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Minutes  
Cape Cod Commission DRI Subcommittee Hearing  
WHOI–New Quissett Facility, Falmouth (Commission File No. 19022)  
October 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.  
Falmouth Public Library  
300 Main Street, Falmouth, MA 02540

Subcommittee Members Present: Charles McCaffrey (Chair), Elizabeth Taylor, Stephen Mealy, Kevin Grunwald, and Tom Wilson

Documents used/submitted at the hearing:

- Staff report dated October 1, 2019
- Applicant PowerPoint slide presentation dated October 7, 2019
- Project Hearing Notice

A quorum of subcommittee members present, Charles McCaffrey opened the hearing at 5:30 p.m. by reading the hearing notice.

The subcommittee members then introduced themselves.

Mr. McCaffrey called for Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (“WHOI”; “Applicant”) to present the proposed WHOI–New Quissett Facility project (“Project”; “NQF”).

Attorney Eliza Cox, appearing on behalf of the Applicant, introduced the other members of the Applicant’s Project team: Colin Reed, Senior Advisor to the President, WHOI; Dave Derosier, Director of Facilities and Services, WHOI; Tom Kearns, President, DSK Architects & Planners; Erin Cusker, Senior Project Manager, DSK Architects & Planners; Mike McGrath, President, Holmes & McGrath Civil Engineers; Randy Hart, Traffic Engineer, VHB; Brian Madden, Environmental Consultant, LEC; and Matt Cate, Senior Project Manager, CSL Consulting.

Attorney Cox began the presentation by citing examples from the Regional Policy Plan (“RPP”) in which WHOI is specifically recognized for its economic, scientific, and cultural value to the region, and suggested that this Project is the type encouraged under the RPP and the Cape Cod Commission Act.

Colin Reed, Senior Advisor to the President, WHOI, provided background on WHOI. Referencing supporting information presented on slides, he emphasized the organization’s nonprofit status, global recognition, and scientific, educational, and economic contributions to the region. Mr. Reed provided context for WHOI’s two Falmouth Campuses: the original Village Campus, located in Woods Hole Village; and the Quissett Campus, located north of Woods Hole Village. He explained that the Quissett Campus was purchased in the 1960s to allow WHOI to grow beyond the limited scope of Woods Hole Village and to maintain coastal resilience. Mr. Reed provided context for the NQF, explaining that the



facility is intended to be used for collaboration and technology innovation, and will move existing operations that are not water-dependent from the Village Campus to the Quissett Campus.

Attorney Cox provided a brief description and displayed a map of approximately 4.05-acres of undeveloped land located on the Quissett Campus, identified as the Project Site. She noted that the Quissett Campus had been the subject of prior Commission reviews and that, as a part of a prior review, an archaeological survey of the entire Quissett Campus was completed. For that review and for the proposed Project, the survey was submitted to Massachusetts Historical Commission (“MHC”), which confirmed that the site was unlikely to contain significant archaeological resources. Attorney Cox further stated that the National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (“NHESP”) reviewed the Project Site and issued a “no take” for the Project.

Mike McGrath, President, Holmes & McGrath Civil Engineers, provided an overview of the site, referencing a map. Mr. McGrath indicated that the site is designed such that the Falmouth ladder truck and other large vehicles can maneuver around the facility. Mr. McGrath also discussed the site design relative to the topography of the land and the decision to segregate the employee parking from the other industrial uses. Mr. McGrath ended his comments by discussing stormwater and wastewater management, noting that the Project will be connected to industrial and sanitary treatment systems and that stormwater runoff will be treated.

Tom Kearns, President, DSK Architects & Planners, provided an overview of the design. Mr. Kearns began by discussing the Project’s topographic and vegetative buffer. He then discussed the design of the facility, indicating that the first floor of the building is intended to serve as a service area, with several overhead doors for equipment and permeability. He explained that the two floors above are intended to be used as flexible research space. Mr. Kearns discussed the design of the exterior of the building, explaining that the building is intended to blend with the campus, and to be sustainable and low maintenance. He stated that the building will be equipped with intelligent glass and a shading system and is designed to host photovoltaic panels. Mr. Kearns showed several renderings and floorplans of the exterior and interior of the proposed facility. He described the use of natural light in the building and noted that the Project is ‘Dark Sky’ compliant.

Attorney Cox ended the Applicant’s presentation by highlighting specific points relative to natural resources, open space, transportation, and overall Project benefits. Specifically, she discussed the 350-foot buffers to the vernal pools, the proposal for the addition of 4.1 acres of open space on-site, and the Transportation Demand Management (“TDM”) plan for the Project. With respect to transportation, Attorney Cox noted that this Project is a low traffic generator and would decrease both employee and commercial trips into Woods Hole Village. Finally, Attorney Cox indicated that the Project will support scientific research, is designed to minimize site impacts, and will provide economic benefit to the region.

Mr. McCaffrey thanked Attorney Cox and asked Commission staff for comments.

Kristen Clothier of Commission staff provided comments based on the Staff Report dated October 1, 2019.

