January 19, 2021

To Martha’s Vineyard Commission:

As a seasonal resident, employee of Harbor View Hotel and friend of Bernard Chiu, I would like to share my support of Bernard Chiu and the remarkable work he has done to renovate the Harbor View Hotel. From day one, he has put his heart and soul into reviving a historic icon that the neighbors, employees and guests will appreciate for generations. The result has been first class and always with respect for Harbor View Hotel’s place in the neighborhood and in history.

The spa project will be no different. The proposal is to take an existing building that is in significant need of repair and transforming it into a beautiful spa with guest rooms. Based on the work that Bernard has done to date, anyone who has toured the property or stayed there would feel confident that the SPA will be built in a tasteful way and will be consistent architecturally with the rest of the buildings. There is a misconception that this is a massive expansion when it is simply a repurposing of a building within the current footprint of the property.

For the record, Bernard has invested a lot of effort and money into doing things for the neighbors. For example, the trash has always been outside, bordering one of the neighbor’s property. He invested in a state-of-the-art trash compactor that reduces trash pick-up by 60% and moved it inside to further minimize noise. He planted dozens of tall trees along the property lines and added privacy fences to mitigate noise. He invested in dark sky lighting to preserve the peaceful and beautiful night sky. The landscaping that the public can see from the street and throughout the property has been transformed into elegant, manicured gardens with thousands of red roses. The foundation of the building was covered with dark green, wooden siding to blend in with the natural landscape. Now, he is looking to invest in a historic preservation fund to help with historic preservation in the neighborhood, beyond just at the hotel. The list is so long. Anyone who has benefited from these changes should have faith that the Spa will be built with respect to the neighbors and its surroundings.

Many of our neighbors have commented privately about how much they love and appreciate the improvements. The employees are proud to work at the hotel and recognize that the improvements have elevated guest satisfaction, which in turn makes their jobs more enjoyable. Employees feel offended, upset and uneasy about neighbors who have put up hidden cameras pointing at them as they work and who write publicly about things that are just not true. Fortunately, those neighbors are in the minority and most residents of the neighborhood have been gracious and appreciative of the enhancements that have been made to the property.

The Spa will be an elegant amenity, and I am hopeful that the board will approve the plans.

Sincerely,

Jean Wong, Edgartown, MA