falmouth
James McLoughlin, Town Engineer for the Town of Falmouth

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 3:00 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. When no one responded, Mr. Sayers stated that he assumed no one else was making a recording of the meeting.
2. Mr. Sayers then announced that, in accordance with section 20 of chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, the SSA has ensured public access to the deliberations of the Working Group today for interested members of the public via Zoom, and that the link to access this meeting via Zoom has been provided in the meeting notice for today's meeting. Mr. Sayers further stated that, also pursuant to that statute, all of the Working Group members were participating remotely in today's meeting by the Zoom video conferencing app and that all members will be clearly audible to each other.
3. Mr. Sayers then thanked Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin for participating in today’s meeting, noting that their attendance was due to a recommendation that Mr. Mauro had made to the Falmouth Select Board.

Approval of the Minutes of the Working Group's April 28, 2021 Meeting

4. The Working Group members then **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Jones, Mauro and Trumbull voting in favor) to approve the minutes of the Working Group's April 28, 2021 meeting in public session.

MassDOT's Response to the Town of Falmouth's Request to Post Additional No Speeding Signs on Woods Hole Road

5. Mr. Sayers noted that the next item on the agenda was MassDOT's response to the Town of Falmouth's request for additional no speeding or similar signs on Woods Hole Road and to conduct spot checks of freight truck weights, which he shared on his computer screen with the other Working Group members. Mr. Sayers then asked Messrs. Trumbull, McConarty and McLoughlin whether they had any ideas about how the Working Group could continue to pursue this subject, noting that MassDOT's letter suggested that the Town can request a meeting with MassDOT, possibly install electronic speed feedback signs, and contact the Massachusetts State Police for weight checks. Mr. Sayers also suggested that, if a new speed study were conducted, perhaps it could only be for certain portions of Woods Hole Road that are more problematic than others.

In response, Mr. McConarty noted that Woods Hole Road is under MassDOT jurisdiction and that the Town might be able to request MassDOT to add signage to the roadway. Further, Mr. McConarty said, MassDOT might allow the Town to install driver feedback signs, provided that the Town, and not the State, will be responsible to monitor and maintain them. In this regard, Mr. McConarty observed that those signs usually are solar powered and, as a result, do not need electricity; but that tree branches and brush may need to be cleared back from the signs. Finally, Mr. McConarty stated that, as far as he knew, no one from the Town's Department of Public Works has reached out to MassDOT about any of these issues since the letter has been received.

Mr. Trumbull then reported that the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee did reach out to MassDOT Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Kenneth Charlton after this letter came in regarding a couple of incidents with school buses and that, according to Ed DeWitt, the Committee's Chair, that issue did get Mr. Charlton's attention.

Meeting Notice for Today's Working Group Meeting

6. SSA Communications Director Sean Driscoll then interrupted the meeting to inform the Working Group that he had just learned that, while the meeting notice for today's meeting contained the correct Zoom link, the text above the link inadvertently provided the meeting ID for the SSA's Board meeting rather than this meeting. Therefore, Mr. Driscoll said, if anyone from the public is trying to attend the meeting via Zoom by typing in the meeting ID, they won't be able to join the meeting, although they are able to join the meeting by clicking on the link. Mr. Driscoll apologized for not catching that discrepancy before the

meeting notice was issued and observed that, because the meeting already had started 11 minutes ago, it was too late for the notice to be reissued. But Mr. Driscoll stated that he felt it best to tell the Working Group about the issue so that they could all decide how they wanted to proceed.

In response, Mr. Sayers observed that, in addition to the meeting's participants, there were then seven attendees at the meeting. Mr. Jones also reported that he had actually tried to participate in the meeting by typing in the meeting ID, which resulted him being put on hold, and that he then switched and clicked on the link instead. Mr. Jones stated that he thought this is probably what most people would do if they tried typing the meeting ID and it didn't work.

After Mr. Driscoll confirmed that the meeting notice provides the correct link for joining the meeting, although not in both places, Mr. Sayers suggested that, given that the Working Group already had started the meeting, they continue with it, noting that Woods Hole resident Catherine Bumpus also had used the link to join the meeting after having first tried to type in the meeting ID. Mr. Sayers also asked Mr. Driscoll if he could post a corrected meeting notice immediately. In response, Mr. Driscoll stated that he could do that immediately and also send an update to everyone who subscribes to the SSA's public meeting notices through GovDelivery. After Mr. Sayers observed that those actions would hopefully correct the situation if they could be done quickly, Mr. Driscoll stated that he would do them right now.

MassDOT's Response to the Town of Falmouth's Request to Post Additional No Speeding Signs on Woods Hole Road

7. Mr. Trumbull then stated that, after having read MassDOT's letter, he was not convinced that MassDOT had received the SSA's letter supporting the Town's request because he thought that MassDOT would have at least referred to it. In addition, Mr. Trumbull noted that the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee was recommending that the Town authorize the purchase of six speed feedback signs at the next Town Meeting through the use of the Town's embarkation fees. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull stated that he had heard that the cost of those six signs was around \$40,000 and that they would be installed at the best locations, which remain to be determined.

