

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

December 9, 2020

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>
John Cahill	Dukes County Commissioners	Present
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	Present
Steven Sayers	Steamship Authority	Present
Nathaniel Trumbull	Falmouth Select Board	Present

Also Participating:

Steven Tupper, Cape Cod Commission Transportation Program Manager

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 4:00 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 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 Working Group 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 Working Group members were participating in the meeting by the Zoom video conferencing app and that all members will be clearly audible to each other.

### **Cape Cod Commission's Traffic Counts on Woods Hole Road**

3. The Working Group welcomed Cape Cod Commission (CCC) Transportation Program Manager Steven Tupper, who had accepted the Working Group's invitation to give an overview of the CCC's traffic counting program and speak generally about the traffic counting activities the CCC has conducted and, more specifically, some of the counts the CCC has done on Woods Hole Road. In this regard, Mr. Tupper noted that the CCC and its predecessor agency have been doing traffic counting back to 1984 and that they have performed them across a whole host of roads across the region, conducting usually around 200 to 250 counts each year that are generally focused in the summer season. Mr. Tupper noted that the CCC conducts traffic counts for a number of reasons: some of them are to keep track of general regional traffic trends, and some are more site-specific counts to look at locations where there may be potential projects in the future. Mr. Tupper stated that the location of the most recent traffic count on Woods Hole Road south of Oyster Pond Road is a location that the CCC counts regularly for tracking purposes. As a result, Mr. Tupper said, the CCC has a lot of data relative to traffic on Woods Hole Road.

Mr. Tupper then described how the CCC typically conducts traffic counts usually in the summer season when the CCC has interns that help out with this activity by stretching a couple of tubes across the road. Mr. Tupper stated that the tubes are pneumatic counting devices that count tire pulses when vehicles go over them, so what the tubes really are doing is measuring axle hits. Mr. Tupper noted that, from those axle hits the CCC is able to determine in most cases what sort of vehicle is passing over the tubes and at what speed. Accordingly, Mr. Tupper said, the CCC's reports will always include the volume that has been counted and, depending on the setup, will often report out the vehicle classifications and the speeds observed as well.

Mr. Tupper observed that the data collected is fairly good in capturing vehicle types, but that it is certainly not perfect, particularly when vehicles are crossing in two directions at the same time and create some weird pulse hits. As a result, Mr. Tupper said, in any of the CCC's data reports, there will be some unclassified counts, which is typical of the CCC's setup. But Mr. Tupper noted that, if there are a lot of unclassified counts, the CCC will reject the count during its quality assurance process and what the CCA does share publicly are data reports it has vetted and is generally comfortable with.

Mr. Tupper then stated that the CCC typically counts the location on Woods Hole Road every year as part of its tracking purposes and that it usually has data from that location in either July or August. Mr. Tupper noted that the count is typically about 48 hours in duration, which provides an average sense of traffic during the weekdays, although sometimes the count's duration will be longer and sometimes the window of time will be a little bit different, as it was this past year. Indeed, Mr. Tupper said, some of the data the CCC shared this year is actually from September because the CCC's traffic counting season got disrupted this year due to the pandemic. In this regard, Mr. Tupper recounted how MassDOT had told the CCC to hold off its traffic counts for some time and that the CCC ended up going back out later in the year. In addition, Mr. Tupper stated that by happenstance the counter the CCC set up in this location had some issues so it was reset in

September. As a result, Mr. Tupper said, the data from the count this year was a bit later than the data from typical traffic counting seasons, although they certainly provide some insight even though they are not exactly comparable in terms of the time of year.

Mr. Tupper then stated that, while the pneumatic counting devices can get a sense of the axle spacing and the vehicle types, they certainly can get no indication of the vehicles' destinations or the purposes of their trips, and that the CCC just doesn't have any way to know those things. In this regard, Mr. Tupper noted that, even though there have been some specific questions about how much of this traffic is SSA-related, the CCC's data is agnostic in terms of what vehicles are doing on the roadway.

In response to a question from Mr. Sayers, Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC uses the data for a number of different purposes. At the highest level, Mr. Tupper said, the data show general levels of activity across Cape Cod and, if looked at historically, some of the traffic volumes track well with development patterns. Mr. Tupper also stated that the CCC looks at the data more specifically in terms of infrastructure investments. For example, Mr. Tupper said, if there is a road that has had some crash issues, the CCC will look at the volumes to see if that is related. Similarly, Mr. Tupper noted that if there is a more specific need to upgrade a traffic signal, the CCC will do a focused look at that location ahead of that activity so it knows exactly what is going on. Mr. Tupper stated that often those counts are conducted at the request of the towns when they are undertaking major infrastructure projects. Although Mr. Tupper noted that sometimes towns will hire consultants to go out and do those counts, in its region, the CCC is actually able to handle a lot of those requests and provide this service for the towns at no cost.

Mr. Tupper further noted that the counts are used not just for vehicle planning, but also to increase the CCC's understanding of the demands for bikes and pedestrians and how those demands relate to vehicle traffic. Finally, Mr. Tupper stated that the purpose of some of the other counts is just to look at traffic volumes on roadways to understand which roadways may need some upgrades like a sidewalk where the vehicle volumes or speeds are creating a potential hazard for non-motorists.

Mr. Tupper then stated that the CCC tracks the traffic by time of day and usually presents the data in an hourly fashion. Mr. Tupper noted that this allows the CCC to use that data to analyze how congested locations are. Specifically, Mr. Tupper stated that while it is interesting to know how much traffic is on a roadway, more often people are interested in the acute issues, such as between 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in most locations, and the CCC tries to understand how much traffic is backing up during that time period. Therefore, Mr. Tupper said, the CCC often focuses on specific hours of the day to look at what the issues are and in some cases applies modeling software to explore potential solutions to problems, such as whether a roundabout at a particular location might improve conditions or whether a traffic signal would make sense. Mr. Tupper noted that the collected data is really behind the decision making for what happens on the roadways.

In response to a question from Mr. Sayers, Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC did not arrive at any specific recommendations or conclusions about anything that needed to be done with respect to Woods Hole Road based upon the data it collected this year from Woods Hole Road. Rather, Mr. Tupper said, the count this year was part of the CCC's annual counting program and really was just looking at trends. In this regard, Mr. Tupper noted that certainly there was a lot of interest in looking at trends this year given the COVID influence, and the CCC does have a lot of COVID-related data on its website. Mr. Tupper also noted that, specifically with respect to the Woods Hole Road location, traffic was certainly down from last year, although he stated that it is a little tough to make some real direct comparisons because the CCC collected the information in September this year instead of during the summer, which would significantly influence the data.

Mr. Tupper stated that, speaking in terms of generalities, the CCC certainly sees significant traffic volume on Woods Hole Road for a whole host of activities in the order of 10,000 vehicles a day, so it is certainly a fairly busy road. Mr. Tupper also noted that, in the past, the CCC has looked at the roadway in terms of challenges for bicyclists on the roadway and, with that level of volume, the roadway is certainly a challenge for non-motorists. But Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC has not looked at anything specific in terms of improvements to the roadway because that was not within its tasks this year, although it certainly has collected the data and has it available for anyone to take a look at.

