

Peter Bradford  
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Martha's Vineyard Commissioners,

Due to a minor medical Emergency I was unable to attend the meeting of the Public Hearing for the Menotomy building demolition and reconstruction at the Martha's Vineyard Commission. I wanted to take a few words to describe my support for the project and shed some light on a few things. Before Ben Deforest and Sarah Omer reopened Red Cat Kitchen, I had spent several months negotiating to lease the space for another concept, which I eventually decided not to do. During this period, I viewed the space several times and one of the reasons I decided not to rent it was that the structure was in such disrepair. Ultimately Ben Deforest and Sarah Omer decided to take it on, and it was an immediate success. I came to work there as a chef on opening night and continued to work there for the first six years. Ben and Sarah certainly did a great job of taking such a fragile, run down space, and turning it into a world class dining establishment and it was an honor to work for and with the both of them. But they have outgrown the tiny kitchen space, and due to the neglect of the former owner, the building has fallen into disrepair. I once stepped through the kitchen floor, which has since been repaired, but that is a good measure of the condition of the building. Anyone who knows me knows that take the architecture and history of Oak Bluffs very seriously, I have a huge collection of historical pictures, glass negatives, original land subdivision plans, and turn of the century cottage city historical books, papers, and literature. The walls of my home are literally plastered with them from floor to ceiling. In almost all cases I would not suggest the demolition of historic building, but in this case, there is nothing to save. I believe the applicant has used a qualified firm, Sullivan & Associates, which has done a good job designing a structure that fits in to our turn of century carpenter gothic history, all the while creating a space to take Red cat into the future. I would also like to clarify, that while I was working at Red Cat, the restaurant controlled the upstairs, and the three bedrooms were rented to both employees, or others separately, whom move in and out, at different times and stayed for different durations of time, and that employees had access to the common areas upstairs to change, keep bags and use the restroom. Common areas of the apartment area where used for restaurant storage. All three bedrooms were treated as separate units and in my opinion the applicant should be considered to have a vested interest in three residential units. I also serve as an appointed member of the Oak Bluff Affordable Housing Committee, and it is of my opinion that smart growth projects such as this, although not actually committing affordable units, indirectly and through increase in seasonal rental inventory can contribute by reducing the demand on rentals that could be rented all year round elsewhere on the island. I trust that the applicant, who cares deeply for our community, will carefully consider which nonprofit to contribute monetary mitigation to, to make the contribution the most valuable for our community. Thank you for your time consideration of my comments on this project.

Peter Bradford

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Bradford', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.