Mr. McConarty then recounted how there had been a fatality on Route 151 earlier this year and, in response, the Town engaged with the public to see what improvements could be made in that area. Mr. McConarty stated that one of the improvements under consideration is the installation of speed feedback signs where the speed limit is 50 miles per hour. In this regard, Mr. McConarty noted that the signs would be solar powered, that they would cost around \$5,500 each, that the Town would install them to keep the cost down as it previously has done, that the Town also would buy additional parts for them in case something breaks, as it would be the Town's responsibility to maintain them, and that the signs can be effective as long as the Town does not install too many of them.

Mr. Jones then asked Mr. McConarty what the next step would be to get a sign on Woods Hole Road and whether it would be up to Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin to figure out where it should be installed and to obtain a permit for it from the State. In response, Mr. McConarty stated that, in order to obtain a permit, the Town will have to submit a plan to MassDOT and a traffic management plan for the work to be done. But Mr. McConarty noted that because all of the work will be done on the highway's shoulder, the amount of traffic management that will be needed is minimal and basically will consist of signage to let motorists know that work is being performed in the roadway.

Specifically, Mr. McConarty stated that, in order to start the process, the Town will have to put a plan together showing the areas where it would like to install the signs, request an access permit to get onto the highway, and submit the information. Mr. McConarty also noted that, while MassDOT's requirements are not a problem, it is very particular on the signage that can be used and it will want the Town to use certain vendors. Mr. McConarty stated that the Town would then fill out the forms and submit all of the information, and that the documents would then go through MassDOT's permitting department for approval before going through all of MassDOT's other departments and returned to the Town. In this regard, Mr. McConarty noted that the last time the Town went through this process, it took several months to complete.

Mr. Jones then noted that the Falmouth Select Board, not the Working Group, are the ones who need to ask the DPW to apply for a permit. Mr. McConarty agreed, noting that if the Select Board were to ask DPW now to begin the process, the paperwork probably would be completed by the time of the next Town Meeting when the Town will be asked to authorize the purchase of six signs.

Mr. Jones then observed that the six signs being considered are for installation across the entire town, not just for Woods Hole Road, and that motorists would start ignoring them if they were all installed on Woods Hole Road. But Mr. Trumbull stated that he was not sure, although Goodwill Park was a proposed location for one or two of the signs. In this regard, Mr. McConarty observed that Goodwill Park was where the highway goes from being double-barrel to single-barrel and the speed limit reduces to 45 miles per hour, although motorists continue to travel at 60 miles per hour there. Accordingly, Mr. McConarty said, Mr. McLoughlin is currently working with MassDOT to install a crosswalk system in that area, and it might be a good location for one of these signs as well.

8. After Mr. Jones stated that he thought one or two more signs would be needed on Woods Hole Road itself, Mr. McConarty agreed, noting that the Town was looking at installing three signs both eastbound and westbound on Route 151. Further, Mr. McConarty said, if the Town were to install them at two locations, it probably would install four signs so that they are on both sides of the road.

Mr. Trumbull suggested that another location for a sign would be the hill going north as motorists approach the bike path, observing that motorists speed when they drive from the crest of that hill. After Mr. Sayers agreed, Mr. Trumbull asked Mr. McConarty what he would study to determine the best locations. In response, Mr. McConarty stated that he

would drive the roadway to review its speed limits and see where there would be enough room to install a sign. For example, Mr. McConarty said, there is an island where there are two entrances to Elm Road, and there is another island around 300 feet prior to the crossing with the bike path, which also would be good for a solar powered sign because it has plenty of southern exposure and not much foliage. Mr. McConarty also noted that while the signs have to be sufficiently off the roadway so they are not hit by vehicles or snowplows during the winter, they also have to be in places where motorists can see them in order to be effective.

After Mr. McConarty stated that his recommendation would be that the Town put together a plan that shows all of the proposed locations, instead of submitting separate plans for each location, Mr. Jones asked whether he felt that the Goodwill Park location should be part of this plan. Mr. McConarty stated he did, and Mr. Jones stated that he agreed.

Mr. Mauro then thanked Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin for attending the Working Group's meeting, and observed that the Town's request to MassDOT had been a good first step. Mr. Mauro also declared that everything which Mr. McConarty had stated was correct, and suggested that the Working Group defer to Mr. McConarty's discretion on where the signs should be located. Accordingly, Mr. Mauro said, he supported the letter and everything that Mr. McConarty had just stated.

Mr. Sayers stated that he also agreed with Mr. Trumbull's suggested location for a sign northbound on Woods Hole Road approaching the bike path, and he then shared his computer screen again showing photographs of Woods Hole Road going southbound from the fire station towards the village. Specifically, Mr. Sayers said, he thought a particularly problematic area for Woods Hole residents was just after the golf course where the speed limits slows from 40 miles per hour to 35 miles per hour at the top of the hill, and then slows down to 20 miles per hour as the road enters the village. As a result, Mr. Sayers said, drivers use their engine brakes on this portion of the highway going down the hill because they do not slow down quickly enough.

