

Correction: Opposition to Proposed Harbor View Hotel Spa Expansion

Isobel Case <isobel_b_case@yahoo.com>

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

Hi Alex - I apologize for my mistake but in the letter I sent yesterday I noticed an error in the address for 85 North Water Street that I listed below my signature. There are no other changes in the letter, but could you please use this version for the Commission's correspondence record? Thank you!

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commission:

I have been a summer resident of Edgartown for over 40 years. I own 36 Morse Street, and, with my family, am a part owner of 85 North Water Street. Edgartown, and specifically the quiet and beautiful neighborhood north of Main Street, is a beloved part of my life.

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed expansion of the spa at the Harbor View Hotel. For years the hotel has successfully operated within long-established guidelines appropriate for a hotel located in a beautiful and historic residential neighborhood. In contrast, actions in recent years suggest the hotel's current owner has little regard for the neighborhood and the families who have lived there for generations. The proposed spa expansion is the latest example. The project would increase the size of the spa to more than five times that of the last publicly approved plan in 2008. Such a facility is completely out of character for a hotel located in a residential neighborhood, and promises to increase traffic and noise as it draws customers not only from the hotel but from the island at large.

The spa proposal is especially troubling because it is consistent with other recent actions that threaten to transform a previously quiet hotel into a large-scale resort and entertainment facility that is completely out of keeping with its location. Special Permits obtained in 1990 and 1992 outlined a range of restrictions on the hotel's operations, including important limitations to outdoor dining services. Yet, in July, 2019, the hotel constructed and opened a full-service outdoor restaurant and bar. The plan for the outdoor bar was approved without the input of neighborhood residents, who were never informed of the proceedings. Instead of the quiet indoor dining and entertainment allowed under the 1990 and 1992 Permits, central Edgartown is now blighted by a raucous outdoor bar more appropriate for spring break than a quiet neighborhood. The bar draws revelers from across the island, increasing traffic throughout the area and creating noise late into the night that significantly impacts neighboring families. Beyond the nuisance of increased taxi and Uber traffic, the introduction of even one impaired driver into the neighborhood could have devastating consequences.

Despite legal action by neighbors in opposition to the outdoor bar, last summer the hotel further violated its Permits by offering an extremely noisy food and drink service on the front porch of the hotel. In addition, hotel ownership has attempted to transform 119 North Water, which is owned by the hotel, into extended-stay lodgings, and its dock into a marine activity center complete with boat charters and jet ski rentals. It is hard to imagine a greater hazard in Edgartown Harbor than tourists on rented jet skis.

I have always cherished the peace and quiet of the neighborhood and that my three children could safely walk and ride their bicycles in town and sail in the Harbor. The proposed spa expansion is just the latest step the hotel has taken to transform a formerly quiet hotel into a resort and party destination that threatens to spoil the beauty and tranquility of historic Edgartown.

I strongly oppose the proposed spa expansion and other recent actions taken by the hotel that have shown a callous disregard for its neighbors. I appreciate the time you are taking to consider the concerns of the families affected by these actions.

Sincerely yours,
Isobel Brooker Case

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