4. [ During the latter part of Mr. Tupper's presentation, a slide appeared on the Zoom screen with the following statements:

Percentage of SSA-related traffic to overall traffic on WH Road (measured on WH Road just S of Quissett lights)

Cars 25% to 34%

Trucks 77% to 100%

Buses 63% to 97% ]

At this time, Mr. Santoro asked Mr. Sayers whether he or anyone at the SSA had compared the percentages being shown on the Zoom screen with the actual number of vehicles that have traveled on the SSA's ferries. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that the percentages shown on the Zoom screen is information that Mr. Trumbull has posted and is sharing with the other Working Group members at this time, although perhaps a little bit prematurely. Mr. Sayers noted that, after Mr. Trumbull had received the CCC's traffic counts, he had asked the SSA to give him reports of the occupied capacity of its vessels on the Martha's Vineyard route for the same days that the CCC did the traffic counts, namely, September 25 through September 30, 2020. Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA provided Mr. Trumbull with that information, which is broken down by cars, trailers, and one-space trucks going up to 5-space trucks. Mr. Sayers further stated that Mr. Trumbull had then asked the SSA about the number of its shuttle buses that made trips back and forth between Woods Hole and Palmer Avenue during that same time period, and the SSA provided him with that information as well. Mr. Sayers stated that he assumed the percentages shown on the Zoom screen represented the results of Mr. Trumbull's analysis of that information.

Mr. Trumbull then apologized and stated that he had not meant to put that information up on the Zoom screen so soon. Then, in response to questions from Messrs. Cahill and Mauro about what the information was, Mr. Trumbull stated that the information was just as had been described by Mr. Sayers, namely, having been provided with the total traffic count on Woods Hole Road by the CCC for almost a week in September, he had looked at the actual numbers of cars and trucks carried by the SSA on those identical dates. Depending on the day of the week, Mr. Trumbull said, there are different percentages of vehicles that traveled south of Quissett Lights on Woods Hole Road that had been either loaded or unloaded on the SSA's ferries.

Mr. Cahill then asked whose data was being presented, and Mr. Santoro stated that he had thought the information had come from the SSA. In response, Mr. Trumbull again apologized for putting up the information too soon, and stated that it represented his analysis of two different data sets, namely, the traffic counts provided by the CCC and the occupied capacity reports from the SSA.

Mr. Cahill suggested that the Working Group step back a bit and finish the presentation from Mr. Tupper. Mr. Cahill assured Mr. Trumbull that he did not want to stop him from sharing his information, but he stated that he thought all of the Working Group members had questions for Mr. Tupper first. Mr. Cahill asked Mr. Trumbull if that would be all right, and Mr. Trumbull agreed.

Then, in response to a question from Mr. Santoro, Mr. Tupper stated that he had not seen the percentages that had been shown on the Zoom screen by Mr. Trumbull. Mr. Tupper stated that while he certainly is aware of the traffic count volumes on the roadway and that the SSA has data on hand, he had not seen the specific calculations for this data and, as a result, would not be able to speak to any of the calculation steps. Although Mr. Tupper noted that the percentages were something that theoretically can be calculated, understanding that there is some uncertainty for sure in that process, he cautioned that he had not had the opportunity to review that specific data and could only speak generally about where that data generally makes sense and where there might have to be some cautions in interpreting it.

5. After Mr. Santoro questioned whether it was worth discussing that data at this time given that no one can confirm it, Mr. Cahill asked Mr. Tupper if he had data from the CCC that he wanted to share. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that he had been asked to speak about traffic counting, and he could certainly put up a sheet that shows the numbers of vehicles counted. But Mr. Tupper noted that, while that information was interesting to him, he did not know if there was something specific that the Working Group members would like to take a look at. Rather, Mr. Tupper said, he more wanted to make certain that the Working Group members understand the data that the CCC collects and, to the extent the data is used in other fashions, what the data contains and what may be an extrapolation from the data. Although Mr. Tupper stated that he had sheets in front of him if the Working Group members wanted to talk about the number of vehicles in any particular hour, he had not planned to make a presentation of that information.

Mr. Cahill suggested that, in order to not waste Mr. Tupper's time, the Working Group may want to think about what data sets they would like and get back to him, and that perhaps they could discuss this later in today's meeting or at a subsequent meeting. In this regard, Mr. Cahill observed that Mr. Tupper obviously has a lot of data and it is probably very helpful, but that he just did not want to waste Mr. Tupper's time that day.

6. Mr. Santoro then noted that, at their last meeting, Mr. Mauro had made a great point about not knowing whether a lot of the trucks or other vehicles are necessarily going to the SSA's Woods Hole terminal because of where the traffic counting location was placed. Because that information is not known, Mr. Santoro asked Mr. Tupper whether the CCC could put a counter past the entrance to the SSA's Woods Hole terminal and calculate how many vehicles were going there with two traffic count readings.

In response, Mr. Tupper stated that the answer is "kind of," saying that if two sets of tubes are set up, one can certainly understand how many trucks went over at one point and how many trucks went over at the next point. But Mr. Tupper noted that one would not necessarily know using this technology whether or not there are things that happened in between, such as if they took side roads. While Mr. Tupper observed that there are other technologies out there that can do more detailed vehicle tracking, he stated that with this technology, if one count is larger than the other, one would have to make some assumptions about what had happened in between.

Ms. Fletcher then asked whether it would make sense to put a counter on Water Street to count those trucks that are going into the village as opposed to those going to the SSA's property. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that, if the CCC were looking more in depth at the vehicle flows in an area, it typically would place multiple sets of tubes and also some on-the-ground personnel at intersections to measure vehicle turning movements, which the CCC could do at the Water Street intersection. Essentially, Mr. Tupper said, in order to answer some of the questions the Working Group members are asking, they will need more data and more locations to understand the situation more specifically.

7. Mr. Cahill then noted that he would like to add to the mix of things by being able to compare the traffic counts on Woods Hole Road to other popular routes on Cape Cod, whether it be Route 6 or upper Route 28, so that the Working Group can understand patterns that go far above and beyond just Woods Hole. Mr. Cahill stated that the value in having that information would be able to see what is happening across the whole region. But Mr. Cahill noted that he was not asking for Mr. Tupper to do a lot of homework; he just would like to have information that could be easily extrapolated, as it would be good insight.
8. Mr. Mauro observed that the Working Group could start by looking at the classifications, namely, the number of passenger vehicles and trucks. Mr. Mauro noted that, based upon those volumes, there could be a quick breakdown of what those volumes mean and what can possibly be done based on those volumes. In this regard, Mr. Mauro stated that, looking quickly at the CCC's traffic counts, it appears that just under 17% of the vehicles on Woods

Hole Road are heavy vehicle trucks, and he suggested that the Working Group may want a quick explanation of what that means and whether anything can be done to exclude that traffic. But Mr. Mauro questioned whether it would be even doable to exclude that traffic because he did not know where it could be diverted from that area, because the trucks would have to be rerouted into some of the ancillary streets that are much, much smaller and are not able to handle that type of volume or those types of vehicles.

In response, Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC certainly could look at the percentage of heavy vehicles whenever it looks at the classifications and agreed with Mr. Mauro that, depending on which day it was, between 15% to 20% of the vehicles that were counted were trucks. Mr. Tupper also noted that those percentages were a little bit higher than what the CCC has seen historically, and he guessed that the difference has more to do with the depressed overall traffic volumes in late September 2020 compared to previous years. Mr. Tupper stated that he had taken a quick look at some of the other classification counts, and the percentages of heavy vehicles appeared to have ranged more in the 10% to 15% of vehicles counted. But Mr. Tupper further noted that the percentages vary from day to day and they also certainly vary within that heavy vehicle user group, which includes buses, tractor trailers and landscape trailers. In this regard, Mr. Tupper cautioned that he was speaking about these percentages on a general level and not to specific types of vehicles.

