

January 4th, 2021

Attn: Martha's Vineyard Commission

RE: Opposition to expanded operations at Harbor View Hotel

Submitted on behalf of Joan Norton, John Wilson and Heather Wilson.

My stepfather, S. Bailey Norton 3rd, came from an old school Edgartown family. The Norton's settled on the island in the mid-1600s. Generations of Nortons plied both the Vineyard waters, and the world's oceans as fishermen, whalers and sailing captains. His great Uncle, Thomas M. Norton, was the first captain of the whaling ship, the Charles W. Morgan. His father, S. Bailey Norton Jr., was the captain of the Manxman, which made its summer home in Edgartown harbor. He grew up in what is now the Anchors. In the 30s and 40s his mother knew everyone in town who needed a meal. For those who were too proud to show up at the back door, Bailey, or his brother Floyd, or his sister Sue would be tasked with dropping off their meals. The reason the Chappy ferries are called On Time II and III is because Bailey's father and Manual Swartz organized the barn raising for the original On Time, which was finished on time. Bailey's, and the Norton's roots, run deep in Edgartown.

In 1983, at the conclusion of a successful business career, Bailey returned to Edgartown and settled into 90 North Water Street. Bailey was fiercely protective of both the character and history of Edgartown. The Norton's gifted the Anchors to the Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust, as well as the Norton Boathouse. Bailey was resolute about both preserving the town's character and maintaining public space on the Edgartown waterfront.

His most notable contribution might just be the 7-year project to bury the power lines along North Water Street. Despite many roadblocks and hurdles he was resolute in ensuring that this project saw its way to completion. He politely prodded everyone from the town, to Eversource to regulatory agencies to keep the project moving forward. He was not shy about leaning on all of the stakeholders to contribute money to ensure that this most renowned piece of Edgartown would maintain its character. It is a part of his enduring legacy that can be appreciated anytime one walks along North Water Street.

While Bailey was committed to preserving Edgartown's, and the island's character, he also recognized that development and growth had its place as well. As a trusted voice in the community he was often asked to weigh in on developments. He was an instrumental voice in getting both Vineyard Golf, and the Boathouse and Field Club approved by decision makers on the island. He recognized that the island had to change and grow to thrive but not at the expense of the essential character of this place many of us find special, and draws so many visitors.

He and Bob Carrol were both classmates and friends. That did not mean he agreed with all of the decisions that Bob made regarding the Harbor View. What it meant is that they often had spirited discussions regarding the limits of Bob's plans. Both Bob and Bailey understood that the Harbor View's role was as a part of Edgartown, not apart from Edgartown.

Bailey would be disheartened about the proposed developments at the Harbor View. It would distress him to know that the new owners were willing to fundamentally change the character of Starbuck neck simply to earn greater profits. He would express to the decision makers that once you lose the character of a place it is difficult, if not impossible, to get it back. He would suggest that if you wanted to build another resort on the island that you find a more appropriate location, not rooted in the village.

Quite simply, Starbuck Neck and North Water Street is the wrong place for a resort. It is the heart of a thriving summer community. Many of the neighbors are amongst the most active supporters of island causes and care deeply about our community. Their concern, like ours, boils down to the fundamental nature this place.

Allowing the expansion of the Harbor View into a full scale resort is wrong. Allowing the owners of the Harbor View to violate both the letter and the spirit of the agreement they signed when they purchased the property sets a bad precedent. Quite simply, it is wrong. The decisions that are made regarding the Harbor View's expansion not only impact the abutters and the residents of North Water Street, they impact the town and the island at large. If you allow this to go forward you are changing the character of a street, a neighborhood, a town and the island.

As we've seen in communities all around the world, once you allow the character to change it does not come back.

Respectfully,

John J Wilson
PO Box 1905
12 Night Heron Road
Edgartown, MA 02539

wailerwoo@gmail.com
(412)719-0029