Dear Martha’s Vineyard Commissioners,

We the members of the Cottage City Historic District Commission in the Town of Oak Bluffs have a keen interest in DRI 695: the proposal to demolish the existing building at 14 Kennebec Avenue and to erect the proposed Menotomy Building in its place. Be assured that we respect the fact that this parcel lies just outside the border of the Historic District and therefore outside our purview of jurisdiction. Our interest stems from our awareness that the proposed development directly abuts the Historic District and figures prominently within the District’s sightlines from multiple vantage points.

Should the demolition of the existing building be approved, we urge the MV Commission to take into consideration the compatibility of the proposed new building’s exterior design, with respect to its overall architectural environment.

The architectural renderings for the Menotomy building indicate that the structure will rise to 35 feet. It will exceed the height as well as the width of the closely abutting, two-story Historic District cottage to its rear, at 17 Ocean Avenue. Moreover, the building will be widely visible from some of the Historic District’s most prominent vantage points – e.g., Oak Bluffs Avenue, Lake Avenue, the ferry terminal, the information booth, Ocean Park and Sea View Avenue. The appropriateness of design of the building’s highest reaches is therefore of particular importance, in our opinion.

The unique vintage character of downtown Oak Bluffs, outside as well as inside the official bounds of the Cottage City Historic District, is treasured by islanders and visitors alike. The Mentomy Building is thus a development of regional impact in its purest sense. Thank you for your consideration of our correspondence as you proceed with deliberations.

Sincerely,

Philip J. Regan  
Chairman  
Cottage City Historic District Commission