Mr. Tupper also stated that a lot of communities certainly have asked the CCC about truck exclusions because they are concerned about heavy vehicles on their roadways. But Mr. Tupper noted that this is a weighted topic, particularly given the limited number of ways into Woods Hole. Therefore, Mr. Tupper said, this issue is certainly something the Department of Public Works (DPW) would want to take a look at with the CCC, and the CCC has helped other DPWs investigate that question, although generally not to the satisfaction of residents because one really has to go through great lengths to demonstrate that there is a suitable alternative route to a destination which, given his knowledge of the area, would probably be a challenge in this case.

9. Mr. Sayers then stated he had noticed that the traffic count report included speed data of the vehicles, and he asked whether the CCC was able to break down that data by types of vehicles. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC usually does not parse out the data in that way, but usually looks at vehicle speeds in the aggregate. However, Mr. Tupper stated that he believed the CCC could dig a little deeper and identify the speed profiles of the different vehicle types, although he would have to dig into that a bit more because that is something the CCC does not often do. Mr. Tupper also cautioned that the speed data is highly dependent on the specific location of the counter, so the closer the counter is to an intersection, the more likely the speeds will be slower there. But Mr. Tupper stated that it certainly could be of general interest and that the CC could see if it can parse out that data in terms of speed by vehicle class.

Mr. Sayers then asked if Mr. Tupper knew what the speed limit was at this location. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that he would see if he could ascertain the counter's location from the sketch that had been given to him by the technicians in the field who installed them. If not, Mr. Tupper said, he certainly could see more specifically where they were.

After reviewing his documents, Mr. Tupper stated that he would have to dig a little deeper to determine the counter's specific location, as the only information he had was that it was south of Oyster Pond Road attached to a street sign. Mr. Tupper observed that not knowing what the specific street sign was makes it a little difficult to give a detailed answer, but that he could see if he can get a little more specificity on where those tubes were actually set up. Mr. Sayers stated that he was asking these questions because he was trying to tie the CCC's information more into the purpose of this group, which is to mitigate on a short-term basis the traffic and noise situation associated with the SSA's Woods Hole terminal operations, and that to the extent the SSA's customers are speeding down Woods Hole Road, the SSA, as a neighbor to the Woods Hole community, would want to know that to see what it can do to dissuade them from speeding.

10. But Mr. Sayers also stated that when he looked at the traffic percentages that Mr. Trumbull will probably show the Working Group in a few minutes, Woods Hole Road is a way that vehicles get to Martha's Vineyard and there will be an amount of traffic that goes down Woods Hole Road that is destined for the SSA and then to the island communities. In this regard, Mr. Sayers stated that he did not know what that information serves in terms of mitigating traffic and noise, and that the SSA's Long-Range Vineyard Transportation Task Force (Task Force), of which Messrs. Cahill and Santoro are also members, are considering potential long-term solutions to see what can be done on a long-term basis.

Mr. Tupper stated that the CCC certainly would be happy to dig into the data to help with any of these issues, and that it sees this tension in a number of other locations in terms of a regional roadway with purposes for regional travel abutting up against residential abutters with concerns of impacts on residential properties. Mr. Tupper acknowledged both of those challenges and noted that it is certainly something that keeps the CCC busy in terms of trying to tackle that.

Mr. Cahill noted that the Task Force will probably want to ask Mr. Tupper to attend one of their future meetings. Mr. Sayers agreed, but noted that the Task Force's next meeting was going to be dedicated to the potential for a barging operation between Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford.

Mr. Tupper stated that, speaking in general, he always would be happy to come and join the Working Group if the SSA were to make a request for his attendance, even if it is simply to look at the data the CCC already has collected. Mr. Tupper also noted that if the discussion gets a little more in depth and requires additional data collection, there are other paths that can get the CCC involved with a project, such as going to the town and having some discussions there. But Mr. Tupper stated that certainly if the SSA requests him to come and share the data the CCC already has collected and answer any specific questions that the Working Group has, he is more than happy to do so.

Mr. Santoro then asked how much lead time the CCC usually needs to do traffic counts that are requested. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that typically the CCC hires interns in late May and conducts its data collection during the months of June through August. In addition, Mr. Tupper said, the CCC sends out notices to DPW directors usually in March

and asks them to send in their requests. But Mr. Tupper noted that the CCC does not respond to citizen requests in terms of traffic data collection because it would be out doing a lot of data collection if that were the case. Therefore, Mr. Tupper said, he certainly would encourage coordination with the DPW to the extent they find this a priority and would like the CCC out there counting the traffic, and the CCC would then do its best to add it to the schedule. Although Mr. Tupper acknowledged that from time to time the CCC receives more requests than it can handle, he stated that something like a typical count on Woods Hole Road is part of its annual program, so the CCC will be out there anyway.

Mr. Santoro then asked Mr. Tupper if he could reach out to the Working Group before the CCC does its next annual count on Woods Hole Road so that perhaps the Working Group members can narrow down some of the specific information they may request in advance. In response, Mr. Tupper asked if the Working Group could get a little more specific about what it is looking at by February or March, and the CC can then include the DPW into the discussion and figure out what makes sense. Mr. Sayers stated that he would review the video recording of today's meeting and get a sense of what requests the Working Group members made today so that Mr. Tupper does not have to remember everything that was asked, and that Mr. Tupper and he can work together to find out what information is easy for him to get and what may take more time and can be deferred until a later time.

#### **Percentage of SSA –Related Traffic on Woods Hole Road**

11. Mr. Sayers then recounted how Mr. Trumbull has gone through the CCC's information and information from the SSA regarding the number of vehicles carried by the SSA between Woods Hole and Martha's Vineyard on a trip-by-trip basis, as well as the number of shuttle buses traveling between Woods Hole and Palmer Avenue, and he asked Mr. Trumbull whether he would like to share what he has discovered. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he would like to write up a 3-to-4-page report, saying that the essential question in which he is interested from the perspective of a Falmouth resident is what percentage of overall traffic in terms of cars, trucks and buses are SSA-related going down Woods Hole Road. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull stated that he would like to ascertain that for a reference point in order to see whether that percentage is changing and whether it is growing more rapidly than Falmouth-related traffic. Therefore, Mr. Trumbull proposed that he prepare a report and circulate it before the Working Group's next meeting, as that may be the most efficient way of presenting it.

Mr. Sayers agreed, although he cautioned Mr. Trumbull that, while he can write up a report and circulate it to the other Working Group members outside of a public meeting, it can only contain facts and statistics and cannot contain any of Mr. Trumbull's opinions. Mr. Sayers noted that Mr. Trumbull's opinions can only be communicated to the other Working Group members at public meetings like their meeting today because that is the requirement of the Open Meeting Law. So Mr. Sayers observed that while Mr. Trumbull can do an analysis of the statistics he finds, the general conclusions and opinions he draws from that analysis should be given to the other Working Group member at a public meeting so that they all can discuss it. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he understood that restriction.