After Mr. Jones suggested that a sign at that location could also warn drivers that the speed limit is 20 miles per hour ahead, Mr. Sayers asked Mr. McConarty whether feedback signs can tell drivers of a change of speed limit ahead or whether they can only be based on what the speed limit is at the place of the sign. In response, Mr. McConarty stated that there are different technologies, but typically the signs are used when the Town wants to enforce a speed limit at a particular location. However, Mr. McConarty also noted that signs can not only provide feedback on vehicles' speed, but also collect data that can be the basis for statistics showing what percentages of vehicles are traveling at different speeds.

Mr. McConarty then asked whether drivers typically slow down to 20 miles per hour by the time they reach the 20-mile-per-hour speed limit sign as they enter the village. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he suspects they are going faster and that those who do slow down to 20 miles per hour turn left over the Crane Street bridge rather than continue onto Water Street. After Mr. McConarty observed that Ms. Bumpus also had typed in the chatbox that people are going faster there, he stated that it might be an area where the Town

may want to enforce the speed limit, as vehicles are leaving the highway and coming into a business area.

In response to a question from Mr. Jones, Mr. McConarty stated that he thought the Falmouth Police would enforce the speed limit on Woods Hole Road even though it is a State highway, although he stated that question really should be posed to Falmouth Chief of Police Edward Dunne. In this regard, Messrs. Trumbull and Sayers stated that their memory was that Chief Dunne had told them that the Falmouth Police can enforce the speed limit on Woods Hole Road, although Mr. Jones observed that it was understandably not a top priority for the department.

Mr. Sayers then suggested that another possible location for a sign might be for vehicles traveling southbound on Woods Hole Road just north of the intersection with Quisset Harbor Road, as the speed limit there reduces to 25 miles per hour so that drivers are prepared to stop in case the traffic light is red when they get to the intersection. Mr. Sayers noted that drivers often do not slow down to 25 miles per hour there and, as a result, engine brakes are used a lot when vehicles encounter a red light. But Mr. Sayers emphasized that the selection of the locations was Mr. McConarty's decision, although he wanted to relay to him the problematic areas that the Working Group had talked about over the past few months.

9. Mr. Jones then asked whether the SSA or the Working Group could draft a letter to the Falmouth Select Board asking them to go through the process of choosing the right locations and applying for the permits. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he was happy to draft the letter if the Working Group members agreed, but that the letter would be from the Working Group, not the SSA, as he did not have any authority to write a letter on behalf of the SSA. Mr. Jones declared that he thought that would be great, and Mr. Trumbull also stated that he would appreciate it. Mr. McConarty then observed that, while the Falmouth DPW can prepare most of the paperwork, it might be helpful to retain a traffic consultant and that, if it is, the Town has an on-call traffic consultant who can be asked to look at the Town's proposed areas.

Mr. Sayers then asked the Working Group members whether anyone had a problem with a letter being sent to the Falmouth Select Board asking them to go through the process. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that she had no issues with it. Mr. Trumbull then suggested that Mr. Araujo be asked for proposed locations because he drives on Woods Hole Road more than the other Working Group members. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that he thought all of the proposed locations were good ones, although he cautioned against putting up too many signs because people will just block them out. But Mr. Araujo stated that, even if people don't look at the signs, he had no qualms with having them installed.

10. Mr. McConarty then suggested that the Working Group might also ask the Falmouth Select Board to request MassDOT to bring in its tree team to brush back the edges of the road. Mr. McConarty stated that he knew MassDOT has done this in the past, but the brush is always growing out into the roadway and it needs to be brushed back for people to be able to see existing signage and also for the new signage that will be installed. Mr. Araujo

agreed, observing that there are some places on Woods Hole Road where a vehicle almost has to go into the other lane of traffic to get around some branches.

11. Mr. Jones then asked Mr. Sayers whether he had enough direction for the purpose of drafting the letter. After Mr. Sayers said he did, the Working Group **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Jones, Mauro and Trumbull voting in favor) to authorize Mr. Sayers to send a letter on behalf of the Working Group, not on behalf of the SSA, to the Falmouth Select Board asking them to:
 - (a) apply for a permit from MassDOT for the installation of speed feedback signs along the State highway leading to Woods Hole;
 - (b) request MassDOT to schedule a tree trimming and sight distance clearing project along this corridor; and
 - (c) request the Massachusetts State Police to take enforcement action against overweight trucks.

12. After Mr. Sayers stated that he would get the letter out to the Falmouth Select Board, he suggested that the Working Group wait and see what happens with the speed feedback signs before considering whether to pursue a possible speed study for Woods Hole Road, as such a study would be very complicated and expensive even for a short part of the road. Mr. Jones agreed, observing that the data from the signs might also be helpful moving forward. Mr. Trumbull also stated that the speed feedback signs might lower the speed of vehicles traveling on Woods Hole Road and that the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee was not interested in a speed study because it might result in an increase of the road's speed limit.

Mr. Sayers then asked Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin whether they had any other suggestions. In response, Mr. McConarty stated that he thought putting up the signs was a good approach, and Mr. McLoughlin agreed.

