

Subject: Opposition to DRI 614 M7

Dear Commissioners,

My name is T. Kimball Brooker. I, together with my three children, own the house at 85 North Water St. We have owned this house for the past 25 years and have spent our summers as well as many long holiday weekends there. For more than 15 years, prior to acquiring 85 North Water Street, we rented houses for the summer on North Water Street, Fuller Street, Pease Point Way and elsewhere in Edgartown. After 40 plus years, I believe we have come to understand and fully appreciate what a wonderful place Martha's Vineyard and, most especially, the northern end of Edgartown, can be for raising a family participating in sailing, tennis, outdoor family barbecues and other activities germane to leading an active life all within a neighborhood which, by its tranquility, permits a peaceful and contemplative life as well. We love the way Edgartown has preserved this special character over the years. For us Edgartown represents a paradise on earth.

I write to the Commission because I know that an important part of its mission is to "protect and enhance the island's...character and social fabric". Over the past few years, I have become concerned that Edgartown has been slowly but increasingly losing elements of its special character that we hold most dear. The closings of such unique boutiques as Tashtego and the store which produced beautiful scrimshaw engravings and carvings in bone or ivory only to be replaced by T-shirt shops on Main Street were an early sign of decreased values brought about by the vulgar commercialization promoted by a few eager to profit from the tourist trade. Although this was undoubtedly a disappointing development for shoppers, it did little fundamental damage to the special character of the Vineyard I mention above. Such fundamental damage began, in my opinion, in 2019 shortly after the new ownership took control of the Harbor View Hotel, beginning with the new outdoor bar restaurant. I believe that the permission received from the ZBA to move the small bar originally next to the swimming pool was obtained by deception and stealth on the part of the Harbor View Hotel and its lawyers. A small bar, occupying a small space (at most 200 square feet) was moved well outside the pool area and vastly expanded to create a full scale restaurant on a large 2600 square foot terrace with three fire pits and extensive outdoor lighting. Besides liquor, food is served there, and this new restaurant was created without seeking any permission from the MVC. Unlike the old small pool bar, the new bar restaurant was not intended primarily for guests of the hotel but for the general public. This has been most deleterious to our once peaceful neighborhood due to high levels of noise from the outdoor restaurant's serving of food, the voices of diners, and the scraping of chairs on the flagstone terrace as well as light pollution, all of which directly affects our community and deprives residents of the peaceful enjoyment of their property, particularly in light of the late hours the restaurant is able to serve alcohol. Additionally, the bar restaurant's lack of parking spaces leads to increased congestion, not to mention illegal parking of cars belonging to patrons. The bar restaurant has also led to noisy and boisterous inebriated or semi-inebriated customers walking down North Water Street after having an evening of carousing there. Although I have no first hand knowledge of this, I imagine the outdoor restaurant is likely to contribute to an increase in the neighborhood's skunk and rodent populations. Similar criticisms could be directed at the increased availability of food and liquor on the front and side porches of the Hotel.

Additional recent changes promoted by the Harbor View Hotel which I believe have damaging impacts on the character and social fabric of this historic corner of Edgartown are the following:

1. Horse and carriage rides—This new commercial activity will lead to clogging streets and snarling traffic. It also raises many safety issues concerning children riding bicycles, family pets, and pedestrians walking on streets, many of which do not offer the protection of sidewalks. As a resident of North Water Street, I do not wish to see horse droppings on the street which would bring unpleasant odors and likely attract flies and other vermin, all of which would have a deleterious impact upon the hygiene of the neighborhood.
2. The proposed new spa—My concerns here parallel many of those surrounding the outdoor bar restaurant, namely: more traffic, parking problems, and out of scale commercial activities for a tourist hotel which have no place in a residential community and clash with the historic character of this part of Edgartown.
3. The rental of jet skis—These are very noisy and very dangerous when handled by less than experienced operators. They present a hazard to boaters, sailors, and swimmers. They have no place in our quiet harbor. If these are allowed, what's next in the Harbor View's quest for money-making opportunities? Cigarette boat rentals?
4. The rental of golf carts, eight passenger electric carts and other small vehicles—These rentals also have no place in the historic context of Edgartown. They add to congestion, come with safety risks to pedestrians and children. If these are allowed, what next will the Harbor View dream up to fulfill its ambition to become a five-star luxury destination resort? Moped rentals? Harley Davidson rentals? A skeet and a trapp shooting range over Lighthouse Pond? Forms of entertainment for tourists such as a Ferris Wheel? Camel rides? Dogsled rides? Chariot races around Starbuck Neck?

STOP! It's gone too far! Much too far for our once peaceful neighborhood!

We all appreciate having a hotel with a restaurant available to us but we don't wish for the Harbor View Hotel to create a mini-Coney Island in our midst. In my opinion the Harbor View Hotel's increasing level of commercial activities have had and will increasingly have a harmful impact on the character and social fabric of this historic and precious corner of Edgartown.

Based on the foregoing, I respectfully urge the MVC to take the appropriate steps to rein in the Harbor View Hotel by moving the pool bar back to its original place by the pool and closing down the outdoor bar restaurant including its fire pits and outdoor lighting, by denying the Harbor View's request to modify the previously approved plan, and by generally restraining the Harbor View Hotel's ever increasing commercial activities.

Sincerely yours,

T. Kimball. Brooker