12. Mr. Santoro then observed that the communities were still in the era of COVID-19 and could still be in this era in June and July. As a result, Mr. Santoro said, he did not know how the Working Group could predict what is going to happen down the road with COVID-19 and where everyone is going to stand, as he cannot even predict what is going to happen with respect to his business. However, Mr. Santoro stated that he does know that, due to COVID-19 right now, Martha's Vineyard does have a lot of people staying on the island and it does have a lot more goods being shipped there, whether it is by UPS or Fedex, and he questioned whether anyone can know if that situation is going to remain the same after COVID-19 is resolved. In this regard, Mr. Santoro observed that everyone is taking this day to day, week to week, and month to month, and that it might be difficult to determine what is going to happen even within this coming year. Accordingly, Mr. Santoro stated that he was curious about how everybody else felt about this situation because it is forever changing and that someone cannot even base any projections on the SSA's 2019 traffic statistics because traffic levels were substantially lower than those statistic during the beginning of the pandemic and then higher during the fall because of COVID-19.

Mr. Mauro stated that he agreed with Mr. Santoro's statements and that, as Mr. Tupper had mentioned in his presentation, Mass DOT had halted all of the regional planning agencies' counting programs in April, including all of the Martha's Vineyard Commission's traffic counts as well. In this regard, Mr. Mauro noted that the Martha's Vineyard Commission has six permanent count locations, so fortunately they were able to monitor some traffic that way, but that their count program basically has been nonexistent for the past year.

Mr. Cahill also seconded Mr. Santoro's statements, which he said had been well stated and did not need any additional statements from him. Mr. Cahill observed that this year is, at a minimum, a one-off year, and that where everything settles is yet to be determined.

The Working Group members then thanked Mr. Tupper for his presentation.

### **Minutes of the Working Group's October 28, 2020 Meeting**

13. Mr. Sayers then stated that, with respect to the draft minutes of the Working Group's October 28, 2020 meeting, Mr. Trumbull had informed him that there is an omission in the minutes he would like to correct. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull stated that he was disappointed that the omission of the exchange the other Working Group members had with Mr. Jones and himself about standby and the general approach to SSA planning for early freight but then not taking into account how reinstating standby after Labor Day might affect the Woods Hole community. But Mr. Trumbull stated that he would simply abstain from voting on the minutes, as this subject was also an item on the agenda later in this meeting.

In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he omitted that discussion from the draft minutes because Mr. Jones had thought that the SSA's 5:30 a.m. freight trip had only been scheduled through Labor Day and that the reservation-only dates similarly had been

scheduled only through Labor Day. Mr. Sayers noted that Mr. Jones was correct about the reservation-only days, but that he had been incorrect about the 5:30 a.m. freight trip, which had been scheduled to operate until late October as it has in previous years. Mr. Sayers also recounted how, based upon Mr. Jones' misunderstanding, he had said that it was unfortunate that the SSA had extended the 5:30 a.m. freight trip through October because of the needs of the island but had not extended the reservation-only days through Columbus Day for the needs of Falmouth, and that the other Working Group members took some issue with that statement because it did not reflect what had happened. Mr. Sayers noted that, after the other Working Group members corrected Mr. Jones' misunderstanding, he believed that Mr. Jones had withdrawn the comment and that, since there had been a misunderstanding that did not reflect the SSA's actions, he thought the discussion did not need to be part of the minutes. But Mr. Sayers stated that if Messrs. Trumbull and Jones would like that discussion to be part of the minutes, he could add it back in.

Mr. Jones observed that, rather than just to omit the discussion completely, it would be more accurate to have the discussion reflected in the minutes, noting that he had made that misstatement and that he had been corrected and had withdrawn his complaint. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he would then send everyone a revised version of the minutes for approval at their next meeting.

#### **Noise of Bruno's Trash Trucks Going Up Woods Hole Road**

14. Mr. Sayers stated that, because of the Open Meeting Law, he did not forward emails to the other Working Group members that he and Ms. Fletcher had received from Mr. Trumbull beginning around November 20, 2020 about the noise of Bruno's trash trucks that are leaving the Woods Hole terminal around 6:15 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Mr. Sayers stated that Mr. Trumbull thought that there would be slightly less noise if the trucks could go more slowly, so the SSA called Greg Carroll and did an experiment the previous Friday with Mr. Trumbull and Ms. Fletcher. In sum, Mr. Sayers said, after two of Carroll's trucks arrived in Woods Hole on the 8:15 a.m. ferry, one went faster up Woods Hole Road and the other one went more slowly. Mr. Sayers stated that Ms. Fletcher had thought there was no discernable difference in the amount of noise made by the two trucks and that, indeed, the slower truck may have been louder. Regardless, Mr. Sayers said, Mr. Carroll has told the SSA that has made quite clear to his drivers that they are supposed to drive responsibly, and the question is whether they will make more noise or less noise if they go slowly up that hill before they gain some momentum, and that it appears they may make more noise because the trucks need to have some inertia going up a hill so that their drivers don't have to shift down.

Later in the meeting, Mr. Trumbull stated that the two cabs that were used in the experiment were quite different, at least in appearance and he assumed in age as well. As a result, Mr. Trumbull said, he found the experiment to be non-conclusive and he had not concluded that the slower vehicle was necessarily noisier. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that, while one cab was from a Carroll's truck and that the other cab was from a Bruno's trucks, Mr. Carroll had informed her that they were roughly the same age, that they were the same kind

of cab, and that they were hauling the same weight of product, which was more than 80,000 pounds on each truck. Mr. Sayers also stated that Mr. Carroll had told the SSA that he would try to use to comparable cabs to make the experiment meaningful, and Ms. Fletcher said that the only difference between the cabs was the name on their sides. Mr. Trumbull then stated that he would think about this more, as it seems counterintuitive to him that a truck going more slowly will make more noise.

15. Mr. Sayers also reported that Mr. Trumbull had emailed the SSA about two other trucks that had been noisy today, that Ms. Fletcher has sent emails to those two shippers, who are relatively new on that boat, and that when Ms. Fletcher comes back from vacation she will make certain to talk to them so they know what their responsibilities are when driving to and from the terminal. In this regard, Ms. Fletcher noted that the two shippers on that 5:30 a.m. trip from Vineyard Haven are new to the SSA's bulk freight reservations system, so prior to making their reservations they did not receive the letters sent out by the SSA regarding compliance with the SSA traffic and noise mitigation policies. Accordingly, Ms. Fletcher said, she has reached out to them and forwarded them the current version of the letter, but she emphasized that both shippers are established businesses on the island and that she is confident that they will be very receptive to her emails.

In response to a question from Mr. Cahill about the identity of the shippers, Ms. Fletcher stated that they are both companies that ship septic waste off of the island. Mr. Sayers stated that both he and Ms. Fletcher were hesitant to provide more identification because it was unclear under the SSA's Enabling Act whether that is public information. In response to a question from Mr. Santoro, Ms. Fletcher stated that they had just started shipping septic waste off-island, and Mr. Santoro noted that it is probably because Edgartown's flow is maximized due to the number of people staying on the island, even to the extent where the town has stopped taking grease waste. Ms. Fletcher further assured the Working Group that both of the shippers are respectable companies and noted that one of them also has a sewage pump-out service on the island.