Traffic Backups on Woods Hole Road

13. Mr. Sayers then noted that the next item on the agenda was a report on the SSA's efforts to eliminate the unacceptable traffic backups from the Woods Hole Terminal and to stop vehicles from crossing the double yellow line on Crane Street to get around other vehicles waiting to check-in. In this regard, Mr. Sayers recounted how, in earlier meetings of the Working Group, he had stated that he thought the SSA would be able to prevent traffic backups on Woods Hole Road by implementing new standby procedures, but that he obviously was wrong and had to apologize profusely. Mr. Sayers observed that, over the past two months, the SSA had failed not only the test on that issue, but the entire course, and that he did not know whether there is a way the SSA can stop those backups during standby days without implementing a very extensive online standby program that the SSA does not have in place yet.

Mr. Araujo then stated that he also had seen the traffic backups on Woods Hole Road, but that they were not always due to SSA standby traffic. Rather, Mr. Araujo said, some of the backups were due to bottlenecks because Water Street it is not wide enough to allow two vehicles to travel in opposite directions when there are cars parked on both sides of the street. Accordingly, Mr. Araujo stated that there several reasons for the traffic backups at that bad location and that he did not think the SSA should be blamed for all of them.

Nevertheless, Mr. Sayers stated that, based upon the numerous complaints and photographs of backups the SSA had received, there were many more times when the backups were due to the SSA's inability to process all of the customers arriving at the Woods Hole terminal with open tickets and reservations for future times. Mr. Sayers observed that the SSA thought it was going to be able to eliminate those backups, but it hasn't been able to do so, although he noted that Ms. Fletcher was going to report on what the SSA will be doing to make certain they don't happen for the rest of the year.

Ms. Fletcher then stated that the traffic backups were occurring despite the best efforts of the SSA's employees at the Woods Hole terminal, and that they always occur between 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. when there is a mad rush of customers showing up at the terminal either with open tickets or reservations for later in the day or even reservations for a later day. Ms. Fletcher noted that, unfortunately, the SSA was short staffed at the moment, but that the employees were doing their best to shorten the lines of cars as much as possible by processing them as fast as they can.

After Mr. Jones observed that eliminating standby travel would eliminate the problem and may be the only solution to the problem, Mr. Sayers agreed that the traffic backups had not been occurring on reservation-only days. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA's staff was considering whether to ask the Port Council and the SSA's Board at their August 2021 meetings to extend the reservation-only weekends (Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays) this year from Labor Day to Columbus Day. Mr. Sayers stated that the staff was doing that in order to provide sufficient notice to the traveling public that the SSA's reservation-only days on the Martha's Vineyard route may be extended this year.

Mr. Sayers also stated that, while the SSA was doing a better job preventing traffic backups at the Woods Hole terminal, as he did not think they had occurred for the past few weeks, the SSA cannot assure anyone that it won't happen again. But Mr. Sayers reported that, for next year, the SSA's staff also was considering whether there should be reservation-only days for the entire summer operating schedule.

After Mr. Jones stated that the SSA could have reservation-only days for the entire summer schedule this year, Mr. Sayers noted that the staff was looking at only whether they can be extended this year on the weekends between Labor Day and Columbus Day, observing that there might be a legal issue because the SSA's advertisements of its operating schedules may have stated when standby travel would be available and when there would be reservation-only days. But Mr. Jones stated that the SSA could change those days due to exigent circumstances, the same way the SSA changes its schedules due to mechanical failures or other events, because on standby days the traffic is backed up on Woods Hole

Road all the way past the Dome, which can't be allowed to happen. Mr. Jones also observed that going to reservation-only days seven days a week is the only solution that anyone can come up with, and not for lack of trying, and while he applauded the SSA for trying everything possible except for the one thing that would work, he now declared that the SSA needs to go with the one thing that does work.

In response, Mr. Sayers again stated that, for next year, the SSA's staff was considering having reservation-only days on the Martha's Vineyard route for the entire summer operating schedule, but that there are complications with doing that for the remainder of this summer. For example, Mr. Sayers said, there are island residents who already have left Martha's Vineyard on excursion fares and/or preferred spaces with open tickets coming back to the island because they have not needed to make return reservations. In response, Mr. Jones then suggested that the SSA can make exceptions for those people and still reduce the problem, but Mr. Sayers observed that, when traffic was backed up past the Dome on June 23, 2021, it was reported that 80% of the people in line were island residents returning to the island on open tickets. Mr. Sayers also noted that some island businesses depend on customers who decide to travel to the island at the last minute, and that they tell those customers that they can take their cars on standby. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, the way to make progress on this issue would be to try to extend reservation-only days this year on weekends through Columbus Day, and then to try to have reservation-only days seven days a week for the entire summer operating schedule next year, which is what he understood the SSA's staff was considering and, personally, what he thought should happen.

Mr. Jones then suggested that the SSA could limit standby travel to only island residents and require visitors to have vehicle reservations, but Mr. Sayers noted that, in the worst incident last month, 80% of the customers causing the traffic backup were island residents. In this regard, Mr. Sayers observed that the SSA's staff has acknowledged that it has not yet successfully addressed the problem and that they are considering some changes, with the only issues being the extent and quickness of the changes.

