

Harbor View Hotel

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To: Lucy Morrison <morrison@mvcommission.org>; Alex Elvin <elvin@mvcommission.org>;

Not having done this before, I hope I am in the right place to record my opinion about a matter coming before the MV Commission originally on Thursday, January 7th, 2021, but now on the 21st. If not, would you please direct this letter to the correct place.

By way of background, my wife, Kathy, and I have been coming the Vineyard since 1983, first as renters on Eel Pond and subsequently as property owners. We bought our house at 100 Herring Creek Road in 2008, using an LLC named MVHWC ("Martha's Vineyard Here We Come) as the purchasing entity. We have spent 5+ months here since 2008, with some combination of our children, 6 granddaughters, and a host of friends from Texas. The Edgartown Lighthouse is one of our go to spots. We obviously love the Vineyard and try to do our part, both financially and personally, to promote, protect and preserve its unique and special characteristics.

We are very concerned about two things the Harbor View is attempting. The first is the operation of an outdoor drinking, dining and event operation that is counter to the quiet, historic, residential neighborhood where it is located. I believe it also is in direct violation of the special town permits the hotel operates under. The addition of the full service spa which they are requesting, coupled with resort amenities such as jet skis, tour boats, and golf carts being operated out of an unlicensed residence, will destroy one of the most scenic and special places on the island, the Edgartown light house, Fuller Street beach, and the surrounding residential area. Parking, already crowded, will be worse. Noise, already unpleasant at late hours, will be worse. I truly believe the surrounding neighborhood, and therefore the town of Edgartown, will be seriously, negatively impacted if we allow the type of expansion the hotel is requesting.

But our second concern is of even greater importance to us. And that is the sneaky, underhanded way the hotel has violated not only the spirit, but also the letter of neighborhood agreements and the permits from the town under which they operate. There is no longer a spirit of cooperation with abutting residences; there is no longer communication to reach amicable solutions to operating issues; there is only a giant profit motive driving the hotel's behavior. The hotel had permits to provide service a certain number of feet around the pool, they doubled or tripled it. They were allowed certain hours of operation and certain size groups, and they ignored the guidelines. The permits do not allow food to be served on the front porch, so guests are encouraged to step inside the door to pick up their plates and eat outside. And it goes on and on. The spa was allowed as an in-hotel amenity and now they want to service the town. Will they do that anyway if their application is denied? I am sure the claim is they need these extra services in order to stay open and make money. We are all in favor of Edgartown businesses being profitable and sustainable. But the restrictions the current ownership is undermining were in place when their deal was struck. They are not some new hurdles added to operations to limit them or make them unprofitable. They are there to protect the town. They should have been taken into consideration when economics of the hotel sale took place. If they need to be changed or tweaked a little, the setting of the hotel in a quiet residential neighborhood should require negotiation with the neighbors, not rammed down their throats by some legal maneuver.

I think the spa permit should be denied and the hotel be required to operate under the existing permits until there can be mutually agreeable changes.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

Kathy and Dick Vermillion

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