

Doug Ruskin

Thu 1/26/2023 7:12 PM

Dear Adam -

In my role as an Island Housing Trust Director and its current Chair, I feel compelled to appeal to you directly to urge your Commissioners to rapidly approve the Southern Tier project. Please make this email a part of the project's public record and share this with the appropriate staff and all of the Commissioners

As I am sure you are aware, the Island's housing crisis continues to escalate its negative impact on our economy and infrastructure. In MVC's own recent housing needs assessment it concluded that the Island's socio-economic diversity is eroding at an alarming rate. We can see this nearly daily as businesses close and people leave the island.

IHT and Affirmative Investments were selected by the Town of Oak Bluffs in response to the town's RFP that clearly recognized the desperate need for attainable housing options. The Southern Tier project directly tackles this critical need by providing affordable and community housing for year-round residents.

Numerous public meetings were held before the project came to the MVC for your review. The design before you is the result of many hours of work by seasoned professionals who had to consider and balance more than a few conditions and variables to satisfy as many constituencies as possible. While I certainly understand some of the concerns raised, it is impossible to provide housing at scale that will please everyone. I ask that approval be expedited, as delay could jeopardize funding applications that could cost us a year.

In the MVC's language, the benefits to the island - its people, the economy and the community - far outweigh the detriments. Please approve this project as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Doug Ruskin, Chair
Island Housing Trust