

January 14, 2021

To: Martha's Vineyard Commission

RE: Public Comment on 131 North Water Street / Harbor View Hotel, Development of Regional Impact

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

As visitors to Edgartown for over 40 years and summer residents at 122 North Water Street for 35 of these, we have had a mostly cordial and respectful relationship with the Harbor View Hotel over this time. This area is truly special, and one that we cherish for its historic roots, idyllic surroundings, and quiet, laid-back neighborly feel. Over the past several years we have observed the hotel make significant changes – not just through physical upgrades, but through a deliberate approach to commercially expand. The hotel character has been moving from a stately and reserved hotel fitting in with its surroundings to that of a raucous destination resort with bikes, shuttles, carriages and expanded outdoor drinking and dining. All of these moves seem to have been made with little concern or input from the neighborhood it shares.

We believe the proposal in front of the MVC continues this recent trajectory by seeking approval of a large 2 floor destination spa of nearly 5,000 SF. We see this as inconsistent with the original spa approvals granted and amended in the existing DRI. The original approvals align more with the size and scope of an operation offered as a convenient amenity to on-site guests.

If the new spa proposal were to be approved as is, we foresee significant increase in daily visitors and employees to fill the 9 treatment rooms, steam rooms, nail salon and reception areas; new waste and water burdens to municipal operations will follow. This proposal is not an elegant amenity. As depicted, the interior is a densely planned facility with many rooms that seems more suited to a high-turnover appointment operation with proposed hours running as long as 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. You can quickly see this layout and size has the potential to create a separate business entity altogether. With narrow streets and limited parking, an uptick of daily traffic will turn a challenging situation into a significant issue. As a result, the experience of all that visit and live in the area will be degraded with more noise, congestion, and litter.

We would like to see the MVC not approve the current recommendation and use its' authority to bring the size and scope of the spa S.F. back to that of a convenient amenity. Thank you for taking this matter under consideration and working to protect one of Martha's Vineyard's truly special places.

Sincerely,

Janice & Francis Conroy

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