

Letter from resident Brien O'Brien to Martha's Vineyard Commission dated 1-05-2021

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To: Lucy Morrison <morrison@mvcommission.org>; Alex Elvin <elvin@mvcommission.org>;

Cc: obrien1414@me.com <obrien1414@me.com>;

January 5, 2021

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Martha's Vineyard Commission
33 New York Ave.
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing as a resident at 93 N Water Street, Edgartown, MA in opposition to the constantly expanding reach by the current owners of the Harbor View Hotel on our neighborhood.

Like many of my residential neighbors, I have put significant effort and resources into maintaining and enhancing the bucolic charm of the North Water Street area. I am, however, growing increasingly concerned by the ever-expanding business strategy and subsequent footprint of my Harbor View Hotel neighbor. Any single incident or encroachment could be easily understood or ignored as a one-time event, but the corporate management team that operates the hotel complex appears to be engaged in a consistent annual expansion of their footprint and town presence in a way that provides benefits to them financially, but detracts from the aesthetic and peaceful character of our town and neighborhood. This expansion is occurring in a way that is at odds with not only the goals of our community, but also the charter that they were granted, a number of years ago, and are seeking to increasingly ignore.

Some of the more salient issues of concern are as follows:

1. The construction of a "tiki bar" and three firepits that seem to serve a multitude of people. It obviously intends to be a destination bar facility rather than a convenience bar for the benefit of their guests using the pool area.
2. The front lawn has become a bit of a three-ring circus with wedding parties overflowing onto the street, blocking and backing-up traffic, a variety of vendors providing different services, and events being held on multiple weekends, along with a weekly live radio concert series broadcast on the front porch.
3. I am not sure what the legality of the eight passenger, unlicensed electric cart with their logo on it shuttling by my house multiple times a day ... but it strikes me as a bit much.
4. Again, I'm not sure on the legality of this one either, but it seems as if their take out menu is being heavily used by people eating and dining on the lawn and across the street on the protected and sensitive sand plains leading up to the lighthouse. More than one of my early morning walks to the ecologically sensitive beach and tidal ponds was interrupted by garbage pick-up of their carry out containers.

The above are just some of the issues and examples indicative of the blatant overreach we are experiencing in our neighborhood. I would ask that the Martha's Vineyard Commission give serious thought and consideration into trying, one way or another, to get the corporate managers of the Harbor View Hotel Corporation property to be more sensitive to our community and neighborhood. It would be great to see them adopt and maintain an operational footprint more consistent with the ambiance and nature of the Charlotte Inn and provide a far richer experience for their guests and our community neighborhood rather than trying to replicate the Grand Floridian experience of Disney World.

I also want to take a moment to thank you for your consideration of the community perspective in all the work you do. I know the Martha's Vineyard Commission's role as a protector of our 'environment, economy, character and social fabric' can often lead the Commission to trying to navigate very fine lines, but I am reasonably certain that if you look closely at the issues associated with the current problems we are having in the neighborhood with the Harbor View Hotel, you'll be able to see that they have clearly sought to erase the sensitive lines the Commission seeks to maintain, and replace that fine line you draw so well with a very messy black magic marker which is being wielded strictly for the financial profit of the hotel's ownership group.

Thank you for your consideration to this letter, and individually for your service to our island community.

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