

January 17, 2021

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission:

I'm writing to express my views related to your upcoming review of the Harbor View Hotel's development activities.

After 20 years of family vacations on Martha's Vineyard, we bought our home at 18 Starbuck Neck in December 2017.

Of course we knew the Harborview was nearby when we fell in love with our home and the neighborhood. But any fears we had of a big hotel in a residential neighborhood were allayed by the fact that we many times had walked the neighborhood and stayed and dined at the hotel. The quiet and affable old hotel was a perfect complement to the neighborhood and vice versa. More to the point, we knew the hotel was a commercial enterprise grandfathered in a residential zone and had faith that the litany of long-time legal restrictions on the hotel's commercial development would either be honored by the hotel or, if not, would be enforced by public institutions such as yours.

Unfortunately, for all of us that live here and bargained for such a peaceful co-existence, the hotel has violated these restrictions and public institutions have not stopped them: in 3 short years the Harborview is mutating into a boisterous, full blown, destination party resort.

So now it's the MVC's turn. The hotel has ignored and marginalized you and your work: they built a huge new pool bar, restaurant, patio and entertainment complex without your review and now are only belatedly here before you on the spa because the neighbors insisted on it.

What's come before bears on what is being asked to be approved by you now. The many moves by the hotel in just the past 3 years to become a destination party resort aren't at all subtle and are in clear contravention of long-standing legal restrictions. Ironically, these restrictions were agreed to by the hotel in exchange for the neighbors agreeing to an expansion of activities at the hotel that were previously prohibited. Give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile as the saying goes!

- In the Winter of 2019, without any notice to or approval by you they illegally replaced a modest 18-seat pool bar muffled in a quiet corner of the pool deck with a huge new 2600 square foot brightly lit pool bar, restaurant, patio and entertaining space with bar and table seating, fire pits, lounge areas and other space for well over 100 party guests plopped right in the middle of the great lawn. *Unlike the old bar, this complex encourages large groups coming and going all day and into the night; the resultant loud*

noise can be heard throughout the neighborhood and the increased traffic creates a safety hazard for kids and adults alike on the small neighborhood streets.

- They bought and commercialized without any approvals the house and dock across the street from the hotel; using the house as an extension of the hotel and the dock for rental of jet skis, charter boats and the like. *More noise, more traffic, more congestion and more safety hazards for kids and others on the streets.*
- They're not legally allowed to, but they now play music and serve dinner and drinks on the front porch whenever they feel like it. *More noise and more traffic.*
- They've added courtesy golf carts, automobiles, bikes and horse and buggy rides. *More noise, more traffic, more congestion and more safety hazards.*

And now they're trying to erect a new 4800 SF building to house a hair and nail salon as part of a spa facility open to the public that's way more intense in size, scope and use than the one you previously approved. *A large freestanding day spa open to the public with high traffic, high velocity nail and hair salons will for sure exacerbate the traffic, congestion, noise and safety hazards already inflicted by the hotel.*

To be clear, this isn't at all about money or property values. I grew up in Everett, Mass and vacation was a few days at Salisbury Beach. I pinch myself every time I get to our Vineyard home (my grand-daughters actually kiss the floor every time they get there ... and cry every time they leave). We're not alone in that. When you count up all the homes in the neighborhood, there are literally thousands of parents, children, grand-children, great grandchildren, family, friends and guests that cherish, respect, contribute to and embody this neighborhood and this island's lifestyle and culture. The Harborview is wrecking our neighborhood by turning what was a quiet inn into a boisterous full blown destination party resort in clear contravention of the legally binding restrictions placed on the hotel many years ago to prevent this very thing from happening.

Please help protect our neighborhood as you've done for so many others: undo what damage you can, including revisiting the existence and operation of the non-compliant new pool bar complex, and stopping them from building this disruptive public day spa.

Respectfully submitted,

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