

Paul Foley

From: Keith Gorman [kpgorman@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2008 5:44 PM
To: foley@mvcommission.org; Philippe Jordi; kgorman@mvmuseum.org
Subject: Letter of Support for Bradley Square Project
Attachments: _AVG certification_.txt

March 18, 2008

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

My name is Keith Gorman. I am the newly appointed Executive Director at the Martha's Vineyard Museum. I am writing in support of the Bradley Square project in Oak Bluffs. The Museum believes that the proposed project will contribute to saving an important historical structure, preserving a family's historical record, exhibiting a community's heritage, offering affordable housing to the Island, as well as contributing to the arts community. The Martha's Vineyard Museum's own core mission is to collect, to preserve, and to interpret the history and heritage of the Vineyard. We believe that the proposed project will assist us and the Island in preserving its heritage and allowing access to its past.

During the fall of 2007, the Museum was asked to assess the physical contents of the Bradley home. Both the Museum's curator and archivist were asked to visit the site and examine the physical artifacts, photographs, and paper documents that chronicle the history of the church and family. The Museum developed a list of documents and artifacts that it believed would represent the historic significance of the church and serve as a historical record for future researchers and visitors. Both the curator and the archivist concluded that there were numerous artifacts that should be preserved for the community's understanding of an important African-American family and its role in the religious life of the Island. Beyond the contents of the home and church sanctuary, the Museum believes that the actual building has its own historical significance and place within the community's identity and memory. Moreover, the Museum supports the Bradley Square's plans to save and retain the physical structure and to create a space to exhibit historic artifacts of the family and church. By creating exhibit space, the Project is allowing people to interact with exhibit items in their original context.

During the fall of 2007, I helped to develop a work plan for the selection, preservation, and processing of artifacts and documents in the Bradley home. I worked closely with Patrick Manning (IAH), Linsey Lee (MVM), and Jill Bouck (MVM) to sketch out the steps needed to implement this work plan. The Museum stands ready to assist in preserving valuable artifacts and making them available for future use in exhibits or in educational projects.

The Museum has an excellent relationship with the organizers of the Bradley Square project. We believe that this project will greatly contribute to the Island's understanding of its past. If you have any questions or concerns about the Museum's role in the Bradley project, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Museum. My work number is: 508-627-4441. My email is: kgorman@mvmuseum.org.

My very best wishes,

Keith Gorman