16. Mr. Sayers then stated that another situation which may be more difficult to solve was one that happened Sunday morning when Mr. Trumbull emailed the SSA about a truck owned by Mr. Maseda going up the hill, noting that the subject of Mr. Maseda's driving also had been discussed at the Working Group's last meeting. Mr. Sayers stated that this is a particular driver to whom Ms. Fletcher already has talked and will talk again in order to impress upon him the importance of not speeding up Woods Hole Road, especially when his rig is empty.

#### **Emails Received by the SSA's [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) Email Address**

17. Mr. Sayers noted that he had sent to all of the Working Group members the emails the SSA has received at [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com), and while Mr. Sayers conceded that the emails were not the most positive responses the SSA has received from Woods Hole residents, they showed what work the SSA has to do. Mr. Sayers also reported that Ms. Fletcher already had responded to everyone who had sent emails, and that she was taking

up the offer from one Woods Hole resident to go and listen at his home to the noise of trucks jakebraking on Woods Hole Road. Mr. Sayers declared that this exchange is exactly what the SSA wants because the SSA will be able to find out where the biggest noise problems are. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that when Ms. Fletcher visits this Woods Hole resident, she should be able to ascertain whether the truck that is actually jakebraking is going north or south on Woods Hole Road and who it is so that she can then tell them to put a stop to it. Mr. Sayers also noted that this was the first email the SSA received in response to its postcard mailing, so he considered it a positive result even though everyone who has emailed the SSA has a negative attitude towards the SSA. In sum, Mr. Sayers said, this means that the SSA just has to try harder.

### **Traffic Backups on Woods Hole Road**

18. Mr. Sayers stated that Mr. Trumbull had asked that the agenda for today's meeting include a discussion of whether the Working Group should recommend that the SSA extend its reservation-only days for travel from the Woods Hole terminal (eliminating standby travel during those days) to Columbus Day and possibly until Thanksgiving. Mr. Sayers noted that his personal sense was that standby is a very important factor for island residents, although the SSA has gotten them used to having reservation-only days through Labor Day. In addition, Mr. Sayers said, at their last meeting Mr. Cahill cautioned against extending the SSA's reservation-only days at this time because no one knows what impact COVID-19 is having on people's travel. Mr. Sayers stated that he personally thought that, instead, that the SSA should consider what it is doing at the Nantucket terminal, which is giving people who want to get in standby numbers like at a deli so that they don't have to keep coming back to the terminal. Mr. Sayers noted that customers call in for a standby number and then the SSA texts them when it can accommodate a range of additional vehicles. Although Mr. Sayers acknowledged that this system would be more difficult to implement at the Woods Hole terminal due to the larger number of standby spaces, he stated that he believed it would solve the problem of traffic backing up Woods Hole Road while still continuing to provide island residents with the flexibility of traveling on standby.

Mr. Sayers also noted that there would be even more opposition to eliminating standby travel during the latter half of September, as there is a lot of pent-up demand on the island to travel off-island during that time because the excursion rate goes down beginning September 15th. Mr. Sayers stated that he thought it would be a better initial approach to see whether the SSA can improve its standby procedures, especially since no one knows whether that traffic situation is going to remain the same this coming year. In this regard, Mr. Sayers observed that the SSA had never had a problem like this before and that reservation-only days always have ended on Labor Day, except for a few reservation-only days around the Columbus Day weekend. In addition, Mr. Sayers said, the standby system the SSA has implemented at the Nantucket terminal is better customer service because people don't have to come down to the terminal and wait for who knows how long in the standby line. Instead, Mr. Sayers noted that they can continue to drive around the island until their numbers are called.

Mr. Santoro stated that he agreed with the point that Mr. Cahill made at the Working Group's last meeting and that, moving forward, no one has any idea what they will be facing this coming year down the road. In addition, Mr. Santoro said, he thought a lot of island residents did not start traveling this year until the fall because they could not go off-island in the spring, and that probably had skewed what happened this past fall.

Mr. Santoro also agreed that the standby system at the Nantucket terminal is a great idea, observing that he has the same system for guests at his restaurants, which includes getting their cell phone numbers so that they can walk around until he texts them five or ten minutes before he wants them to arrive. But Mr. Santoro noted that requiring people to go to the Woods Hole terminal to get their standby numbers would only encourage people to drive back and forth between Woods Hole and Falmouth and would not eliminate any traffic, and he suggested that the SSA allow people to call to get their standby numbers so that they are able to park their cars and go shopping. In any event, Mr. Santoro said, there is no way the SSA can eliminate standby during those periods right now, as no one knows what anyone will be facing this spring that might result in people again going off-island more in the fall than they do in the spring.

For clarification, Mr. Sayers noted that customers traveling standby from the Nantucket terminal do not need to go to the terminal to be placed on the standby list; instead, they can call the terminal to get their standby numbers.

Mr. Jones disagreed with Mr. Sayers' statement that this year has been the only time the SSA has had this problem, which he declared has existed for a long time. While Mr. Jones noted that recently the SSA may not have had a problem very often, he observed that the SSA has experienced these problems caused by the standby line for the last ten or fifteen years. But Mr. Jones stated that he was also concerned about this problem because it sounded like a problem the SSA has caused by lowering its excursion rates and Mr. Jones suggested that the SSA not lower its excursion rates until mid-October or the end of October. In this regard, Mr. Jones observed that, if the SSA is causing this problem by lowering its rates, it would be really frustrating for Falmouth and Woods Hole residents to find out that the SSA is causing the problem and not willing to solve it.

Mr. Cahill then questioned how Mr. Jones knew that the SSA is causing the problem. In response, Mr. Jones recounted how Mr. Sayers had just said that the SSA lowers its excursion rates in September, which is why island residents travel then. Mr. Sayers then stated that it is a fact that the SSA lowers its excursion rates on September 15th and that he assumes this may encourage people to travel then instead of traveling earlier in September. On the other hand, Mr. Sayers observed that not lowering excursion rates until September 15th may improve the situation at the beginning of September and transfer it to the end of September. Mr. Sayers declared that he did not mind any of those characterizations, but that what he did mind was when Mr. Jones said the SSA is not willing to solve the problem. Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA is willing to solve the problem and that he was just proposing a way that he thought it could be solved in a way that would satisfy both island residents and Woods Hole residents, namely, by implementing the standby system at the Woods Hole terminal that the SSA already has implemented at the Nantucket terminal.

Mr. Sayers further stated that he also had not heard of this problem before this year and that he is proposing a solution that should be considered. Mr. Sayers also conceded that he does not yet know whether his proposed solution is practical because he had just brought it up, and that the SSA has to see if it is practical; but he observed that, if it turns out to be practical, it could be the best solution because it would address everyone interests.

In response, Mr. Jones stated that his concern was the Mr. Sayers started this discussion by saying that he was not willing to consider moving the deadline of the standby policy. But Mr. Sayers took issue with Mr. Jones' statement, noting that he had said that the ability to travel on standby is a very important thing to island residents and that he does not want these two communities fighting each other, and island resident would say they are being attacked by having their standby travel taken away from them. Mr. Sayers noted that the communities were trying to get to a situation where everyone can talk together and look at each other's interests and see how they can all work together, and that is what he was trying to do in this instance.

