

February 5, 2019

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

To Whom It May Concern,

I cannot attend the hearing on Thursday night regarding the Meetinghouse Way Development. Please consider this letter a summary of my concerns.

My husband and I own a home in Island Grove. We love the layout of our neighborhood and the sense of community that exists when lots are modest in size and so are the houses. We feel strongly that the island needs to protect the natural resources and the quality of life that exists here. And we feel strongly that more affordable housing is needed, included in every development and contributed by the developers.

As a former member of the Planning Board in my hometown of Concord, MA, I urge the MVC to require the Meeting House Way project to:

- Preserve more of the land in its natural state, honoring the agricultural heritage of the area, increasing the moth habitat, reducing the clear cutting.
- Provide passive recreation for the public, such as trails.
- Protect Edgartown Great Pond - we've made great strides, let's not go backwards.
- Reduce the demands on the land and on the town – water and sewer in particular.
- Require smaller lots and fewer lots so that houses are closer together. This increases the sense of community among the people who live in the neighborhood and preserves larger natural areas.
- Require units of affordable housing, not a payment in lieu of.

When on the Planning Board, I found it a challenge to balance the rights of property owner applicants with the needs of the town. But that was my responsibility too. Zoning laws are written to provide flexibility along with authority, a prerogative or latitude to interpret the laws so that projects can be shaped to benefit and certainly not harm the area and those who live there.

We hope that the MVC uses the power it has to reduce the Meetinghouse Way development to a reasonable number of houses, to smaller lots, leaving larger tracts of land undisturbed, and with several homes that are within affordability of year-round island residents.

Respectfully,  
Elisabeth Elden

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