

Martha's Vineyard Commission:
Douglas Sederholm, Chair
33 New York Ave.
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

August 3, 2020

RE: DRI #697 Hob Knob Inn Expansion, 124/128 Upper Main Street, Edgartown

Dear Chair Sederholm and Martha's Vineyard Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, and consider my viewpoint. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the expansion of the Hob Knob Inn, 128 Upper Main Street Edgartown, MA.

Who I am:

As a native of Martha's Vineyard — who was a long time resident of Edgartown — and is still a familial resident of Chilmark — I have great concerns regarding this project and the plans I have reviewed.

Although, I now reside in Nashville, TN, my life history with Edgartown, and the island at large, runs deep. I taught on the island for over 20 years, including the Edgartown School and Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. I still return to the Vineyard to visit my family and friends throughout the year, including the Greelys who reside on Tilton Way. Last summer, I lived on the Vineyard working with ITW as the Director of ACT MV, and would have returned to the position this summer, were it not for COVID-19. I continue to have a presence on the Island as a community contributor.

A not so brief history:

On the first day of Third Grade 1976, I met Maggie Greely; she became my best friend, her family an extension of mine. I spent almost every day at their house. Jack Greely was the Rector of my church, Saint Andrews. Mary Greely was like a second mother to me. I basically grew up in the St. Andrews Rectory, 14 Peases Point way; and then, when Jack passed away, in the backyard house that became Mary and Maggie's residence.

For years, the Greelys have been incredibly generous friends and thoughtful neighbors. In the fall of 2011 they invited me to live in their house, while finishing out a contract, and seeking a replacement, for my position as the MVRHS Drama Director. I became very aware of the Hob Knob activity during this particular time. It is a busy Inn, and brings frequent foot and vehicle traffic to the tiny Tilton Way.

Particular things that stood out for me were biking tours and other groups staying at the Hob Knob, along with regular guest activity. For this usually quiet area, noise was often an issue, both early in the morning and late at night. The extra people, traffic, the landscaping and garbage removal all added to the disruption of an already cramped historic neighborhood. This was 2011.

I can only imagine what it will be like adding the extra rooms, parking spaces and a swimming pool to this very crowded quiet neighborhood. Tilton Way already provides one of the few cross-over outlets for cars — stuck in the Stop & Shop/downtown jams — that frequent our summer

commutes. This tiny WAY actually helps alleviate traffic patterns that are a constant issue during the summer. The residents of this area are already majorly impacted. Honestly, it is too narrow to be a two-way street, but if it becomes a one-way street additional traffic pattern issues will occur.

List of Concerns/Facts:

The Architectural plans and size of this project do not adhere to the very clear Historic District Guidelines already in place. (Please see **Plan Notes/Reactions** below.)

Hob Knob is not owned by a local resident. It is owned by a California based investment group. A group that has no invested concern for local aesthetics, or issues and most importantly for our community. It is quite probable they will expand and then sell for a profit.

This may set a precedent for the entire Island Community — allowing large inns in residential neighborhoods and forcing year round residents out.

MVC is expected to consider and review the impact any changes will have on property values for owners and local residents. This project will lower property values for the Hob Knob Inn neighbors.

Plan Notes/Reactions:

Added Rooms and Parking Spaces: The increased number of rooms from 17-35 and proposed 21 total parking spaces clearly ignores the R-5 Zoning laws of Edgartown, already in place. 35 rooms means a possible 70 guests a night (assuming these guests do not bring children; and not taking into account additional staff, friends and family stopping by to enjoy the hotel amenities.) That means there could be upwards of one hundred extra people crossing Tilton Way and Upper Main Street daily.

Increasing the Spa: 4 additional treatment rooms will increase traffic. Although it is noted that outside clients would not be permitted — they will find a way around it! I have worked at hotels on and off the Island — guests always find a way to share amenities. Hotel staff frequently looks the other way — especially for services that bring in extra revenue.

Adding a Swimming Pool will add foot traffic and noise as well — people will invite family and friends to swim.

Dangerous Traffic Patterns in relationship to access roads, and additional Parking spaces that only lend themselves to a “backing-out” (onto Tilton Way) option for drivers.

Additional Neighborly Concerns:

Parking: Spaces will be positioned on the property line of the Greely’s house, near all of their bedrooms, a bathroom and the living room. This is not only a concern for noise and disruption, but also a *privacy* issue. There is very little space between the two properties.

Noise for all neighbors: Deliveries and trash pick up are extremely disruptive already, and would likely occur with more frequency. There are existing challenges for traffic at present, as Tilton Way does not allow enough room for the large delivery and garbage trucks to easily enter and exit.

Additional Trash: Dumpsters bring pests, fumes and are a health concern for neighbors.

Let's "Do The Math": Inn VS Hotel:

INNS: the first known established Inn dates back to 500 A.D. — these accommodations typically have no more than 15-20 rooms.

Inns in Edgartown and on MV:

Charlotte Inn (between 4 buildings): 17 Guest Rooms & 2 Suites

Edgartown Inn: 12 Rooms

Ashley Inn: 10 Rooms

The Richard: 16 Rooms

The Christopher: 15 Rooms

Lambert's Cove Inn: 15 Rooms

HOTELS: An establishment that provides paid lodging on a short-term basis with numerous full-service amenities for guests. A medium sized hotel has on average 25-99 rooms.

Hotels on MV:

Pequot Hotel: 29 Rooms

Vineyard Square Hotel & Suites: 37 Rooms

Edgar Hotel: 41 Rooms

Kelly House: 57 Rooms

Harbourside Hotel: 90 Rooms

The Harborview Hotel: 117 ROOMS (additional guest cottages)

Mansion House Inn (formerly Tisbury Inn — dating back to the 1800s — rebuilt and added to after 2 fires — is considered a hotel): 48 Rooms & Suites

All things considered...

The proposal for the Hobb Knob Inn is really a proposal for a hotel; not an expansion of an inn. Is it realistic to allow the establishment of a hotel property on a residential way?

In light of the proposed plans, I feel the current expansion of the Hob Knob Inn is unrealistic. It will forever alter the Historic District of Edgartown, and set an unwelcome precedent for the island of Martha's Vineyard at large.

Respectfully

~Katharine W. Poole

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