Mr. Jones stated that he agreed with Mr. Santoro and would be worried that Mr. Sayers' suggested standby system would create people driving around Woods Hole waiting for their number to come up, which he said would be even worse than the current situation where they arrive at the Woods Hole terminal to wait, knowing that they cannot get in line. But Mr. Santoro observed that Falmouth businesses probably would not agree with Mr. Jones because they would love the fact that people are driving back to Falmouth to grab a sandwich or to stop somewhere else. Mr. Santoro also stated that when he raised this concern he did not realize that the SSA could communicate with its customers to tell them to call the Woods Hole terminal to get on the standby list instead of driving there, and he stated that would be a great idea and a start.

Mr. Jones then stated that he hoped the Working Group members realize how horrible and dangerous a situation it is if Woods Hole Road is blockaded all the way to the Dome and that, from a safety point of view, it just cannot happen. In this regard, Mr. Jones stated that it was not acceptable to allow it to happen four or five times and that it is extremely problematic even if it happens only once. After Mr. Sayers stated that he agreed with Mr. Jones, Ms. Fletcher recounted how she has been stuck in traffic trying to get down Woods Hole Road many times and has then found out the backup was caused by the Woods Hole drawbridge, although she conceded that the majority of the time the problem usually has something to do with the SSA. Mr. Jones agreed that what Ms. Fletcher had said was true and that she had a good point as well.

Mr. Trumbull then recounted how, at their previous meeting, Mr. Sayers had said that the SSA was having trouble trying to implement the Nantucket standby system at the Hyannis terminal, and he asked whether it was something the SSA was willing to try at the Woods Hole terminal even though it might not work there. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that the SSA was willing to try anything and that she was not going to say "no" to anything. Ms. Fletcher also stated that the Nantucket standby system was definitely worth trying at the Woods Hole terminal, but she noted that it would be more of a challenge due to the

much larger scale of the Woods Hole operations. In this regard, Ms. Fletcher stated that the reason the system works well on Nantucket is that standby customers come to the terminal or call and put their name on the list, then they go home or to the beach or hang out and then, when it is time, they come back onto the property and wait. So Ms. Fletcher noted that the SSA has to look at exactly how it would do this with the numbers of people coming down to the Woods Hole terminal. For example, Ms. Fletcher said, the SSA stages only ten standby cars at a time at the Nantucket terminal, and she asked whether the SSA would stage 20 or 30 standby cars at the Woods Hole terminal. Ms. Fletcher also asked how the SSA would keep down the number of standby cars staged at the terminal and at the same time keep people from driving up and down Woods Hole Road because the SSA honestly does not know how long a customer will need to wait in the standby line. Indeed, Ms. Fletcher noted that while customers may believe that they will have to wait a couple of hours in the standby line, it could turn out to be only one hour or as many as five hours.

Mr. Cahill noted that, at the beginning of this discussion, the question was whether the Working Group should make a recommendation and that, in his opinion, the Working Group is not prepared to make a recommendation because it seems that the data and information is still flowing around and that the Working Group has to get more information in order to arrive at an educated opinion. But more importantly, Mr. Cahill said, speaking for himself he would have to have that question asked to his Dukes County Commissioners because he could not make a recommendation without their input. Accordingly, Mr. Cahill stated that he did not think the Working Group was prepared to make any recommendation.

Mr. Santoro agreed, saying that he thought the Working Group was at the discussion phase right now, that this was the first time they were aware of the problem, and that it is great to hear Mr. Jones' opinions about it. Mr. Santoro emphasized that he is all ears, that he knows the Working Group is looking for ideas and that, indeed, that is what the Working Group is about. Mr. Santoro also noted that he became a member of the Working Group knowing that they are not going to solve these issues overnight, although he would like the SSA to handle the ones it can as soon as possible.

Mr. Jones then suggested that the SSA might not publicize for quite a while what date its reservation-only days will end in 2021. But Mr. Sayers stated that, even before this discussion came up at their last meeting, the SSA's 2021 Operating Schedules had been approved and all of the information had been printed, which he believed included information that the reservation-only days will last the same time they historically have lasted, namely, to Labor Day except for Columbus Day. Mr. Jones then asked whether the reservation-only days will stop after Labor Day. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that if next year's reservation-only days are the same as they have been in the past, then his memory is that they end after Labor Day except for another reservation-only day period around Columbus Day weekend. Mr. Cahill stated that he similarly believed that was the case.

Mr. Jones then stated that he hoped that, at a future meeting, the Working Group would ask that the SSA's reservation-only days go to September 15th because he thought the period after Labor Day was still busy enough to be problematic for both Woods Hole and Martha's Vineyard. In response, Mr. Sayers noted that the September 15th date coincided

with the date that the SSA lowers its excursion rates for island residents, and he suggested that he and Ms. Fletcher talk with SSA General Manager Robert Davis to get more information. Mr. Sayers further stated that, after they have more data, the Working Group can discuss this subject again at a later meeting, observing that there was still some time to think about the issues.

### **Noise Monitoring Program along Woods Hole Road**

19. Mr. Sayers stated that Mr. Trumbull had asked that the subject of a possible implementation of a noise monitoring program also be placed on today's agenda, and he noted that he and Ms. Fletcher had received an email from Mr. Trumbull on this subject which he could not forward to the other Working Group members because it contained Mr. Trumbull's opinions about the subject. In summary, Mr. Sayers said, Mr. Trumbull would like the Working Group to recommend that the SSA buy a sound monitor for \$5,000 and that he has provided information about the company that manufactures it. Ms. Sayers further stated that Mr. Trumbull would like the SSA to move ahead with that purchase or rent the device for \$500 or \$600 per month. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Trumbull whether he wanted to present that information.

Mr. Trumbull then shared a portion of the email he had sent to Mr. Sayers about the sound monitor, noting that he had done some research on what groups do when they want to measure traffic noise and that one path led to Larson Davis. Mr. Trumbull stated that he had explained the SSA's situation and that this particular monitor was one of the representatives' recommendations for a per-second audio monitoring whose data set can be downloaded on a weekly basis. Mr. Trumbull observed that the device can be rented for 500 to \$600 per month or purchased for around \$5,000.

Mr. Trumbull further stated that he wanted to tie this subject back to comments the SSA has been receiving from Woods Hole residents and their discontent over being asked to bear the burden of monitoring entirely on their shoulders. Mr. Trumbull then referred to a couple of letters from Woods Hole residents asking whether they are supposed to jump out of bed and take pictures of trucks going by at 40 miles per hour. Mr. Trumbull also emphasized that having a sound monitoring program gets at the problem and that the Working Group has been discussing it almost since the beginning of their meetings. In addition, Mr. Trumbull said, without the data from a noise monitoring system, the Working Group appears to have little basis on which to proceed with their designated tasks.

Addressing Mr. Trumbull's last comment first, Mr. Sayers stated that he believed the Working Group did have a reason to proceed without this data and that everything they had discussed during this whole meeting shows that the Working Group has other things to accomplish. Mr. Sayers noted that the Working Group can talk about the SSA's standby policies, its reservation-only days, and other ways to mitigate noise and traffic without knowing the exact decibels of vehicles going down Woods Hole Road. Therefore, Mr. Sayers stated that he thought the Working Group should continue to work on those noise

and traffic mitigation issues regardless of which way they go with respect to the noise monitoring program.

