

Martha's Vineyard Commission  
Box 1447  
Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts 02557

Re: DRI # 602 Vineyard Haven Yacht Club ("VHYC")

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission:

The undersigned submit this letter on behalf of Lucy and Sheldon Hackney, who own property at 319 Main Street (Tisbury Assessors Map 5J, Lot 1) bordering the VHYC property on the west, and the Styron family, which owns property bordering the VHYC property on the south (Tisbury Assessors Map 5J, Lot 6). We have reviewed the plans submitted by the VHYC for the demolition of the existing Club building and the construction of a new and larger Club building and, while we are not entirely opposed to the construction of a new building, we have many concerns which we hope can be addressed by the MVC. We are thankful that the Martha's Vineyard Commission has decided to review this project. We hope that the MVC will help to protect the character of this residential neighborhood by ensuring that this proposed new building and the uses associated with it will not interfere with the residential use of the surrounding properties. We believe that this project merits careful review for several reasons.

First and foremost, the new and larger VHYC building will be located in the midst of a residential neighborhood. Although the current one story club building has been located at the end of Owen Little Way since the early 1960's, and while many neighbors are also members of the club, the intensity of the non-conforming use of the VHYC property has significantly increased since the late 1960's when the Styron and Hackney families began coming to the Vineyard. The membership of the club has been significantly increased so that there are more and more cars traveling up and down Owen Little Way every summer day and more cars parked both on the VHYC property and on Owen Little Way. There are more social events being held after hours at the VHYC every year. Most recently, a new parking lot and road on top of a new raised septic system has been constructed behind the Tennis Courts and along Owen Little Way in place of vegetation which existed there. In addition, the buffering hedge between the Styron property and the VHYC Property which used to screen the VHYC tennis courts and club was significantly cut several years ago to make room for more boat storage and other activities. A new tennis shed and a new storage shed were constructed several years ago. More and more shrink wrapped boats are stored on the VHYC property every winter, making the VHYC appear like a boatyard in the off season. All of this activity has had a significant negative impact on the residential character of the neighborhood. Our fear is that a new and larger clubhouse will exacerbate this negative impact.

Secondly, the current club building and the new club will be located on a fragile beach area in a flood zone and will be visible both from the water and from many surrounding homes. If the club were located on the northerly side of Owen Little Way it would be in the Coastal District and limited to a height of twenty (24) feet. As proposed, the first floor of the building will be twenty four (24) feet in height which is at least five (5) feet more than the current one story building. In addition, due to the new second floor, a portion of the building will be 30 feet in height. We hope that the MVC will consider carefully the impact that the increased size, footprint and height of the VHYC building will have in this fragile and conspicuous area.

In this careful review, we hope that the MVC will consider the following list of concerns, and address those concerns by modifying and conditioning any approval as requested below:

- There is a concern that the new expanded club will lead to increased activities at the club (particularly at night) which will have a negative impact on the neighbors in terms of traffic, parking and noise. There is a related concern that the financial cost of the new club will lead to the club being rented out more often for private events such as parties and weddings. We would request that the uses of the club at night be limited to (i) the existing number of summer club events and (ii) a limited number of events (not more than two per year), such as weddings and private parties for members of the club in the off season. The club should agree not to rent the club to others unaffiliated with the club for private parties, weddings and other social events. The club should also agree to be responsible for ensuring that all of the Town's bylaws, ordinances, rules and regulations are complied with, including those related to noise and noise amplification at night.
- There is a concern that the parking for the new club building will be insufficient. It appears that approximately 11 parking spaces will be lost. There is already insufficient parking so that often on a summer day in July or August all the parking spaces are filled and people are forced to park along Owen Little Way. This interferes with those wishing to park and use the public beach and makes it impossible for two cars to pass each other. It is a public safety issue for children and others walking down Owen Little Way to get to the beach, including the children from the Montessori school, who often walk down to the public beach for a swim. As there are no sidewalks on Owen Little Way, when there is significant traffic and cars are parked along the road it is extremely dangerous for those walking on the road. To mitigate these dangers we request that more parking spaces be created, that the membership be limited and/or that alternative methods of transportation be encouraged
- There is a concern that a new expanded club facility will lead to the addition of more club members. We would request that the club membership not be expanded beyond its current number (and possibly be further limited as memberships expire) and that there be enforcement and reporting mechanism in place to ensure compliance with this condition. We would also request that some traffic and parking analysis be performed to determine the maximum number of VHYC memberships which should be permitted based on the traffic and parking which the neighborhood can reasonably be expected to accommodate.

