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Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI # AA Car Rental

MVC Staff Report – 2008-06-26

Note: New information is printed in bold type.

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Applicant:** Bryan Nelson & Kenneth Bettanhauser (owners of Atlanta Island Auto {AA} Car Rentals)
- 1.2 Project Location:** 6 Water Street, Tisbury Map 7-F-9 (0.11 acres)
- 1.3 Proposal:** To replace a two-story house and outbuilding with a single three-story multi-use structure with a rental car business on the first floor and grounds with two apartments upstairs.
- 1.4 Zoning:** B-1 Commercial
- 1.5 Local Permits:**
- 1.6 Surrounding Land Uses:** Business
- 1.7 Project History:** A car rental business has existed for many years on the site where the current Atlanta Island Auto (AA) Car Rental currently resides on the northwest corner of 5 Corners in Tisbury. A new building is proposed for that location by the owners (not AA Car Rental) so the AA Car Rental Co. would like to purchase and relocate to the abutting property north on Water St.
- 1.8 Project Summary:** To replace a two-story house and outbuilding with a single three-story multi-use structure with a rental car business on the first floor and grounds with two apartments upstairs. The Applicant has a purchase and sales agreement pending permitting approvals by July 2008. Their lease where they currently reside is up December 31, 2008. They said they have offered the existing structure to affordable housing groups but there was no interest. The proposed building would contain 1,998 sf of office space (stick built) on the first floor and two 1-bedroom apartments on the second and third floors (modular) for staff housing at no charge to the employee. The new building would be built on a concrete slab at grade. They have been permitted for a total of 10 cars on site (2 for employee residences) with a 24 car a day limit.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 DRI Referral:** Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals
- 2.2 DRI Trigger:** 3.101e: Any development of commercial, storage, office and/or industrial lands or building(s), or any private educational facility that has: e) any change of use, or increase in intensity of use (including conversion of basements, storage space or other exempt floor space to active floor space) with the concurrence of the MVC;
- 2.3 Pre-Application meeting with staff:** May 8, 2008.
- 2.4 LUPC:** June 9, 2008. LUPC voted to recommend to the full Commission to concur with the town referral due to the area's high traffic congestion and visibility and that a public hearing will allow these matters to be fully explored. Included in the motion was that a traffic study be conducted. The motion passed unanimously. Subsequently the Applicant decided to proceed directly to Public Hearing without waiting for the full Commission to vote on the concurrence review in order to expedite the scheduling of the public hearing.
- 2.5 Site visits:** Monday June 23, 2008 at 4: 45 pm.
- 2.6 Public Hearing:** Thursday June 26, 2008 at 7:30 pm

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 **Some Key Issues**

- Regional
- The 5 Corners in Tisbury is one of the three major traffic problem spots on Martha's Vineyard.
- Local
- Cars being returned would be likely to create occasional backups into 5 corners if allowed to make a left into the site from Water Street.
- Even if left turns into the site from Water Street are prohibited enforcement would be difficult.
- How will the proposed new building fit into the character of the area?

3.2 **Environment**

- **Vegetation:** There are currently a number of trees and shrubs in the backyard.
- **Habitat:** This is not an NHESP habitat.
- **Landscaping:** The proposed site plan has a very small area denoted as a landscaped area. The back yard is currently lawn, shrubs, and weeds. The proposal is turn it into parking for the car rental business with a porous stone paving.
- **Open Space:** The open space would be used for parking.
- **Lighting:** There would be lights on the back stairs that would be downward shielded and on motion detectors. The applicant would have a sign in the front that would have small lights shining up at it.
- **Noise:** This is a busy business district near the ferry docks. The vacuuming of the cars can be a nuisance for the neighbors.
- **Energy/Sustainability:** No information
- **Waste Management:**
- **Water:** Town Water.
- **Wastewater / Stormwater:**
 - The existing house is not hooked up to the sewer system.
 - The Applicant plans to tie into the sewage treatment plant eliminating an existing septic system and the nitrogen load associated with it.
 - They have been allotted 335 gallons of flow per day by the Wastewater Commission.
 - This property is located in the Harbor watershed. We do not have nitrogen guidance for this water body as it is so well circulated.
 - The Water Street- Five Corners area is located at an elevation near sea level and storm-water from the roadways is directed to Harbor outfalls near SSA Wharf and the Black Dog Tavern.
 - The current use of the site includes a good deal of vegetation that can help to infiltrate runoff, reducing the amount added to the Water Street-Five Corners discharge system.
 - The Applicant proposes to use pervious material in the parking area. These materials will reduce the runoff rate over paved areas but will still generate some runoff. Our Water Quality Policy calls for a storm-water design capable of handing the 25-year return storm. This may not be possible to achieve on a site of this size at a low elevation but a design indicating what is possible and what is proposed should be prepared.
 - Roof water should be guttered and directed to infiltration on site.