Mr. Mauro then observed that, in the SSA's July 2021 newsletter, the SSA actually has set forth the reservation-only dates for the 2021 summer operating schedule, telling the public that they can travel on standby three days a week during July and August and then a lot more days after Labor Day. But Mr. Trumbull noted that island residents traveling on excursion fares have to return to the island within 31 days, so the SSA should be able to change the rules beginning after that period without affecting any island residents. Although Mr. Sayers agreed, he pointed out that the policy would not be able to be changed until the SSA Board's August meeting, so island residents traveling before then would still expect to be able to return to the island on standby sometime in September.

Mr. Trumbull then suggested that the SSA solicit the views of its Woods Hole terminal employees, because he did not think they were big fans of standby and he thought every one of them would be in favor of having all reservation-only days. Mr. Sayers stated that he did not disagree with Mr. Trumbull, but that in order to have more reservation-only days the SSA will need to hire additional reservation clerks because the SSA has to provide

customers with the ability to contact the Reservations Department later in the day on reservation-only days to make reservations for those days, and that he did not know whether the SSA would be able to hire enough reservation clerks. Ms. Fletcher agreed, saying that, at the moment, the SSA does not have enough reservation clerks to expand reservation-only days to seven days a week.

14. Mr. Sayers then observed that, during the traffic backups, after vehicles turn left onto the Crane Street bridge, a lot of them, including the SSA's own shuttle buses, cross the double-yellow line into the opposite lane of traffic in order to get around the line of cars that are waiting to check in at the terminal. Mr. Sayers stated that, in order to correct that situation, the SSA was wondering whether there might be a possibility of putting up stanchions on the double-yellow lines from the Crane Street bridge to the intersection of Crane Street and Cowdry Road to keep cars on their side of the road.

In response, Mr. McConarty stated that the SSA could take a look at foldable stanchions, but that the Crane Street bridge and a portion of the road south of the bridge are owned by the State. Although Mr. Jones suggested that, in order for the stanchions to work, they would need to be placed before the bridge where drivers begin to cut into the opposite lane, Mr. Trumbull observed that drivers are cutting over to the opposite lane when they are on the bridge as well. Mr. Trumbull also reported that he had raised this issue with some homeowners on Juniper Point who similarly have to cut into oncoming traffic to get home and that, while he thought the installation of stanchions was not a bad idea, he suggested that the SSA work with those neighbors to try to find if there can be some other solution. Mr. Trumbull also noted that, during traffic backups, everyone cuts into the ongoing traffic lane, including all types of buses, not just the SSA's shuttle buses. Mr. Sayers then suggested that the Working Group defer this subject for the moment in the hope that the traffic backups will be addressed by increasing the number of reservation-only days.

15. Although Mr. Trumbull stated that he did not believe SSA employees in the check-in booth could see when traffic was backing up on the bridge, Ms. Fletcher disagreed, saying that they do know what is going on. Ms. Fletcher also noted that, even when only a few cars are backed up at the check-in booth, the SSA assigns extra employees there and those employees go directly to the cars that are waiting up the hill to check them in.
16. Mr. Trumbull then suggested that the SSA also consider using the Palmer Avenue parking lot as a waiting area for standby customers, although he acknowledged that it may not be popular and that he did not know whether it would work. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that this might create even more traffic congestion, as standby customers would still drive down to Woods Hole and then have to drive back to Palmer Avenue and drive down a second time to Woods Hole. In addition, Ms. Fletcher observed that Woods Hole terminal employees already turn away a lot of customers who arrive hoping to park there, even though the SSA has signs telling them where to park and that there is no parking in Woods Hole. Mr. Sayers agreed, saying that SSA General Manager Robert Davis had mentioned to him that, when he has been at the Woods Hole terminal while there have been traffic backups, he had been surprised at how many of the arriving customers were there to find

parking spaces. Indeed, Ms. Fletcher said, for every five cars that arrive at the terminal, the SSA turns away one or two of them who are there looking to park.

Mr. Sayers then suggested that perhaps the SSA could find a location on Palmer Avenue between Jones Road and the Palmer Avenue parking lot to put another sign that tells drivers there is no SSA parking in Woods Hole, but Mr. Araujo stated that if too many signs are put up, nobody will read them. In this regard, Mr. Araujo observed that the SSA already has a variable message sign on Route 28 that tells people exactly where to park, yet SSA customers still drive down to Woods Hole. Mr. Araujo stated that the problem is that people just are not reading the signs that are already there, not that the SSA's Woods Hole terminal employees are not doing their job.

In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that some form of institutionalized standby system before customers get to Woods Hole Road might help solve the problem, observing that now there is a perception that one has to get to Woods Hole for a better chance to travel on standby. But Ms. Fletcher stated that she did not know whether it would work, although she was not saying it was not a good idea, as unfortunately the SSA cannot even get its customers to follow its signs regarding parking.

Noise Monitoring Programs

17. After reporting that Cape Cod Commission Transportation Program Manager Steven Tupper had informed him that the Cape Cod Commission has not maintained a noise monitoring program and does not have any noise monitoring equipment, Mr. Sayers asked Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin whether the Town of Falmouth has ever been involved with any noise monitoring programs or anything similar to such a program. In response, Mr. McConarty stated that the Town has not done any traffic noise monitoring programs during his 15-year tenure with the Town.