Mr. Sayers further noted that another aspect of this issue is that, given the SSA's current financial state, spending \$5,000 for one decibel monitoring unit seemed to be a lot to him. In this regard, Mr. Sayers recounted how, when he had googled sound monitoring devices and sound monitoring meters, a number of advertisements came up for ones that can be bought for around \$100 to \$300. Mr. Sayers also noted that, from what he understood, the \$5,000 monitor similarly is a handheld device, is only one device, and is primarily for workplace noise and workplace situations, not outside environmental noise that is the situation here.

Mr. Sayers also questioned whether the Working Group needs to have such a precise measurement in decibels that he assumed the more expensive models would provide. Rather, Mr. Sayers said, he thought the Working Group generally needs to know which trucks are the louder ones and which ones are not, and that he thought the SSA's idea of having Ms. Fletcher going to hear the trucks that are jakebraking will serve a good purpose in terms of identifying the people who are abusing the community. Mr. Sayers emphasized that the Working Group has to ask themselves what they can accomplish and what they cannot because they are just trying to mitigate the noise and find out who these people are, and he noted that buying a sound monitoring device is not going to give the Working Group that much more information.

In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he did describe this situation in quite a lot of detail to the manufacturer and that his recommended device is planted and secured somewhere and then left there for a week. Mr. Trumbull noted that, as the representative described it, this monitor is the instrument one would use to measure traffic noise including truck noise. But Mr. Trumbull observed that he was hearing loud and clear that the SSA doesn't seem to want to do it and doesn't want to be involved, and that if it were about the money, then he thought the SSA could rent the device for a month.

Ms. Fletcher then suggested that, if there is going to be a sound monitoring program, it might be better if the SSA could find a third party who would be willing to do it, noting that people will consider whatever information the SSA reports to be skewed because it was collected by the SSA. Similarly, Ms. Fletcher said, if Mr. Trumbull were to administer it, people are going to think the information is skewed because he collected it. Therefore, Ms. Fletcher stated that, if a program is going to be conducted, it should be done by a third party who has no connection to either the SSA or the Woods Hole community, and that way the data will be as precise and accurate as it needs to be.

Mr. Mauro also noted that any sound monitoring device will need to be able to withstand the weather and he stated that, on a windy day, he expected that some of the wind gusts will be louder than the trucks that drive up Woods Hole Road.

Mr. Cahill then noted that he has been attending a few of the Working Group's meetings, hearing the concerns of Woods Hole resident, and obviously wants Martha's Vineyard and Falmouth to be good partners and neighbors, but he asked whether the Working Group has to look at who is going to be enforcing anything the Working Group wants to deal with. For example, Mr. Cahill said, he did not know whether the Falmouth Police or the State Police would be needed, and he did not think that the SSA is in the business of enforcing traffic regulations. Accordingly, Mr. Cahill suggested that one of the things the Working Group may want to think about for a future meeting is to invite either the State Police or the local police to find out how they can help with these issues. Mr. Cahill declared that he wants to continue to deal with these issues and that the SSA has done an amazing job of reaching out to different businesses and freight and working on the schedules, but he suggested that outside enforcement may also be needed. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that the Falmouth police definitely could have a larger presence on Woods Hole Road, as they are never seen there.

Mr. Cahill further noted that implementing the suggested noise monitoring program just doesn't seem feasible because even if the SSA has the best data, there is still the question of who is going to enforce the law. In this regard, Mr. Cahill observed that it was not going to be him or any other Working Group member because the violators do not listen to them. Rather, Mr. Cahill said, it has to be someone with a blue suit on and a siren.

In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that, in his view, a sound monitoring program would let the Working Group understand which trucks at which moments are making too much noise. Although Ms. Fletcher noted that all of the freight shippers' trucks have been inspected by MassDOT, Mr. Cahill asked how the Working Group would go forward even if trucks are making too much noise and it becomes an enforcement issue. In this regard, Mr. Jones noted that the Working Group would go to the State Police because Woods Hole Road is a state highway.

Mr. Cahill then assured Mr. Trumbull that he and the other island representatives on the Working Group definitely want to cooperate on these issues, but he asked Mr. Trumbull who is going to be responsible for enforcement if the Working Group were to find serious problems. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he believed the noise monitoring program would identify the trucks to which the Working Group needs to turn their attention and, while he noted that Mr. Cahill may then want to reach out to the police, he thought that it could be very effective for Ms. Fletcher to reach out to them directly. Regardless, Mr. Trumbull said, it is not efficient for Woods Hole residents to get up at 6:00 a.m. every morning to try to identify the trucks driving by.

Mr. Cahill stated that he thought the SSA should continue with the programs it has implemented over the last nine months, which he observed have been effective, and that the Working Group should continue to receive the letters being sent in by Woods Hole residents so they are aware of what those residents' concerns are. Mr. Cahill emphasized that he was not negating those concerns; he was just trying to cut to the chase and ask, whatever is done or whatever is recommended, who is going to enforce it?

Mr. Jones stated that he hoped the SSA can continue with what Ms. Fletcher and Mr. Sayers have been doing in the past and not worry about enforcement. Instead, Mr. Jones suggested that the SSA find out whose trucks these are and then go to the freight companies, telling them that it has come to the SSA's attention that their trucks are some of the ones causing problems and asking them to correct those problems to help the SSA be a better neighbor. Mr. Jones stated that appealing to the freight companies' understanding might help and he would prefer to take that approach rather than sticking them with a \$200 fine.

In this regard, Ms. Fletcher observed that she is on good terms with 90% of the truck drivers who come through Woods Hole and that they all realize what is going on and are honestly trying their best to accommodate and pay attention to what they are doing so that they are not exacerbating the situation. Ms. Fletcher also observed that, although every truck is different and that every truck handles differently, all of the truck drivers are making a conscious effort except for one or two outliers who have been dealt with and talked to.

But Mr. Jones noted that some of the truck drivers may not know that they are causing problems and, as Mr. Trumbull suggested, it would be useful if the Working Group had more data to know exactly which trucks are causing the problems. In response, Mr. Sayers asked for the opportunity to think about this a little bit more, saying that he also would talk to Mr. Trumbull. Mr. Sayers stated that his biggest reaction was that the SSA would be criticized for spending \$5,000 for one monitor, for which in any event it would have to go out to bid, and he wanted to look at alternatives. For example, Mr. Sayers said, when he googled sound monitors, the results he received cost only a few hundred dollars. Mr. Sayers also observed that, while a sound monitoring program would be a good supplement, he did not think the SSA needs one that is going to be as precise as one that would be used for monitoring workplace noise. Instead, Mr. Sayers said, what is needed is just some basic information, namely, a sense of what is louder and what is not as loud, and not precision. Ultimately, Mr. Sayers stated that he thought the solution might be a combination of Ms. Fletcher and Woods Hole Terminal Manager Rob Townes going to meet some Woods Hole residents and finding out where the noisy places are, and that they can probably deduce who the people are who are causing the problems based upon the time of the day and the location.

In response, Mr. Trumbull observed that, in reality, there may be five or six trucks going by in the space of 15 seconds, which makes it difficult to identify where the noise is coming from. But Mr. Sayers observed that, in that situation, a sound monitor would not be of much help either, while Ms. Fletcher's extensive knowledge of the drivers may be of some help. In any event, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA is working on the problems, it has not given up, and it is continuing to work on all of these things. For example, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA is continuing to send out emails to freight shippers who arrive early at the Woods Hole terminal, and that the freight shippers are responding to those emails.

