

February 27, 2020

To the Commission,

I've been following the stories in the Island papers and feel compelled to weigh-in.

As a resident of Oak Bluffs, I welcome the upgrade to downtown that the proposed Red Cat project will bring. This project would bring an efficiency to operations that would be a boon to the business, town, and island. As the owner of a small business, I am quite familiar with the struggles and costs involved in doing business on the island.

Red Cat is a small business that supports the island's economy in myriad ways. If the commission were to show its support for a small business like Red Cat, it'd go a long way to furthering their mission of protecting the island's character and community.

For the project to be squashed, or worse, be turned into another hotel due to the application of an untested formula for affordable housing, would be a shame that I don't think would be soon forgotten. Martha's Vineyard has a number of "missed opportunities" for conscious development—Boch Park in VH and the Tisbury school are the ones that come to mind.

To burden this relatively small development project with an oppressive fee is counter-intuitive to anyone truly invested in the future of this town as it is really discouraging for those of us residents who are entrepreneurial minded- will we be extorted for wanting to do business too? Do any of us "little guys" ever truly stand a chance of owning or developing anything?

Red Cat has become a cornerstone of Kennebec Ave and a lively and special place to dine. As someone who loves living in Oak Bluffs, I want to see the town growing and thriving. Prohibiting this project would stagnate downtown growth and allow yet another island business to fall behind the times. I'm excited to see Red Cat improve its already elevated dining experience. As with so many issues of this nature on our island it seems our fear of progress remains the standard at the expense of innovation and relevance.

Sincerely,

Terri Hakala