

Town of Oak Bluffs
Temporary Marine Fueling Facility Proposal
Martha's Vineyard Commission, LUPC Sub-Committee
May 18, 2009

Brief Description of Plan:

The Town of Oak Bluffs maintains a municipal harbor and marina which generates roughly \$900,000 in receipts between the months of May and October. For many years boaters were able to purchase fuel from two local facilities located on the Oak Bluffs Harbor. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the town, there is a significant possibility that neither facility will be offering fuel this summer. Since fuel is critical to the success of any marina facility such as Oak Bluffs, the Board of Selectmen has the Marina Manager to pursue planning of a temporary facility to be located adjacent to the current Harbormaster's office. The facility will consist of one or two tanks installed between the concrete bulkhead walkway and the Circuit Avenue Extension road layout. The temporary tanks will sit on a gravel bed approximately 2 feet below grade so that only approximately 3 feet will be visible above grade. The tanks will be surrounded by a wooden fence, comparable in design to the fence protecting the electrical boxes just south of the proposed tank site.

Request to the MVC:

The Town of Oak Bluffs is asking the MVC to permit the installation of these tanks under the MVC's DRI Guidelines 3.109(a), Development for a new vehicular refueling station.

Setbacks:

The plan, as presented, calls for the tanks to be setback from the nearest residence by approximately sixty (60) feet. The actual pumping of fuel will be approximately one hundred forty (140) feet from the nearest residence. The only other structure within those setbacks is the Harbormaster's office from which the facility will be run.

Procedures:

As proposed, the Town will assign two seasonal staff to pump fuel for transient boaters. Staff assigned to the fueling service will be trained according to the Oak Bluffs Fire Chief's requirements. One boat will be fueled at a time. The Assistant Harbormaster will directly supervise the fueling operation. The Town will offer water as part of the service. The facility will generate cash and credit card receipts. All receipts will be handled according to the Town's and the Harbormaster's money receipts policy.

Safety:

The tanks and hoses will all be fitted with quick-disconnect valves. Fueling takes place at the end of the dock, well out of range of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The double walled tanks will be protected as required with steel and concrete bollards as well as fencing. Hoses leading from the tanks to the bulkhead will be buried in appropriate conduit. The area of fueling will conform to Homeland Security regulations as enforced by the State Fire Marshall and the local Fire Chief. The facility is located away from the more congested areas of the harbor.

FAQs:

1. How much will the fuel cost? The fuel cost will be competitive with other marine fuel operations on the Cape and Islands.
2. Who can fuel? Any boat may fuel at the facility. No automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, ect. will be permitted to fuel. It is possible that a special rate could be developed for year-round fishing boats.
3. Will this facility be permanent? While it is being proposed only to cover the fuel demands for this summer and next summer, if it works for the boaters and the Town it may become a permanent facility. If this happens, the Town could propose to bury tanks rather than have above-ground tanks.
4. Is this done elsewhere? Yes, Edgartown has a municipal fueling facility with above-ground tanks. There are above-ground tanks in Tisbury and Falmouth, as well as other ports around the Cape. Menemsha tanks are buried.
5. Will there be an impact to the abutters? There should not be a noticeable impact to the abutters. The facility will be open only during the business hours of the Harbormaster's office, which in the summer is usually no later than 7pm. The actual fueling area is removed enough from the residences that there would not be an odor issue.
6. Will there be any impact to parking? There should be no impact to parking along the harbor. Several spaces next to the tanks may have to be pushed toward the centerline of the road layout, but there is a significant roadway to accommodate the parking.
7. Is the Town looking to make money on the endeavor? Not necessarily. Within the industry, marinas are expected to have fuel available for purchase. A harbor without fuel dissuades boaters, especially recreational fishermen, from booking slips and moorings. For Oak Bluffs, the Marina Manager estimates a potential loss of over \$100,000 in slip and moorings revenues if we cannot offer fuel. The Town intends to offer fuel at a competitive price, and expects to use the net fuel revenue to offset increased insurance costs and cover the cost of installation of the tanks. By law, any additional revenues will accrue to the town's general fund.
8. Will the facility be open year-round? No. The facility will be open during the months the harbor is open. Usually from May through Columbus Day.
9. What regulatory body oversees fueling facilities? The State Fire Marshall's office ultimately oversees the facility. The local Fire Chief inspects and enforces the Homeland Security regulations.