Accordingly, Mr. Sayers suggested that the Working Group's efforts be directed towards trying to address the traffic problems that cause the noise, such as addressing vehicles speeding and the use of engine brakes in the noisy portions of Woods Hole Road. However, Mr. Sayers questioned what could be done to reduce the use of the engine brakes except to make them unnecessary or less necessary, as MassDOT had been quite clear that it will not do anything because they are a safety feature. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he though lowering the speed of vehicles traveling on Woods Hole Road will help.

18. Mr. McConarty then mentioned that the Falmouth DPW receives emails from residents who live along Woods Hole Road or on its side streets informing the Town that areas of pavement are not in good shape. Mr. McConarty noted that, when the road pavement has some cracks or is uneven, there will be a lot of noise from containers banging in the back of trucks as they go over those areas. Mr. McConarty also stated that, over the years, the Town has worked with the State on getting some areas of the roadway patched, so at least the roadway is smooth to prevent that type of banging when vehicles go over uneven pavement or uneven patches, and that might be something to follow up on.

Mr. Sayers thanked Mr. McConarty for his suggestion, noting that the Working Group had not discussed this before, although Mr. Trumbull stated that, in letters that had been submitted to the SSA in connection with its hearings on its proposed operating schedules, Woods Hole residents had identified potholes in specific locations on Woods Hole Road.

Enforcement of the SSA’s Policy against Early Arrivals at the Woods Hole Terminal and Its Other Noise Mitigation Policies

19. Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the spreadsheet he had prepared showing the number of email reminders the SSA sent to freight shippers for early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal from April 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021, including the number of trucks 35 or more feet in length (3-, 4- and 5-space trucks) that were carried on the SSA’s early morning trips during that time period, noting that the SSA did not have electronic communications capability during much of the month of June 2021. Mr. Sayers observed that more than 90% of the SSA’s early morning freight shippers were in compliance with the SSA’s early arrival policy during these two months, except for the ones traveling on later trips in the morning. Mr. Sayers also noted that, while the spreadsheet indicates that there was only 89.5% compliance for the 5:30 a.m. trip, it only shows the 19 3-space trucks that were carried on that trip and not the number of 1- and 2-space trucks that were also carried, and that when the 90 2-space trucks that were also carried on that trip are included in the statistics, freight shippers on that trip had a compliance rate of 98.2%.

Thus, Mr. Sayers said, despite all of the other problems the SSA has been having, he thought that Ms. Fletcher’s email campaign to the freight shippers has really been proven to be somewhat effective in making freight shippers not arrive at the terminal until they are supposed to arrive, and even those who have arrived early are mostly just a few minutes early. Nevertheless, Mr. Trumbull observed that the trucks “are still too noisy and they’re waking us up. Early arrivals or not, the scheduled boat is waking up our neighborhoods.”

Emails Received by the SSA’s whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com Email Address

20. Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the emails that had been received via the SSA’s whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com email address since the date of the previous Working Group meeting, including Ms. Fletcher’s responses to those emails. Mr. Sayers again noted that, unfortunately, many of the emails were sent during the month of June when the SSA did not have email capability and at the time Ms. Fletcher did not even know that they had been sent. Mr. Sayers’ and the Working Group’s discussion of these emails included the following:
 - (a) Generally, when emails were about trucks speeding and using their engine brakes, Ms. Fletcher has talked to the freight shippers directly when she has been able to identify the truck involved.

- (b) There was one time when three trucks of a particular freight shipper were parked on the sidewalk in Woods Hole village. On that occasion, Ms. Fletcher called the freight shipper directly and the SSA refused service to one of its drivers. The incident occurred when one of the SSA's ferries was out of service for mechanical reasons and the terminal employees told the drivers that they had to leave and return at a specific time. Instead of leaving, the drivers decided to park wherever they wanted and, when one of the drivers was rude when he was told to move, he was denied service that day and had to come back a later day.
 - (c) Other emails have been about the SSA's shuttle buses speeding. In those instances, the people sending the emails often have been able to provide Ms. Fletcher with the bus numbers and where and when the buses were speeding, so she has been able to determine what speeds those buses were going in order to talk to the drivers if they were in fact speeding.
 - (d) Another email was about the huge lines of vehicles leaving the Woods Hole terminal after the ferries dock, and Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA has tried to space the arrivals of the boats sufficiently apart so that a line of cars from one ferry does not join up with another line of cars from another ferry.
 - (e) The SSA received a number of complaints about traffic backups from the Woods Hole terminal, which the Working Group had discussed earlier that day.
 - (f) Someone complained about a truck traveling down Woods Hole Road at 3:15 a.m. in the morning, but Ms. Fletcher determined that no trucks had arrived at the Woods Hole terminal around that time.
 - (g) One person complained about the terminal's public address announcements and, although the SSA has to make those announcements, perhaps their volume can be turned down.
20. The Working Group also discussed the subject of another email, namely, how large trucks have to cross into the other lane of traffic when they make the turn at Watson's Corner (the intersection of North Main Street, Locust Street and West Main Street), requiring drivers of vehicles traveling in the opposite direction to stop, and Mr. Sayers asked Mr. McConarty whether that was something the Town could look at. Mr. Araujo stated that he thought part of the problem was due to drivers of cars speeding as they come from Woods Hole and cutting that corner, and he said that he had been run off the road there many times. But Mr. Jones stated that the issue was large trucks making all other vehicles stop in order for them to get around the corner because the corner is just too tight of some of the large trucks, and Mr. Trumbull noted that there is a pothole there as well.