But Mr. Sayers observed that the Working Group also has to realize what the SSA's limits are. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that the Working Group is not charged with shifting traffic from Woods Hole Road to New Bedford, and that another group is looking at those issues on a long-term basis to see if traffic can be reduced. Noting that the SSA can only

do so much in terms of mitigation, Mr. Sayers stated that, as far as he could see, if trucks are driving along Woods Hole Road responsibly, below the speed limit, and minimizing the noise they make, that would be the maximum the SSA can do while those trucks are on the road. But Mr. Sayers also noted that the situation is not there yet.

Mr. Sayers also recounted how, at an earlier Working Group meeting, Patrick Cleary of Cape Cod Express, Stephen Araujo of John Keene Excavation, and Greg Carroll of Bruno's Rolloff had stated that there is no reason why any truck driver should be using jakebrakes along Woods Hole Road except in an emergency, yet he noted that this was the first complaint the SSA had received in an email to its [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) email address, which needed to be checked out. Mr. Sayers then stated that he would look at other sound monitors, talk to Mr. Trumbull, and see how the SSA can best integrate a sound monitoring program with everything else it is doing. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he found it very hard to think about mitigation without a monitoring, but that he would give it a try.

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

20. Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA was doing pretty well with having its freight shippers comply with its early arrival policy at the Woods Hole terminal, although he noted that there was a problem when the SSA ended the 5:30 a.m. freight trip in October 2020 because a number of drivers had a routine of arriving before 5:30 a.m. and continued to do so for a few days. But Mr. Sayers stated that they soon stopped arriving early and, afterwards, there had been only a few freight shippers who have arrived early and they generally were early by only a few minutes. Mr. Sayers also noted that the SSA was continuing to monitor early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal and that, while the report he had given the Working Group members only went through the end of November, he thought that there had been two more instances since then.

#### **End-of-Year Impressions by Working Group Members**

21. Mr. Sayers stated that Mr. Trumbull had asked that the Working Group members be asked at this meeting to provide their impressions of the first year of the Working Group's work. In response, Mr. Jones noted that the SSA now has a committee and that he would like to respond favorably to the SSA's attempts to hear the concerns of Woods Hole and Falmouth residents and to try different solutions to them. Although Mr. Jones noted that the SSA's suggested solutions are not always the solutions he would like and that the SSA doesn't always work as quickly as he would like, he observed that every single time something has been brought up, an attempt has been made. Therefore, Mr. Jones stated that he wanted to validate that this is certainly the way it is and that, while he thinks the Working Group has a long way to go to get the community of Falmouth and Woods Hole to really see the SSA as a good neighbor, he certainly thinks they are headed in that direction.

22. Mr. Sayers then observed that he thought the Martha's Vineyard members were realizing the problems that the SSA's traffic causes in Woods Hole, and that those members are open minded, want to solve the problems, and be good neighbors. Mr. Sayers also noted that everyone is beginning to understand the problems being faced by the others and that as long as the Working Group keeps on talking and trying to solve the problems, he thought they were going to be in a good place.
23. Mr. Cahill declared that he supported what Mr. Sayers had just said and observed that Martha's Vineyard and Falmouth really are a community that happens to be separated by a body of water and a ferry service called the SSA. But Mr. Cahill noted that island residents are always in Falmouth and that they enjoy getting off-island to escape there to go to the movies, or go out to dinner or the doctor. Mr. Cahill further stated that they see the issues, and that they are all here today to help understand them more. In this regard, Mr. Cahill also noted that, because he lives downtown in Vineyard Haven, he sees some of that noise on his side as well and, as a result, he is aware of those things. Mr. Cahill concluded by saying that, while he cannot speak for everyone, he was looking forward to further meetings.
24. Mr. Santoro echoed those sentiments, declaring that it has been a pleasure to be part of the Working Group and also a pleasure, during the Task Force meetings, to talk with Falmouth Selectman Doug Brown and hearing that he understands the issues Martha's Vineyard residents are dealing with on the island. Mr. Santoro also stated that, just as Mr. Brown had not been aware of those issues, the island representatives are learning of Falmouth issues that they had not been aware of, so at some point he thinks everyone will meet at middle ground even though it is going to take some work. Mr. Santoro also noted that the representatives on these bodies have to answer to their appointing authorities and that, in this regard, he represents the Oak Bluffs Selectmen and goes back to them with updates on these discussions. In addition, Mr. Santoro said, he receives more ideas from other people, so all of this is a work in progress. Mr. Santoro concluded by saying that he is excited to be involved and that he looks forward to continuing to do the work.

#### **Scheduling the Working Group's Next Meeting**

25. The Working Group Force members then agreed that their next meeting would take place by Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.

#### **Public Input**

26. Mr. Sayers then read comments that had appeared in the Zoom's chat box, noting that David Lesley had asked whether the CCC's data showed the times of day that its traffic counts had been taken. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that, in fact, the CCC's traffic counts were broken down by the hour and that Mr. Lesley could obtain the CCC's report by either emailing him or any other member of the Working Group because all of them have copies of it.

In response to a question as to whether the count stations have to be manned and can be operated year-round, Mr. Mauro stated that the tubes at a station are typically put down for 48 hours and do not need to be manned, although there would need to be a person sitting at an intersection if the count wanted to record the number of vehicles turning at that intersection. In this regard, Mr. Mauro noted that those turning counts are usually taken from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., which on the mainland are typically the morning and afternoon peak hours. Mr. Mauro also stated that the two counting stations installed by the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) on the island do not operate year-round and usually end for the season at the first snowfall, although this past year the MVC has installed six permanent count stations that do operate year-round.

After Mr. Sayers noted that he was going to pass by two comments that David Eisenberg had left in the Zoom's chat box because they were about issues beyond the scope of the Working Group's mission, which he said was traffic and noise mitigation, he reported that Mr. Jones had left a comment saying that he had to leave and thanking all of them for the time and good work.

27. The SSA's Falmouth Board Member Kathryn Wilson stated that she wanted to thank all of the members of the Working Group very much and that she was really impressed and grateful that all of them are willing to get into the weeds of some of these issues. Ms. Wilson noted that, when she joined the SSA's Board a year and a half ago, she had hoped that this kind of conversation would happen and she realized that it is a real commitment in terms of time and energy on all of their parts. Therefore, Ms. Wilson declared that she just wanted to thank them all again.

At approximately 5:33 p.m., the Working Group unanimously **voted** (with Ms. Fletcher and Messrs. Cahill, Mauro, Santoro, Sayers 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 January 27, 2021

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Working Group's December 9, 2020 Meeting

1. Meeting Notice for the Working Group's December 9, 2020 Meeting (posted December 7, 2020).
2. Draft Minutes of the Working Group's October 28, 2020 Meeting, dated December 4, 2020.
3. Cape Cod Commission's Vehicle Volume and Classification Report for Woods Hole Road (south of Oyster Pond) from Sept. 25 through Sept. 30, 2020.
4. Copies of emails that have been sent to [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) from December 1, 2020 through December 3, 2020 in response to the postcard it sent by direct mail to Woods Hole and neighboring Falmouth residents.
5. Chart of the number of email reminders the SSA sent to freight shippers for early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal from October 21, 2020 (the beginning of the Fall Operating Schedule) through November 30, 2020.