

5 August, 2022

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commission,

Thank you for the work you do to protect and support our island Community. I am sure you do this because you care about this community, and I imagine it can sometimes be a thankless job.

I have been a resident in Chilmark for twelve years, and both of my children have graduated from Chilmark school. As summer visitors, my family has cherished the island as a refuge for six generations now. My parents were married here, as were my wife and I. I cherish this place and this unique island community, as I know you do.

I am concerned about the increasing divides in our community: economic, political, cultural, and more. Given the environmental and social challenges we are facing, now is a time when we need to learn to reach across divides, and see the common humanity in each other, even when we disagree. I want to do my part in that.

Just before the pandemic Thomas Bena and I collaborated on a discussion series that used quiet as a tool to bring conversations deeper. The idea for the series, named *Inwards*, drew in part on my background in Buddhist meditation and philosophy. In those conversations, I was really inspired by how fewer words, and more moments of silence, helped create conversations that connected people across divides. Seeing the kind of learning that is possible in that space of stillness was part of what moved Thomas to embark on the Stillpoint project, and also what brought me to collaborate with him as an advisor on this project.

I would also be honored to offer meditation classes and day-long retreats at Stillpoint. I have been training in insight meditation for the past thirty years, including time as a monk and translator in Burma (Myanmar). I have been teaching around the world for the past 10 years, but had not felt there was a really suitable place for me to teach on the island. With its natural sense of sanctuary, Stillpoint is a perfect place for me to bring this home.

Please do support the success of the Stillpoint project in any way that you are able. Our community needs it.

Sincerely,
Jake Davis
Chilmark