Mr. Araujo agreed, and stated that when a large truck encounters such a corner, the correct way for it to make the turn is to go across the intersection into the other lane that way, and he again stated that the problem is due to some people driving cars from Woods Hole cutting that corner short. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he hoped this problem will be passed along to the SSA's Long-Range Vineyard Transportation Task Force because it gets to the very point of trying to run a commercial port out of a small village with even smaller roads. But Mr. Araujo pointed out that Woods Hole always has been a commercial

port and that, before trucks traveled on Woods Hole Road, trains used to run to and from Woods Hole. Mr. Mauro agreed, observing that Woods Hole is a working waterfront.

Mr. Sayers then stated that he did not think the SSA has any control over Watson's Corner and he did not know whether Mr. McConarty, after having heard of the problem there, could think of anything that could help the situation. Mr. Sayers also noted that there is no traffic light at that intersection and he wondered whether a light would help; but he also observed that, according to MassDOT, that roadway does not appear to have any more accidents than any other roadway.

Mr. Jones then stated that the fact was that Watson's Corner is a dangerous illegal situation that requires trucks to drive illegally, but Mr. Araujo maintained that the trucks were not making an illegal turn there. In response, Mr. Jones stated that, because the road cannot be changed, the solution would be to have freight trucks travel from New Bedford instead of from Woods Hole, although Mr. Sayers then observed that another way to solve the problem would be to straighten out that corner.

After Mr. Araujo again stated that trucks are not making an illegal turn at that corner and that the manual instructs drivers to make such a turn by going into the other lane, Mr. Jones stated that he was not being critical of the truck drivers; rather, he was critical of having a truck being on a road that forces it to be in the other lane. But Mr. Araujo stated that this happens all over the country and that some trucks cannot make the turn at the Falmouth Hospital traffic light without going into the other lane. In response, Mr. Jones stated that it would be better to avoid such situations as much as possible and he encouraged the Task Force to push for the New Bedford solution. Mr. Sayers then noted that the person who sent the email to the SSA regarding Watson's Corner suggested that Woods Hole Road be widened, but that the question for the Working Group was what the SSA can do with the infrastructure currently in place, and that Ms. Fletcher would be looking at that location to try to identify any trucks that actually speed there.

21. The Working Group then continued to discuss other emails that had been sent to the SSA at whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com:
 - (a) Mr. Mauro suggested that the Town could erect signs telling drivers not to use their engine brakes, recounting how he recently had seen several such signs when he was driving in the area around Natick. But Mr. Sayers noted that MassDOT had stated that it could not erect that type of signage.
 - (b) Mr. Trumbull asked if Ms. Fletcher had contacted any freight shippers when someone complained about a specific truck speeding at a specific time. In response, Mr. Sayers and Ms. Fletcher stated that, although she did not receive many of these emails at the times they were sent, she did respond to those freight shippers that she could identify. Mr. Trumbull stated that he thought that it will make a difference when there are enough complaints and feedback from the SSA reinforcing the speed limits, and Mr. Sayers agreed. Ms. Fletcher also noted that most of the issues are with third-party shippers who only occasionally travel on the SSA's ferries.

22. Mr. Sayers noted that one of the emails the SSA had received was from Jonathan Goldman, who complained about a car carrier just stopping on Woods Hole Road and unloading cars there. Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA tells car carrier companies that they cannot unload their cars at the Woods Hole terminal and that they are supposed to go to the Palmer Avenue parking lot and unload their cars there. Ms. Fletcher further stated that, when island residents contact the SSA about making reservations for cars that are being shipped to them, the Reservations Department informs them that they are to take a shuttle bus to the Palmer Avenue parking lot, get their cars there, and then drive down to Woods Hole at the time of their reservations. In addition, Ms. Fletcher said, if a car carrier arrives at the Woods Hole terminal, the terminal employees tell them that it has to go back to the Palmer Avenue parking lot and unload its vehicles there, and they even provide them with the physical directions to the parking lot.

But Mr. Trumbull observed that the fact that some car carriers are still going to the Woods Hole terminal indicated that they are not receiving a clear message that they have no business in Woods Hole. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that the SSA can only communicate with the owner of a vehicle, who is making the reservation, and the owner is supposed to relay that message to the car carrier company, but that the SSA tells the owner exactly what needs to be done.

23. Mr. Trumbull then mentioned that the emails received by the SSA are probably only a fraction of a single percentage of the incidents that occur, as it takes a lot of effort for someone to find the SSA's email address and write an email.
24. Mr. Jones left the meeting near the end of this discussion.

