



MORNING GLORY FARM

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

RECEIVED

JUN 05 2020

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission

June 3, 2020

Regarding the Meetinghouse Road Subdivision in Edgartown

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are being asked to approve a subdivision of a large tract of natural woods and shrub land that will result in the construction of a new village of seasonal and year-round houses. You are well aware of the increases that will be caused by this proposed development, such as population, traffic, water quality, sewage treatment capacity and all the elements of our Vineyard life that are subtly impacted by more of everything.

With all of the dozens or hundreds of developments approved by the Commission over the last 50 years, even with conditions, these seemingly subtle impacts have added up to a Vineyard landscape and lifestyle that is radically different from what we used to enjoy. As people do, we have adjusted to the changes over time and continue to enjoy the resources that are left to us, but we are all poorer in spirit for it.

The Commission was established precisely because of this over development that was anticipated to destroy the beauty and character that are the basis of our livelihoods and the joy of our family lives. Though the MVC has managed to blunt some of the impacts of development, it has still continued, with smooth-talking agents assuring us that they are only adding a little bit more and it will be fine.

After all these years of loss, and the unfulfilled promise of the Commission "to protect...the general welfare of island residents and visitors by preserving and conserving...values of Martha's Vineyard... by protecting these values from development and uses which would impair them..." , it is time for the Commission to finally acknowledge that our capacity for growth has been reached. Further growth will only diminish the resource that is the basis of our economy and the peace that residents and visitors seek.

The MVC has made some courageous votes in its history, risking political retaliation for decisions in defense of the Vineyard. One line that no one has dared cross, however, is to admit that there is a point at which we must declare that our development limit has been reached. Limits are common sense for movie theaters, lifeboats, scallop yields, and school classrooms. Without established limits, our lives are endangered or diminished. Some of us feel that Martha's Vineyard exceeded its sustainable capacity some years ago. The MVC will be clearly acting within its authority to deny a project based on the reasoning that what has been allowed in the past, and which may still be legal by zoning rules, is now over the limit.

MORNING GLORY FARM, Inc.

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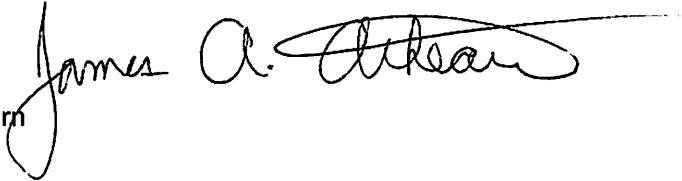
After voting to deny this project, the Commission can take on the task of establishing a zero net growth policy, a policy that was apparently needed after creating the Island Plan, but was shied away from at that time. Such a policy can establish means of continuing to accommodate new residents, housing and business while keeping track of corresponding undevelopment or transitions to conservation. In the meantime, developments such as this one proposed can be denied.

Only the MVC has the ability to make this happen. The Towns and the State could not do it, but it is what the MVC was created for, and it is time to fulfill that promise.

Sincerely,

James A. Athearn

Edgartown

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James A. Athearn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.