- There is a concern that the height of the new building, rising from twenty four (24) feet to thirty (30) feet in the center, is too high for a building so close to the water, and is not in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood. As the current club is approximately 19 feet in height, this increased height will have a negative impact on the neighborhood and the views of the water by abutters and the views of the shoreline from the water. We would request that the new building be limited to a single story similar in height and size to the current building.
- There is a concern that the club premises have increasingly been used in the off season as a place for the storage of large boats. We would request that the club premises not be used as place for the storage of boats, other than boats owned by the VHYC which are located so as to be properly screened from the neighbors.
- There is a concern that the six (6) parking spaces that are located facing the Styrons' house will be visible to the Styrons' from their main house and that, at night, the lights from cars parking there will shine into the Styrons' house and yard. We would request that those six parking spaces be reconfigured or that an appropriate buffer such as a fence or plantings be installed to address this concern.
- There is a concern that the Chimney (don't know the height) might loom over the Styron property. We wonder whether a chimney and fireplace in a club that is only open in the summer is necessary. We would request that the Chimney be removed.
- There is a concern that many of the club and boating activities which now take place on the northerly side of the club will be moved to the southerly side into the 25 foot area between the new club building and the Styrons' property. We would request that beach and sailing activities continue to be oriented towards the northerly side of the club as they have always been. Due to the configuration of the property lines along the beach, if such activities were re-oriented toward the Styrons, it is inevitable that people will continually be using the Styrons' private beach.
- There is a concern that if a second floor is permitted the second floor windows above the new entrance to the club will interfere with the Styrons' privacy as people will be able to look into the Styrons' yard from those windows. We would request that if a second floor is permitted the windows be reconfigured to ensure that the Styrons' privacy is protected.
- There is a concern that portions of the deck for the new building are located in the 25 foot setback between the property line between the Styrons and the club. We would request that the new club building be reconfigured so that it meets the current zoning setback requirements.
- We would like to make sure that the club's landscape plan properly shields the club and its parking lots from the neighbors. We would request that a landscape plan be developed and implemented, in consultation with the neighbors, which would provide for, at a minimum, the following:

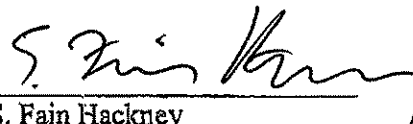
- (1) Screening of the white shell parking lot behind the tennis court from the neighbors across Owen Little Way and from the Hackney and Wagner/McFadden houses.
  - (2) Screening along the boundary line between the VHYC and the Styrons to screen the Styron property from the parking lot and the new club building.
  - (3) Replacing the current crushed white shell surface of the parking areas with a more subdued (and less reflective) surface.
  - (4) Other screening and plantings as appropriate.
- There is a concern that the ten (10) parking spaces behind the tennis courts and on Owen Little Way, are located within a right of way 12 feet in width which several neighbors (including the Hackney's) have along the northerly (Owen Little Way) boundary of the club premises. Having cars parked within that right of way blocks the right of way. The VHYC is only able to use that area for parking with the permission and consent of such neighbors.

We thank the MVC for its careful consideration of this important DRI project.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Styron  
On behalf of the Styron Family  
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New Haven, CT 06519



S. Fain Hackney  
On behalf of the Hackney Family  
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