Ms. Clothier began by providing a brief overview of the Project and its relevant procedural background, as detailed in the Staff Report. Next, Ms. Clothier discussed the applicable and material goals and objectives of the RPP.

Beginning with the Economy, Ms. Clothier noted that the expansion facilitated through this Project will protect and build on Cape Cod’s competitive advantages by: contributing to advancement in the marine science, research, and technology sector; expanding the capacity of a world-renowned, regionally-based institution of higher education; and increasing regional high-wage employment opportunities.



For Natural Resources, Ms. Clothier stated that the Project is sited to avoid impacts to the more sensitive natural resource areas on the Quissett Campus. She also confirmed that the Applicant has proposed to employ an Eastern Box Turtle Protection Plan during construction to help ensure that the species will not be adversely affected during development activities.

For Open Space, Ms. Clothier explained that the Applicant proposes to meet the Open Space requirement by conserving 4.06 acres on-site and noted that Commission staff are currently in discussion with the Applicant regarding the details of this requirement.

For Water Resources, Ms. Clothier stated that the Project will provide the required water quality treatment and storage volumes and will be connected to existing wastewater treatment infrastructure.

For Community Design and Cultural Heritage, Ms. Clothier stated that there is a dense visual buffer surrounding the Project. Ms. Clothier also confirmed the Applicant's statements relative to the findings of the archaeological survey. She also confirmed that the Project is dark sky compliant.

For Transportation, Ms. Clothier stated that the Project is expected to be a low traffic generator.

For Energy, Ms. Clothier indicated that the Applicant has demonstrated an institution-wide, as well as a Project-specific, commitment to energy conservation and efficiency, renewable energy generation, and sustainability.

Next, Ms. Clothier discussed the Project benefits and detriments included in the Staff Report, highlighting that the Project would support technology development and sustain an institution that attracts experts and funding to the region. Ms. Clothier also highlighted benefits of the NQF and the siting of the Project, which is designed to provide a sense of community within a compact built environment and to increase infrastructure resiliency. Addressing the potential Project detriments, Ms. Clothier noted that, although the Project involves development of a currently undisturbed site, the Applicant has minimized and mitigated these impacts by designing the Project in a manner consistent with the RPP.

Ms. Clothier reviewed the conditions recommended in the Staff Report, including the establishment of a comprehensive emergency management and spill response plan, NHESP approval of the Eastern Box Turtle Protection Plan, use of best management practices and restoration during appropriate phases of construction, and the implementation of a TDM plan.

Ms. Clothier concluded her presentation by indicating that Commission staff suggest that the proposed Project meets the standards for DRI approval.

Mr. McCaffrey asked for questions from the subcommittee.

Kevin Grunwald asked the Applicant several questions relative to economic and employment information. Specifically, Mr. Grunwald asked for information related to the number of employees the Applicant has, how many jobs the Project will create, and whether the Applicant recruits employees from Cape Cod.

Mr. Reed estimated that the total number of employees fluctuates between 1000-1400 seasonally, with approximately 60% of those employees being from Cape Cod. He also confirmed that WHOI makes an effort to recruit for positions locally. Mr. Reed promised to provide a detailed economic analysis with the requested information as a follow-up item to the hearing.

Mr. Grunwald then asked the Applicant to speak to the concerns submitted in a letter from a resident, relative to the archaeological inventory.



Attorney Cox stated that there was a thorough study, reviewed by MHC, that confirmed that there were no significant archaeological or historic resources on the site. She noted that this finding was established both at the time that the survey was done and then again when this Project was submitted. Attorney Cox noted that the public does not have access to detailed information of archaeological surveys but indicated that MHC has verified the findings.

Elizabeth Taylor asked about Natural Resources, referencing a portion of the Staff Report that refers to an “undisturbed migratory corridor that will remain outside of the Project footprint.”

Ms. Taylor asked if the corridor between the protected open space was intended to be used for site access in the future, and if the Commission should expect to see more development on or around the Quissett Campus in the future.

Attorney Cox said that it was difficult to predict what would happen in the future due to advancements in science and changes in funding, and other as-of yet undetermined programmatic and operational needs for WHOI. She added, however, that it was important for WHOI to keep the corridor open should it need access for utility or frontage purposes in the future.

Dave Derosier, Director of Facilities and Services, WHOI, added that leaving that corridor open allows the facility to have the flexibility to access a water main should the conditions require that access in the future.

Ms. Taylor asked about the Applicant’s use of solar power.

The Applicant confirmed that the NQF would be designed to host solar panels but that without additional funding, they are not able to add the panels at this time. The Applicant added that many of the existing buildings at WHOI have rooftop panels, and WHOI has existing purchase agreements securing renewable energy from off-site sources that benefit the campus.

Mr. McCaffrey then held subcommittee comments and took comments from Susan Moran, a member of the Falmouth Board of Selectmen and a member of the Barnstable County Economic Development Council, who had to leave the subcommittee hearing because she had another local public meeting to attend. She spoke about the positive impacts that WHOI has on the region. Ms. Moran emphasized the value of having an internationally recognized organization in the local economy and of the resources and opportunities that the organization offers to young people. She ended her comments by stating that the protection of natural resources depends on the work that WHOI does, and that she is in favor of the Project.

