

11 November, 2013

Box 400
West Tisbury
Massachusetts, 02575

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

Attention: Paul Foley, DRI Coordinator

Dear Commissioners and Staff:

The proposed STOP AND SHOP, to be built to replace the existing building at Five Corners in Vineyard Haven, is way out of scale for the neighborhood and the island. Further, even with included parking, the proposed building – a sort of de facto mini mall in nature – will only exacerbate what is already a horrible traffic bottleneck. Between the traffic from the ferries, folks going to the post office, and those drivers who are attempting to pass along Beach Road and towards the west and southwest (or in reverse) that intersection is already a failed one for much of the year. With the added S & S traffic from the existing store the traffic is intolerable, and somewhat worse than failed. To create a much larger store and expand the numbers of vehicles accessing that area will make it impossible to negotiate that area.

We have a huge problem with traffic on the island, particularly in the summer and even the up-island towns are not immune. I work in a small seasonal shop on South Road in Chilmark and routinely ask folks where they shop, and if they shop in the three down-island towns. The answer is a resounding “NO” with additional comments about the inability to move into town (the traffic routinely backs up, in Vineyard Haven, almost to SBS), find parking, find basic consumer goods such as realistically priced clothing (aside from t-shirts and very expensive resort wear), and comments on the high prices.

We need to support and encourage local businesses which are year round, appropriate in scale and character, and which would be displaced or unable to compete with such a juggernaut of a store. We need to find ways to reduce traffic (VTA helps but Five Corners will always be problematic) and we need to find ways to enhance the local economy by encouraging more small businesses purveying services and products useful and necessary to islanders year round.

The proposed Stop and Shop is out of place on this island and we need you to vote it out of town and off the island! Between the construction phase and the possible increased customer base even a dramatically reduced facility will only worsen the existing bad traffic situation.

Finally, something that I have not seen adequately mentioned is that that area of Vineyard Haven is subject to flooding in storm or flood tides and in major storms the flooding could be significant. Denys Wortman, former Tisbury Selectman, describes walking along Water Street during Hurricane Carol, and deciding to take a swim because the water was so high (waist high and he is well over 6 feet tall). Over by the MV Shipyard there is a mark painted high up on the corner of one of the buildings showing the height attained during that same hurricane. Such a location is not the appropriate place for a supermarket, and parking garage.

Thanks.

Virginia C. Jones
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