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# Martha's Vineyard Commission

## DRI 748 Island Food Pantry Relocation

### Staff Report – 2023-10-5

#### 1. DESCRIPTION

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- 1.1 **Owner:** Island Grown Initiative, LTD
- 1.2 **Applicant:** Island Food Pantry
- 1.3 **Applicant's Agent:** Rebecca Haag, Executive Director of Island Grown Initiative
- 1.4 **Applicant's Agent:** Michelle Gittlen, Managing Director of Island Grown Initiative
- 1.5 **Applicant's Agent:** Chuck Sullivan, Architect
- 1.6 **Project Location:** 114 & 116 Dukes County Avenue, Oak Bluffs (Map 17, Lot 22 & Map 17 Lot 24)
- 1.7 **Proposal:** Remodeling of a mixed-use building consisting of 2,135 square feet of commercial space and 610 square feet of residential space to serve as the Island Food Pantry with one workforce housing unit. Also, the creation of 18 parking spaces for the Island Food Pantry.
- 1.8 **Zoning:** Commercial and residential (zoning boundaries bisect building)
- 1.9 **Local Permits/Reviews:** Oak Bluffs Building Department, Oak Bluffs Fire Department, Oak Bluffs Board of Health, Oak Bluffs Planning Board. Oak Bluffs Wastewater Department
- 1.10 **Surrounding Land Uses:** To the North, the Project Site fronts Arch Avenue, a short private way. The Project Site may include a portion of Arch Lane. Also to the North, the Project Site, beyond Arch Avenue is a lot with an incomplete building project (foundation). This lot and building project were reviewed as part of DRI 704 112 Dukes County Ave Demolition. Also to the North, an open lot that appears to be serving as a motor pool for a taxi company. To the East, the Project Site abuts a residence. To the South, the Project Site abuts a restaurant and a residence. To the West, the Project Site fronts Dukes County Avenue. Across Dukes County Avenue are a collection of houses under single ownership. To the Southeast, across Dukes County Avenue is a combination market, deli, and beer and wine shop.
- 1.11 **Project History:**
  - The Project Site was subject to a prior DRI review—DRI 615 Muckerheide Housing. The Main elements of DRI 615 were the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of a 12,276 square foot building with 12 residential units. The Commission approved the DRI. However, the project was never acted upon.
  - Town records from 1989 indicate there may have been a petroleum spill at the Project Site. The records do not make clear whether or not the spill thoroughly addressed
  - The Island Food Pantry presently operates out of Vineyard Avenue real estate owned by the Holy Ghost Association. According to the Applicant, the lease agreement with the Holy Ghost Association comes to an end in 2024.

#### 2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

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- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Oak Bluffs Building Department
- 2.2 **DRI Triggers:**

- 1.3 D Modifications to a Previously Approved DRI
- 3.1 Commercial, Storage, Office, Industrial and/or Mixed-Use Development:

Any Development of a commercial, storage, industrial, and/or office use, including any use of any of the foregoing mixed with a residential use, provided that one or more of the following thresholds are met:

- h. a new parking area that provides spaces for 10 or more vehicles –Mandatory Referral Requiring MVC Concurrence
- j. high traffic-generating business, such as a drive-In bank, convenience market, fast food or take-out restaurant, coffee or donut shop, or service station –Mandatory Referral Requiring MVC Concurrence

- 2.3 **LUPC:** Slated August 28, 2023 (concurrence)
- 2.4 **Full Commission:** Slated September 7, 2023 (concurrence)
- 2.5 **Full Commission Hearing:** Slated October 5, 2023

### 3. PLANNING CONCERNS

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#### Wastewater:

The Project Site is partly connected to municipal sewer sewer (apartment) and partly connected to a septic tank (remainder of the building).

Nitrogen calculations are as follows:

Proposed project is in the Farm Pond Watershed, which is an impaired watershed.

The Adjusted Nitrogen Load Limit for Farm Pond is 2.95 kg/acre/yr

The project is 0.269 acres, the **load limit for the property is 0.79kg/yr** (2.95 kg/acre/yr x 0.269 acres)

#### **Apartment**

WW load from septic (26.25mg/l)      1.21 kg/yr

WW load if on sewer (3mg/l)            0.13 kg yr

#### **Building**

WW load on sewer                        0.2 kg/yr

**Roof runoff**                                .13

**Impervious**                                .33

If the project is completely on sewer they will exactly meet the load limit

Apt                                            .13kg/yr

Building                                    .2 kg/yr

Roof                                           .13 kg/yr

Impervious                                .33 kg/yr

Total                                        0.79 kg/yr

If apt stays on septic, the project will be over the load limit

Apt                                            1.21 kg/yr

Building                                    .2 kg/yr

Roof                                           .13 kg/yr

Impervious	.33 kg/yr
Total	1.87 kg/yr

**Recommendation:**

Entire property connected to sewer in order to meet Water Quality Policy load limit.