Subcommittee comments continued.

Ms. Taylor asked for information about the conservation restriction on the land currently set aside as open space on the Quissett Campus.

Attorney Cox answered that the Falmouth Conservation Commission holds that restriction and would hold the restriction on the proposed open space.

Mr. McCaffrey asked if the Applicant plans to move non-water-dependent uses away from the coast to accommodate growth and increase resilience.

Mr. Reed indicated that the Applicant intends to move non-water-dependent uses away from the coast but that they do not yet have a comprehensive long-range plan for doing so.



Mr. Kearns added that WHOI's planning efforts are strategic multi-stage assessments, as opposed to a Master Plan.

Mr. McCaffrey opened the hearing for public comment.

Richard Lovering identified himself as an abutter and stated that landowners should be considered abutters, and notified as such, based on proximity to any part of the Quissett Campus. Mr. Lovering raised concerns regarding the lights, noise, and continuing development in the coming years. Concluding his comments, Mr. Lovering questioned the overall height of the proposed facility, referencing a structure designed to be above the 50-foot roofline of the proposed building.

Mr. Kearns confirmed that some accessory features on top of the proposed building would exceed the 50-foot roofline height.

Richard Hugus identified himself as an abutter and expressed concerns about the frequent recurrence of new and additional development at the Quissett Campus, referencing prior Commission Decisions. Mr. Hugus also stated concerns relative to the archaeological and historical value of the site, traffic impacts, the sensitivity of the wetlands, and a lack of transparency regarding WHOI's involvement in defense contracting.

Mimi Frank identified herself as a resident living near the Project Site. She expressed agreement with the previous speakers and stated concerns about light pollution, noise pollution, traffic, proximity to a residential area, and future development.

Steve Leighton identified himself as an abutter and requested an explanation of the value of placing a conservation restriction on an existing wetland, citing his understanding that the land would already be protected from development by wetlands regulation.

The Applicant agreed to provide further information about this issue for a follow-up meeting of the subcommittee.

Catherine Bumpus identified herself as a resident of Woods Hole. She stated concerns that the Applicant is a large, powerful organization in the community, and she is concerned that they will continue to develop the Quissett Campus in the future.

Attorney Cox clarified an issue raised by Mr. Lovering relative to the abutters list by explaining that the Applicant used the entire Quissett Campus for the basis of the abutters list. She also reiterated the Applicant's inability to provide information about future plans for the Quissett Campus due to dependence on funding for individual projects on an as-needed basis.

Erin Cusker, Senior Project Manager, DSK Architects & Planners, clarified that the rooftop equipment that exceeds the 50-foot roofline was included to reduce noise and provide access to potential solar panels.

Stephen Mealy asked about exterior lighting and the noise expected from the Project given the outdoor work and machinery mentioned.

Mr. Derosier answered that while it is possible that some facility operations would take place outdoors, it is unlikely that any work would generate excessive noise.

Ms. Cusker said that all lights for the building are included in the photometric plan and are dark sky compliant.

Tom Wilson asked for clarification regarding transportation impacts and commented that he is impressed with how the building is sited to minimize visual and environmental impacts.

Randy Hart, Traffic Engineer, VHB, explained that there would be a decrease in peak hour trips because of the relocation of activities from downtown Woods Hole.

Seeing no more questions from the subcommittee, Mr. McCaffrey asked if the subcommittee would like any additional information prior to asking Commission staff to draft a DRI Decision.

The subcommittee discussed requesting additional economic analysis and information regarding the Applicant's plans for the Quissett Campus.

Jon Idman, Commission staff, generally discussed the Commission's jurisdiction with the subcommittee. Mr. Idman clarified that previous DRI Decisions did not include conditions or restrictions that would prohibit the proposed Project.

Mr. McCaffrey requested a motion to continue the hearing on the Project to the meeting of the Cape Cod Commission on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. in the East Wing Conference Room, Barnstable County Complex, 3195 Main Street, Barnstable, MA 02630.

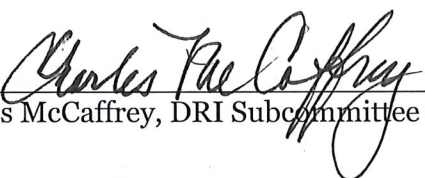
Mr. Grunwald moved, which was seconded by Ms. Taylor. The motion carried unanimously.

The subcommittee discussed having a meeting to review additional information requested from and to be submitted by the Applicant, and to discuss a draft written decision. Staff would find a meeting time, date, and place that worked for the members, and schedule and post the meeting. Mr. Grunwald asked for additional economic analysis from the Applicant to review at the follow-up meeting. The Applicant agreed to provide this information.

Mr. McCaffrey asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Taylor moved the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Mealy. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Charles McCaffrey, DRI Subcommittee Chair

10/28/19  
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Date