

March 24, 2008
Martha's Vineyard Commission

At the Bradley Square Project DRI public hearing on 3/20 I heard most everyone agree to the merits of the project. Negative comments were threefold; increased traffic, the scale of the project for the neighborhood, and not enough off street parking.

I am a member of the Design Committee for Bradley Square. The design committee was cognizant of the likely traffic increase. There will be traffic surveys conducted and the results need to be analyzed. The committee was aware that the Town of Oak Bluffs is planning to repave Dukes County Avenue and install sidewalks. This improvement alone, to this B-1 zoned street will be an asset to the community as well as being safer for all. As to the scale of the project the committee used smart growth principles which are being promoted by the MVC in their Island Plan; mixed-use affordable residential living close to town with green space. The size of the buildings required the fronts of the two new proposed buildings to be scaled back to reduce mass at street level. Off street parking is a problem that requires creative collaboration with the Board of Selectmen and the Parking and Traffic Committee, and other town agencies.

I am a member of the Oak Bluffs Community Preservation Act Committee. The committee unanimously recommended to Town Meeting \$400,000 to be used for construction costs of the affordable housing units. In the committee's report to the Town it recommends expenditures be made because:

- "A. The project utilizes preserves, protects, or enhances currently owned historic and or/housing assets;
- "B. The project leverages additional or multiple sources of public and/or private funding;
- "C. The project serves multiple needs and populations and/or addresses more than one focus area of the Community Preservation Act."

I am a member of the Oak Bluffs Affordable Housing Committee. The committee is grateful to the Community Preservation Act Committee for recommending the funding and with this project the town will be over the 10% affordable housing guideline and goal set by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Development.

I am a member of the Oak Bluffs Planning Board. I know there is work to be done in Oak Bluffs with regards to parking, as all of the down island towns will attest to. In Oak Bluffs we have a Parking Mitigation Fund. It allows an applicant with insufficient parking spaces in the B-1 zone to apply for a Special Permit from the Planning Board. This By-Law is relatively new BUT it implies Town responsibility to mitigate parking by means of satellite parking lots, public bus service, shuttle bus service and/or other creative ways. Tisbury has the Park and Ride Lot, and Edgartown has the Upper Main Street Park and Ride lot that will be paved, landscaped and lighted this year. A relatively new by-law set up this Mitigation Fund. The Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen and Oak Bluffs Traffic and Parking Committee are committed to finding solutions to the parking and traffic problems in town.

I believe the Bradley Square proposal is; **noble** in restoring the first African-American church in Oak Bluffs; **unique** in combining historic preservation with affordable housing and affordable live/work art studios; and much **needed** by creating 10 affordable housing units to Oak Bluffs affordable housing inventory.

James Westervelt
Oak Bluffs