**Energy:**

- Further consideration and specification of insulation type and amounts for both walls and roofs, specification of good performing windows and doors, enclosure of the freezer and refrigerator to improve their efficiency could be goals for this project. Achieving goals could result in better energy performance and may allow for smaller heat pumps being needed to heat and cool the space. If the warehouse area of the space is to be heated or cooled, it too could see efficiency from these the achievement of such goals. These changes could assist the Island Food Pantry in the long run in terms of operating costs.
- The Applicant has offered to wire the building for future solar use.
- If EV charging is ever to be considered at the Project Site, burying the appropriate conduit ahead of time could yield cost savings.

**Stormwater:**

There may be advantages in considering a pervious surface for the parking lot.

**Traffic and transportation:** Representatives of the Applicant have stated the Island Food Pantry would manage the distribution of food through a focus on reserved time slots for pickups. “SmartChoice online Food Pantry Software for pre-orders will allocate 6 to 7 pickups every 15 minutes, and we will have a 5 minute gap every 30 minutes to reduce traffic congestion,” Applicant presentation material states.

A staff traffic report did not find the proposed use of the building as generating impactful traffic. The report and data are below:

**Existing Traffic Conditions:** Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts were conducted in the project study area. Below, Table 1 shows the existing weekday traffic volumes at the following nine (9) locations:

**Table 1: Traffic Volumes August/September 2023**

<b>Dukes County Avenue north of Wing Road</b>		
	NORTHBOUND	1,626
	SOUTHBOUND	53

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,679</b>
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<b>Dukes County Avenue north of Vineyard Avenue</b>		
	NORTHBOUND	2,400
	SOUTHBOUND	2,533

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,934</b>
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<b>Masonic Avenue east of Dukes County Avenue</b>		
	WESTBOUND	1,757
	EASTBOUND	2,814

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,571</b>
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<b>Vineyard Avenue west of Dukes County Avenue</b>		
	WESTBOUND	1,523
	EASTBOUND	1,970

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,493</b>
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<b>Winthrop Avenue south of Vineyard Avenue</b>		
	NORTHBOUND	173
	SOUTHBOUND	363

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>536</b>
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<b>Oakland Avenue east of Dukes County Avenue</b>		
	WESTBOUND	680
	EASTBOUND	220

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>899</b>
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<b>Winthrop Avenue north of Wing Road</b>		
	NORTHBOUND	156
	SOUTHBOUND	614

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>771</b>
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<b>Everett Avenue west of Dukes County Avenue</b>		
	WESTBOUND	366
	EASTBOUND	71

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>437</b>
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<b>Warwick Avenue east of Dukes County Avenue</b>		
	WESTBOUND	70
	EASTBOUND	176

<b>WEEKDAY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>246</b>
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The heaviest volumes occur along Dukes County Avenue north of Vineyard Avenue, and on Masonic Avenue west of Dukes County Avenue. When evaluating historical traffic counts that have been conducted in the area, volumes have steadily increased at roughly a 1.5% rate over the past ten (10)

years. Other existing land uses along Dukes County Avenue are, The Bombay Indian Cuisine Restaurant, and Tony’s Market.

**Sight Lines:** Sight lines at the existing and proposed driveways were also analyzed. The posted speed limit along Dukes County Avenue is 25 mph. The corresponding required sight distance for 25 mph is 155 feet. Sight lines are approximately 412 feet looking left, which is adequate for the posted speed limit.

**Safety:** The accident history of the study area was evaluated to identify safety deficiencies and determine if any location experiences a higher-than-average annual accident rate. The accident data was obtained from MassDOT records for the three most recent years available (2020-2022). There were no reported accidents in the project area vicinity, of which all fell well below the state-wide average (0.57) and the District 5 average (0.57) for unsignalized intersections.

**Parking:** The Island Food Pantry shows a total of 16 parking spaces. Seven (7) spaces are dedicated for clients, eight (8) spaces for staff volunteers, and one (1) space for the residential unit. Under 5.1.3 of the Zoning Bylaws, retail sales and service establishments require one parking space per 100 SF for the first 500 SF and one space per additional 200 SF of space. Based on this requirement, the Island Food Pantry is required to provide 14 parking spaces. The Island Food Pantry Parking is adequate and meets the zoning by-law.

**Existing and Proposed Operations Plan:** Below, Tables 2-4 shows the existing and proposed daily/weekly operations at the Island Food Pantry:

**Table 2:**  
**2023 Weekly average number of client visits (Month)**

<i>Month</i>	<b>Average Weekly Client Visits</b>
Jan	255
Feb	304
Mar	303
Apr	275
May	273
Jun	271
Jul	255
Aug	241
Sep	227

**Average Monthly Client Visits = 267**

**\*Average does not include deliveries (47 per week)**

Table 2 above represents the most up to date 2023 weekly average client visits per month. The monthly average client visits are roughly 267 visits per month. The 47 deliveries per week (not included in this average) represent the

transported deliveries to the pantry in volunteer’s personal vehicles. February and March have shown the highest number of visits thus far in the calendar year 2023.

Table 3 below represents the daily average number of client visits per month. Wednesdays are the busiest days of the week at the Island Food Pantry. The pantry sees roughly an average of 122 visits that day, while seeing a significantly reduced number of visits on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Clients arrive in 15-minute increments and only one driver at a time is served. All donation pick-ups occur after distribution hours from various locations around the Island.