3.3 **Transportation**

▪ **Access:**

- There is an existing driveway and curb-cut on the south side of 6 Water Street which will be maintained for the proposed use of the parcel. A second curb-cut is proposed at the northerly boundary of the property. The second driveway will allow returning rentals to park in front of the office and attend to paperwork while an employee drives the vehicle to the service area at the rear of the building.
- Water Street is the prime access to and from the Vineyard Haven Ferry Terminal, and is one of the legs that form the Five Corners intersection. The Water Street approach to the intersection has pavement markings for through and right-turn lanes. One lane is provided on Water Street in the direction of the ferry terminal.
- The movements of the rental vehicles and other Water Street traffic create conflict points (crossing the path of an oncoming vehicle) and merge points (entering an existing traffic flow in the same direction).
- Rental vehicles returning to the rental site have three possible options:
 - Left-turn into the driveway;
 - Go to the ferry terminal to drop-off passengers or baggage and return to rental site or
 - Proceed to the turn-around (no-left-turn into the site) - return to the site and enter with a right-turn.
- The first option will require the rental vehicle to cross two lanes of Water Street traffic heading towards Five Corners. This movement will create one conflict point and no merges.

▪ **Parking:**

- The site plan shows parking for ten cars in the backyard. 8 for the car rental business and two for the two staff apartments.
- The parking spots on the site plan do not appear to be sized for full size vehicles.

▪ **Traffic Summary:**

- The movement of rental vehicles into and out of the proposed relocated Atlanta Island Auto Rental site for a typical summer day was provided by the Applicant based on data from Saturday, August 18, 2007 at the existing rental facility.
- The trip generation according to the applicant's numbers on that date was 29 trips per day (17 in and 12 out).

• **Mitigation**

- The following are possible remediation steps that could ameliorate conflicts between the proposed Atlantic Island Auto Rental traffic and Water Street traffic:
 - Prohibit left turns into the proposed site. Install a "No Left Turn" sign at the appropriate Atlantic Island Auto Rental driveway location or on Water Street at a location visible to drivers heading to the ferry terminal.
 - Require the Atlantic Island Auto Rental to provide instructions to returning drivers of rental vehicles to continue on Water Street to the turn-around and return to the proposed site, making a right turn into the property. An alternate return route could be from Main Street via Union Street or Cromwell Lane.
 - Require that the Applicant provide proposed plans that demonstrate:
 - The geometry with the two curb cuts provides adequate space for vehicles to maneuver, and;

- The combined two curb cuts into one wide enough to accommodate simultaneous exiting and entering vehicles is viable.
- Provide one space in which a returning vehicle can temporarily park while checking in.

3.4 **Affordable Housing**

- The two apartments will be for staff at no charge.
- **The MVC Affordable Housing Policy requires an applicant displacing an existing housing unit by demolition to replace with comparable size. The applicant offered to donate the building(s) to the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority and the Island Housing Trust. Both organizations declined to either move or soft strip the buildings due to the poor structural condition of the buildings.**
- **The applicant proposes to rent 2 one-bedroom apartments free of charge to two year-round employees. Given the structural condition of the existing buildings, the applicant's offer is consistent with the MVC Affordable Housing Policy.**

3.5 **Economic Impact**

- **The proposed mixed-use project is an appropriate development within the B-1.**
- **The car rental business will operate seasonally from May to October (possibly into November).**
- **The hours of operation are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm seven days a week (with possible extended evening hours on Thursday and Fridays' during the summer).**
- **The applicant will employ between 1 - 2 workers with a possible third employee during July and August.**

3.6 **Scenic Values**

- **Streetscape:**
 - A site plan dated April 7, 2008, shows the replacement building to be about five feet further set back from Water Street than the current house.
 - The new building would be somewhat higher than the existing and neighboring buildings.
- **Building Massing: The footprint would be slightly smaller but the building larger.**
- **Architectural Detailing: Stick built first floor with a two-story modular above.**
- **A.D.A. Accessibility:**

Local Impact/Abutters

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4. **CORRESPONDENCE**

4.1 Town Officials: Co-Chairs of the Tisbury Planning Board, Tony Peak & Henry Stephenson have written with concerns and suggestions about the access, circulation, potential easements, building size, and flood plain requirements.

4.2 Island Organizations:

4.3 Public: Sherm and Suzie Goldstein have written a letter of support of the mixed-use project. Todd Silva has written in support citing the "home grown" nature and the valuable service they provide. Robert S. Douglas, jr. has written in support citing the valuable service provided and the growth of local companies.