Sharing of Complaints from Working Group Members

25. Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the emails that had been received via the SSA's whtaffic@steamshipauthority.com email address from Mr. Trumbull since the date of the previous Working Group meeting, including Ms. Fletcher's responses to those emails. The Working Group's discussion of these emails included the following:
- (a) Mr. Trumbull stated that he viewed the incident when a freight truck passed a stopped school bus to be serious, and that he had gone to the Woods Hole terminal and spoken about it with the driver, who said he could not stop because he was too heavy. Mr. Trumbull observed that the truck driver needs to be traveling more slowly and that maybe the speed feedback signs will help with that. Ms. Fletcher noted that, in addition to Mr. Trumbull speaking with the driver, she had spoken directly to the company about the incident. After Mr. Araujo mentioned that, as a courtesy, school bus drivers sometimes allow trucks to go around them when they are stopped and will wait to put on their red lights and open their doors until after the trucks have gone by, Mr. Trumbull suggested that the SSA add a statement in its letter to its freight shippers telling their drivers to stop for school buses on Woods Hole Road.

- (b) Mr. Trumbull stated that he did not get much of a response from the Falmouth Police Department when he reported that another truck had been speeding on Woods Hole Road. But Mr. Sayers noted that Ms. Fletcher had spoken with two drivers who were reported to have been speeding, and that they thought they were going the speed limit.
- (c) Mr. Sayers stated that, in response to Mr. Trumbull's request, Greg Carroll had provided a list of the ages of his trucks, and Mr. Trumbull observed that not all trucks are built equally in terms of noise and that he wished the trash trucks would no longer use Woods Hole Road.
- (d) Mr. Sayers observed that another email was about a Bruno's truck being turned away from the Woods Hole terminal when it arrived on a reservation-only day to travel on a standby basis.
- (e) With respect to Mr. Trumbull's email about an SSA shuttle bus going over the double-yellow line into the opposite lane of travel on Crane Street, Ms. Fletcher stated that all of the SSA's bus drivers have been warned that they are not supposed to pass there and are to stay in their lane until they get onto SSA property. In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull, Ms. Fletcher also stated that the SSA's bus drivers are not allowed to let passengers off anywhere on the road and can only let them off on SSA property.

The SSA's Visits to Problem Noise Areas Along Woods Hole Road

26. After Mr. Sayers noted that Ms. Fletcher had observed the traffic situation on Woods Hole Road the previous day, Ms. Fletcher confirmed that she will be continuing her visits to the various problem noise areas.

The SSA's Truck Check-in System

27. Mr. Sayers then reported that he had discussed the issues with the truck check-in system at the Woods Hole terminal with Mr. Davis, who stated that, when there is a new layout for the terminal, it will allow employees in the check-in booth to access the same computer system that is used in the terminal building. As a result, Mr. Sayers said, the employees in the check-in booth will be able to process charge authorizations for truck drivers so that the drivers will not need to go into the terminal building, although the SSA will still have to address employee jurisdictional issues regarding those job functions.

In response to a question from Mr. Araujo, Mr. Sayers stated that the ability to process these authorizations in the check-in booth will benefit the SSA by allowing trucks to be loaded onto a ferry directly from the booth, particularly when the SSA wants to load a truck as soon as it arrives. But in response to a concern expressed by Mr. Araujo, Mr. Sayers confirmed that, if they want, truck drivers will still be able to go into the terminal building to stretch their legs or use the restroom.

Scheduling the Working Group's Next Meeting

28. The Working Group members then thanked Messrs. McConarty and McLoughlin for their participation in the meeting today, and Mr. McConarty confirmed that if he cannot attend a future meeting, he will try to make arrangements for Mr. McLoughlin to attend.
29. In response to a question from Mr. McConarty, Mr. Sayers then confirmed that he will send a letter to the Falmouth Select Board regarding the requested speed feedback signs, that the Falmouth DPW was not expected to do anything with respect to those signs until it is authorized by either the Select Board or the Falmouth Town Manager, and that the only thing the Working Group can do is make a request to the Town for such authorization.
30. The Working Group members then agreed that their next meeting would take place by Zoom at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

At approximately 4:35 p.m., the Working Group unanimously **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Mauro and Trumbull voting in favor) to adjourn their meeting that day.

A TRUE RECORD

Steven M. Sayers

Approved by the Working Group at their
meeting on August 25, 2021

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Working Group's July 28, 2021 Meeting

1. Meeting Notice for the Working Group's July 28, 2021 Meeting (posted July 26, 2021).
2. Draft Minutes of the Working Group's April 28, 2021 Meeting, dated July 25, 2021.
3. Correspondence among MassDOT, the Town of Falmouth and the SSA regarding the Town's request for assistance on Woods Hole Road.
4. Photographs of speed limit signs southbound on Woods Hole Road south of the intersection with Quissett Harbor Road (only shared by SSA Counsel Steven Sayers on his computer screen).
5. Email exchange with Cape Cod Commission Transportation Program Manager Steven Tupper regarding a possible noise monitoring program or equipment.
6. List of the number of email reminders the SSA sent to freight shippers for early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal from April 1, 2021 through May 31, 2021, including the number of trucks 35 or more feet in length (3-, 4- and 5-space trucks) that were carried on the SSA's early morning trips during that time period.
7. The emails received by the SSA via its whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com email address from April 28, 2021 through July 22, 2021, together with the SSA's responses.
8. The emails received by the SSA via its whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com email address from Nathaniel Trumbull from April 28, 2021 through July 22, 2021, together with the SSA's responses (only shared by SSA Counsel Steven Sayers on his computer screen).