



To: Edgartown Planning Board, in advance of January 18 meeting

This letter is in strong support of the Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard project proposed for construction on the VH/Edgartown Rd. in Edgartown. As a 70-year resident of Chappy from seasonal to part-time and now full-time, and a priest who has served at both St. Andrew's and Grace, Vineyard Haven, I am acutely aware of two major challenges facing the island: how to keep our frail elderly from having to move off island, especially now that Windemere is closing, and the desperate island-wide need for affordable housing. One of the major reasons that places like Windemere are closing is because no one really wants to be warehoused in such a nursing home, either for themselves or for their loved ones.

Navigator Homes, a Green House Model, turns the traditional warehouse model of nursing home care completely upside down. An innovative design of small houses that will be architecturally designed specifically to fit the Vineyard landscape and individual rooms with private baths will allow residents to do what they enjoy and are still able to do. During Covid, the number of cases in Green House model nursing homes throughout the country was almost no-existent. As Vivian Vasallo, Vice President, Housing Impact Program, AARP Foundation writes, "*AARP supports the Green House Model because it helps elders keep their best life within reach. Too many older adults face high housing costs, inadequate housing, and isolation (sound like the Vineyard?!) – and Green House addresses those needs. It not only gives older adults a place to live, but also provides stellar care, fosters community, and promotes their personal well-being.*" Of crucial importance, Navigator Homes will have their own staff housing, meaning employees will be able to work and live on the island.

We are aware that neighbors do have concerns. We all know that people in general do not like change and any changes to a neighborhood can be worrisome. Concerns about an increase in traffic should be minimal, unless the elderly have plans to invest in motorized wheelchairs and start zooming up and down the Edgartown/VH road! Furthermore, since the staff will be living on site and walking to work, the impact would be less than having a street with a typical number of houses. If people are concerned about an increase in noise, my guess is, again, if a street were to be there, populated with active children and perhaps swimming pools, the impact of increased noise would be considerably greater.

Another concern we have heard is that the project would require the town to make expensive upgrades to its sewer plant and collection system and use its dwindling flow to accommodate this project. On the contrary, the Navigator project is following a path to provide on-site advanced nitrogen removing septic systems that will be completely separate from the town's sewer and



therefore, have no impact on the town's wastewater department. Plus, they are capable of removing over 90% of the nitrogen produced as opposed to the 19% now required by Title V.

For anyone concerned about this wonderful potential addition to the island, I would encourage you to visit their website, www.navigatorhomesmv.org. We see Navigator Homes of MV as a win/win undertaking for the island, for both our growing number of elders in need of skilled nursing care and the housing required for their caregivers. If I were facing nursing home care, which I very well could be some day, the decision between a traditional nursing home facility such as Windemere and a Green House Model such as Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard, my decision would be a complete no-brainer. We, on the Board, invite you to learn more before making any decisions for or against. Thank you.

The Rev. Cynthia Hubbard
Board Member, Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard