



MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION

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REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY OF DUKES COUNTY
SERVING: AQUINNAH, CHILMARK, EDGARTOWN, GOSNOLD, OAK BLUFFS TISBURY, & WEST TISBURY

Date: January 4, 2013
To: William O'Brien, Stop & Shop
From: Mark London, Executive Director
Re: **New Vineyard Haven Stop & Shop Store**

This note is a follow-up to the initial staff-applicant meeting held before Christmas about the planned expansion of the Stop & Shop store in Vineyard Haven.

At the staff-applicant meeting, the applicant's representatives stated their intention to build a new grocery store of about 22,000 square feet on the properties that now include the existing grocery store, the former Midnight Farm, the former Chinese restaurant, and the adjacent house, all of which would be demolished. The intention expressed is to have the store at the Cromwell Lane level with about 30 to 40 parking spaces underneath, at the Water Street level.

MVC staff suggests that the applicant meet the Commission's Land Use Planning Committee (LUPC) as soon as possible – during the design development process – so the applicant is aware of LUPC's concerns. It is suggested that this be done in conjunction with the Tisbury Planning Board, either with a joint meeting or by inviting the Planning Board's Co-Chairs to an LUPC meeting. In the past, the MVC's LUPC has held preliminary meetings with applicants before the design was completed for other large projects and it allowed applicants to be aware of and respond to concerns early in the design development phase, thereby reducing the need for potentially costly redesigns later in the design review process. This meeting would also allow LUPC to formally approve the scope of the Transportation Impact Assessment.

Enclosed are some preliminary staff comments on the proposed store expansion. They point out a number of concerns that are likely to come up during MVC review of the proposal.

Also enclosed are a number of reference documents that should be useful in the design and review process. Even though we have already given some to the applicant's representatives, we are including them with this memo so they are all available in one place.

New Vineyard Haven Stop & Shop Store

Preliminary MVC Staff Comments

Building Uses, Affordable Housing, and Economic Impacts

The design so far has focused exclusively on the grocery store and parking. It is suggested that consideration be given to integrating other uses such as housing and/or offices on a partial level above the grocery store, as well as small shops along Water Street.

The MVC has an affordable housing policy (enclosed) that encourages applicants to incorporate affordable and/or workforce housing within their projects. It also identifies mitigation appropriate to offset a project's impact on the need for affordable housing. This policy also generally calls for the replacement of existing housing units demolished in redevelopment projects, either on or off site. Given the large scale of this project, it would appear to be possible to incorporate housing on site. This could be used for store staff, or for other workforce or affordable housing. For example, if a second floor was added to a third of the building within a sloping roof (see next section) this would probably allow for about 3000 to 4000 square feet of usable space, which could accommodate 3 to 6 apartments.

In addition, it might be possible to locate store offices or other support space for the store operations in a partial second floor.

The applicant should address the projected impact on Martha's Vineyard's local economy including the following.

- The hiring local (Island) contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers and other professional service and trade industries (architects, engineers, plumbers, electricians) in the development of this project.
- The current and projected number of employees, year-round and seasonal, full and part time.
- Whether the hours of operation or other aspects of the store's operation would change.
- The existing and projected taxes paid and impact on municipal services.

Building Massing and Design

The store is in one of the most highly visible locations on Martha's Vineyard, immediately across from the Island's only year-round ferry terminal, the gateway to the Island. The building's visibility is increased by the presence of the open parking lot beside of the building. Therefore, the architectural design of the building will be an especially sensitive issue. Building what is perceived as a single box-shaped volume with an essentially flat roof would be very problematic. An effort should be made to come up with a design approach that breaks down the scale of the building and uses volumes, roof shapes, and other features that relate to the scale and character of the surrounding area.

In 2009, the MVC carried out an urban design study of downtown Tisbury (enclosed). It analyzed the history and current features of the district in order to delineate a number of areas and sub-areas, and to identify the defining characteristics of the built form of each area. The Stop & Shop project is in Sub-Area 2E (pages 39-42). The main traditional defining characteristics of buildings in the area are:

- Simple, large, two-and-a-half floor buildings, having gabled roofs with the gable-side facing the street, strung rhythmically along pedestrian-scaled streets;
- Buildings 22-42 feet wide;

- Gable roof slopes of 30-35 degrees with ridge heights of 28-35 feet;
- Window openings equal to about 25-35% of facades; windows vertically oriented, height equal to about twice the width, double-hung;
- Buildings clad in natural wood shingles with corner boards painted white.

At the staff-applicant meeting before Christmas, the applicant's representatives indicated that they had purchased the house next to the former Midnight Farm and intended to integrate that property into the project. Records indicate that the house at 15 Cromwell Lane was built in 1828. The applicant should indicate how this historic building will be dealt with. Although it is usually best to preserve an historic building on its original site, the possibility of moving it could be explored. One option would be to move it to an edge of the property, such as on the southwest corner facing Cromwell Lane, to minimize the impact on the interior floor area of the grocery store and to make the historic building more visible to the general public. Another option would be to move it off the property.

As discussed at our meeting, it would be useful to consult the Cape Cod Commission's "Contextual Design on Cape Cod: Design Guidelines for Large-scale Development" (enclosed). This document contains many suggestions about how a large building can be designed to harmonize with a historic, small-scale, pedestrian-oriented town center, such as:

- Contribute to the village streetscape/follow established patterns,
- Incorporate smaller tenant spaces in the front of a large building,
- Define and enhance the street edge,
- Shield large buildings with smaller frontage buildings,
- Design a second story
- Use existing topography to screen new development,
- Create effective landscape buffers,
- Locate utilities underground,
- Shield loading and delivery areas
- Break down the building mass with smaller sub-masses,
- Vary the facade line,
- Vary wall heights,
- Vary the roof line,
- Bring down the building edges,
- Vary building materials to add depth to the façade,
- Use traditional and natural building materials,
- Incorporate pedestrian-scaled features,
- Incorporate landscaped areas to break up large facades.

A useful design approach might be to express the building as a series of volumes with gable roofs, with links between them (with either flat or gabled roofs) which are slightly set back from the facades of the main volumes. The recesses between the main volumes could be used for access to the parking and/or truck dock, for landscaping, and/or could incorporate the mural presently on the side of the store. The use of windows on both floors would break down the scale of the facades and would provide sunlight to the interiors of the store and parking. Signage should be appropriate for the scale of the historic downtown.

Pedestrian Access and Activity

Water Street is an active pedestrian street with a variety of shops as well as the ferry terminal. There is also a lot of pedestrian activity coming down from Main Street along Norton Lane¹. The Town has been working on a plan to transform Cromwell Lane into a primarily pedestrian/bicycle way that would provide access from the ferry area to Beach Street where it would link to Veteran's Park and a network of bicycle paths.

This would suggest that the following strategies be considered for the Stop-and-Shop building.

- Locating the pedestrian entrances oriented primarily to the pedestrian streets, ideally on Water Street and at the northwest corner of the building at the intersection of Cromwell and Norton Lanes.
- Ensuring that the sidewalk along Water Street is wide, say 10' or more.
- Extending Norton Lane all the way down to Water Street with a sidewalk along the edge of the new store.
- Supporting pedestrian activity along Water Street by including activities along that street edge. This could be activities related to the store and/or renting out one or two small and shallow separate retail spaces. (Note that there are presently three separate retail entrances along this approximately 115' frontage, which contribute to the variety of the pedestrian experience.) Any activities at this level might have to be of a temporary or movable nature, given the risk of flooding.

Transportation and Parking

Traffic and parking are likely to be significant issues in the design and review of this project. As was discussed at the preliminary meeting before Christmas, staff will recommend a full scope of traffic study that will not only look at the immediate impacts but also takes a broader look at how to mitigate the impacts of the project. (Enclosed is a standard scope for a Traffic Impact Assessment). The MVC Transportation Planner has already sent the VHB Director of Transportation all traffic counts in the project area extending from the Lagoon Pond Drawbridge to the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven/State/Look Street intersection.)

As this site is an urban environment with considerable foot traffic, it would be useful to estimate the approximate share of customers that arrive on foot or use public transit, how many use a personal vehicle but combine their trip to town with visits to other destinations, and how many use personal vehicles for a trip exclusively to the Stop-and-Shop. Such estimates could refine the estimated need for additional parking and impact on street traffic. (It might be possible to do this by using a survey or by making an estimate based on factors such as the number of grocery bags per transaction or the number of people using shopping carts vs. baskets).

With respect to parking, the integration of a full floor of parking under the building should go a long way to meeting the parking demand. It should be clarified how this parking will be managed, such as whether the intention is to limit it to Stop-and-Shop shoppers. The study should address the concern that shoppers might prefer to park in the Town lot, and might only park under the building if

¹ *There is some confusion over what the names Cromwell Lane and Norton Lane apply to. In this note, we use the terminology used by the Tisbury Planning Board, namely:*

- *Norton Lane is the east-west street that runs between Main Street and Cromwell Lane,*
- *Cromwell Lane is used for the north-south private lane that runs between Beach Street and Norton Lane.*

no outdoor space is available; this could effectively render the Town lot unavailable for other visitors to the area.