**Table 3:  
2023 Daily average client visits (Month)**

<i>Month</i>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Jan	37	127	45	38	81
Feb	43	153	43	39	80
Mar	36	131	46	45	92
Apr	38	118	50	37	87
May	33	126	48	42	77
Jun	42	111	48	45	90
Jul	36	104	49	43	67
Aug	35	103	48	39	67
Sep	40	124	47	41	76
<b>Average</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Shift Hours</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>No Deliveries</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**\*Thursdays are pick-ups, not in-person shopping**

Table 4 below represents the total number of volunteers per shift during the week/month.

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**Table 4:**  
2023 Weekly average number of volunteers per shift (Month)

<i>Month</i>	Donation Pick-Up*	Monday Distribution	Truck Unload (Tues)	Tuesday Bagging	Wednesday Distribution (1st shift)	Wednesday Distribution (2nd shift)	Thursday Bagging	Thursday Deliveries	Friday Distribution	Friday Stocking	Saturday Shopping
Jan	3	8	10	4	9	7	7	17	7	4	12
Feb	3	9	10	3	8	7	4	15	7	5	13
Mar	4	10	10	4	8	8	2	14	7	3	12
Apr	4	8	13	3	11	7	4	12	8	5	9
May	4	6	10	3	11	7	3	12	8	4	12
Jun	5	6	9	3	10	7	4	12	8	3	10
Jul	4	8	11	3	9	8	4	12	9	6	12
Aug	4	8	10	3	10	5	4	12	9	5	12
<b>Average</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Staff Present</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

\*Donation pick-up happens after distribution hours from various locations around the Island. Donations are transported to the pantry in volunteer's personal vehicles.

\* Thursday deliveries are volunteer pick-ups only. Drivers arrive in 15 minute increments and only one driver at a time.

**Table 4:**  
2023 Weekly average number of volunteers per shift (Month)

<i>Month</i>	Donation Pick-Up*	Monday Distribution	Truck Unload (Tues)	Tuesday Bagging	Wednesday Distribution (1st shift)	Wednesday Distribution (2nd shift)
Jan	3	8	10	4	9	7
Feb	3	9	10	3	8	7
Mar	4	10	10	4	8	8
Apr	4	8	13	3	11	7
May	4	6	10	3	11	7
Jun	5	6	9	3	10	7
Jul	4	8	11	3	9	8
Aug	4	8	10	3	10	5





Pick-ups occur Tuesday through Saturday. They will be receiving a total of 4 deliveries throughout the week that will not interfere with distributions.

**Circulation:** The Island Food Pantry has provided an internal circulation plan on the proposed site. Deliveries are made by 34-foot straight box trucks at 8am on Tuesdays and Fridays, and at 11:30 am on Wednesdays and Fridays. Client distributions are not scheduled during delivery times. The circulation plan provided by the applicant is adequate and safe for its delivery trucks to safely navigate the parking area internally and externally.

**Future Traffic:** There is not a Land Use like that of a food bank or food pantry in the ITE Trip Generation Handbook.

**Recommendation/Potential Mitigation:** Staff has evaluated the proposed project and has concluded that the project will not have a negative impact on the surrounding area/neighborhood. The two existing uses that reside along Dukes County Avenue generate far more traffic daily than that of the Food Pantry.

To limit noise in the surrounding neighborhood, limit the beeping of trucks backing up (if need be) during the morning deliveries.

It is recommended that the proponent work with the Oak Bluffs public safety offices to develop an opening day strategy that provides for police details, parking attendants and wayfinding assistance to minimize disruptions during the initial opening period. This strategy should be reviewed on a daily, or weekly, basis to evaluate its continuing need. After one-year, the proponent shall return to the MVC for review.

**Social Development:**

According to the Island Food Pantry:

- “In 2019, the Pantry saw an average of 2,042 clients each year.”
- “Today, the Pantry’s numbers have doubled to a current enrollment of 4,200 registered clients.”
- “Demand has not dropped off since the height of the pandemic.”

New software and the new project will, according to Island Food Pantry:

- “Serve more clients per hour”
- “Educate and promote nutritious choices using the MyPlate categories”
- “Increase access, reduce lines, and improve the overall food pantry client experience.

It will also allow us to create a ‘case manager’ who can reach out- asks about income/expenses, income verification, can connect clients to other services and create greater and deeper engagement with our client base.”

**Housing:**

- The project will feature onsite housing. Specifically, a 610 square foot apartment for use by an Island Food Pantry employee. According to the Applicant's Agent, an Island Food Pantry employee currently resides in the apartment.
- The facility the Island Food Pantry is vacating offers no housing for the nonprofit's employees

**Impact on Abutters:**

- According to the Applicant's Agent, a vegetative screening will be maintained on the Eastern periphery of the Project Site as screening for the neighbors
- The number of employees transitioning from the old Island Food Pantry location to the Project Site will remain at two (2) and is not expected to increase, according to the Applicant's Agent