With respect to traffic, the study should carefully analyze options for access and egress to the underground parking in relation to the circulation in the town lot and the surrounding streets. Among other things, it should consider the following.

- Should there be direct access from or egress to Water Street, or should access be via the Town lot? Any vehicular entrance or exit so close to Five Corners could pose problems. A left turn entrance from Water Street onto the property would be especially problematic in that it would lead to traffic backing up into the Five Corners Intersection. (The MVC worked with the Town on recommendations for dealing with traffic in the area, enclosed.)
- The impact of trucks backing into and leaving the truck dock should be minimized, especially if this is located near the intersection of Cromwell and Norton, an important vehicular access from Main Street to the Town parking lot and ferry area, which is also an area of high pedestrian activity. This could involve ensuring that truck movements take place early in the morning and are managed to ensure safety. The applicant should address the possibility of having the truck dock at the lower level.
- The possibility should be examined of reducing traffic generated and parking used by store employees by ensuring that they park off site, such as at the Park and Ride.

Even with all reasonable efforts to minimize the traffic impacts of this project, it is likely that the enlarged store will result in a significant increase in traffic in an already problematic area. As one of the major traffic generators in the area, the applicant should consider working with the Town on larger scale efforts to improve mobility while reducing vehicular traffic, such as the following.

- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the area, such as the planned modifications to Cromwell Lane.
- Circulation improvements to the general area such as changing the direction of Union Street. The study by the Tisbury Planning Board suggested that circulation in the area could be improved by treating Norton Lane and Union Street as a loop of one-way streets.
- Helping support the expansion of the free shuttle bus service between the Park-and-Ride at Upper State Road and the ferry terminal, to allow increasing the frequency of shuttles and promoting the service to the public. (An expanded free service linking the town's two shopping areas with each other, the ferry, and the Park-and-Ride should help encourage drivers picking up or dropping off people at the ferry to do this at the Park-and-Ride lot, and should facilitate the movement of employees and shoppers without their having to drive downtown.)

Water Resources

The applicant is presumably counting on being tied into the Tisbury sewer and wastewater treatment plant. The applicant should ensure that the Tisbury Wastewater Commission is prepared to give it the allocation desired. Given the limited capacity of the treatment plant and especially of its leaching field, it might be appropriate that the applicant assist with enlarging this capacity to offset the expanded use from the Stop & Shop.

Stormwater management will be a challenge because of the applicant's intent to expand impervious surfaces to cover most of the added parcels south of the existing food store combined with the fact that the water table is so close to ground level and that Water Street floods during some storm events. This is anticipated to worsen with sea level rise and other impacts of global warming. Plans

should address how stormwater will be dealt with on site and not further exacerbate the problem. This is another issue where discussions with the Town – in this case, the Department of Public Works – might reveal opportunities to jointly address improvements to a chronic drainage problem. Note that an MVC intern recently did a study of the Town parking lot and made some suggestions as to ways to improve stormwater capture to prevent runoff. We will forward his final report as soon as it is available.

The potential for flooding and storm damage should also be addressed in the building design. This could include provisions such as keeping electrical and mechanical systems above the level where they could be damaged by current and future flooding and storm impacts. Note that the Martha's Vineyard Commission collaborated with the Martha's Vineyard Commission to study these potential impacts and propose mitigation measures for the new Martha's Vineyard Hospital. We will forward a copy of this to you.

Energy and Environmental Building

The Commission's Energy and Environmental Building Policy is enclosed and the application should address its policy guidelines. Given the site's extensive solar exposure, the applicant should address the opportunity of incorporating solar panels on the roof.

Construction Process

It would be useful to address concerns related to the construction process such as the following.

- What is the schedule for demolition and construction? It would be advisable to avoid construction during the peak summer months?
- How and where will the staging for demolition and construction, as well as storage of construction materials and equipment, be located?
- How will noise and dust be mitigated to minimize impacts to surrounding businesses?
- What other impacts would be anticipated and how will they be mitigated?

Enclosures

- DRI Application Information
 - The DRI Process
 - Making a DRI Application
 - DRI Application Form
- DRI Policies
 - Affordable Housing
 - Site Design and Landscape
 - Water Resources
 - Energy and Environmental Building
 - Transportation Impact Assessment – standard scope
- Tisbury Urban Design Study – MVC
- Tisbury Traffic Improvements – Town/MVC Committee
- Tisbury Downtown and Waterfront Planning Study – Tisbury Planning Board
- Contextual Design on Cape Cod

January 4, 2013