

From: Don Muckerheide jostnick@gmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Island Grown Initiative
Date: September 29, 2023 at 4:18 PM
To: saltzberg@mvcommission.org

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From: Don Muckerheide <jostnick@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Sep 29, 2023 at 4:12 PM
Subject: Island Grown Initiative
To: Adam Turner <turner@mvcommission.org>, Don Muckerheide <jostnick@gmail.com>

Copy of the letter I am circulating about the referral to the MVC about the IGI plans to use my old property for their services to the people in need of food assistance. This should have been refused by the MVC for review, they are not changing the building and the MVC has never considered traffic for any project on Dukes County Ave. even though they have approved foolish projects like Bradley Square. The fact that this got past the LUPC compliance review is highly suspicious.

Your Food Pantry needs your participation at the MVC public hearing on October 5th. They are not changing the building beyond fixing it up, the issue is Parking and Traffic. They should not even be required to deal with the MVC based on the 40+ year history of the various businesses that have been on this property yet they failed to get past the Compliance hearing of the LUPC and were referred to the full interrogation treatment of the MVC. Over decades of projects on Dukes County Ave., there has never been anyone subjected to traffic and parking scrutiny by either of these boards.

I want to make the public aware of yet another example of our corrupt MVC and Oak Bluffs Planning Board.

The new owner of my old shop property is Island Grown Initiative, AKA (Island Food Pantry). Under pressure from Ewell Hopkins, Planning Board Chairman, the town of Oak Bluffs building department has referred the use of the property to the MVC for traffic and parking considerations.

This is quite the hypocrisy when you consider Ewell Hopkins did nothing to enforce the parking regulations voted into law by the citizens of the town of Oak Bluffs, and in fact totally ignored these laws, for his cohort Brian Packish when Brian was allowed to grossly over develop his property across the street with 0 on site parking. There are 4 more units on the property that should have never been allowed if even inadequate parking was provided for the summer rental complex. Plus, all the little box units are approved by the building department and wastewater department as 1 bedroom units because the second floor sleeping lofts do not have a wall. These "one bedroom" units are marketed as suitable for 4 adults on Airbnb. How friendly.

I would also point out that another Dukes County Avenue project the MVC approved was the disaster known as Bradley Square, which was so over built that it was 58 parking spaces short of even being close to basic compliance to the OB parking regulations. Even though it had a public meeting space, museum, many units of housing and B-1 live work studios, traffic was not considered. It was an attempt by the Arts District to develop their district with public subsidy that sold housing units at market rate to

subsidize B-1 commercial use. During hearings on Bradley Square the MVC had said, to those of us against the project, on several occasions that “parking and traffic issues would not be considered” as a factor in their approval process. Fortunately a few of us were able to stop the project after it was approved by the MVC. We also exposed the fraud that was the IAHF, Island Affordable Housing Fund, which ended their donations and made them ultimately dissolve during the leadership of Ewell Hopkins.

During the year 2012 many artists came together to create the public entertainment venue at my shop, still called The Pit Stop. We had an approved capacity of 268 people for gallery space and performance space. These capacity permits were established by professionals, displayed as required, signed and approved by the OB Building Department and Fire Department. Again, parking and traffic were never discussed or even brought up.

Traffic is a function of the people's right to the use of a roadway, funny how Ewell Hopkins, the town building department and the MVC thinks it can regulate the use of a road by people in need of food assistance after decades of ignoring all previous project's traffic issues and at the same time completely ignoring all parking regulations voted into law by the citizens of Oak Bluffs. My old shop property has more parking than any other property on the road, and there have been many kinds of businesses there over the 40+ years I owned it. These include: leased as automotive repair shops, welding shop, sandblasting, boat and fiberglass repair shop, the Pit Stop Tire Shop and Quick Lube, The Arts District Exchange Consignment Shop, a public space for events, Early on Jazz Venue in the days of Rodney Ward where we hosted the now famous Esperanza Spalding, a recording studio for many local artists in the day of recording engineer Matthew Cullen, early animation workshop, and ultimately The Pit Stop music venue and Gallery. I am sure I am forgetting some but you get the idea.

The reason the Dillon's sold the property was due to the abuse by Ewell Hopkins, the OB Planning Board, Gail Barmakien of the OB Wastewater department and the MVC. They wanted to provide year round housing and year round high skilled jobs, a trade school for our youth for cabinet making, invest millions in the town with a state of the art cabinet making shop and these low lifes basically drove them off the island to New Hampshire. In New Hampshire their business and skills were met with great appreciation by a town who wanted to do nothing but help them bring jobs to their community. That is why the foundation sits there to this day, they got to that point and our great leaders decided that it should go before the MVC. After a year of expensive BS they scrapped their plans and left the island. A real loss to the island. This is a disgusting story of corruption in and of itself.

Now that it is owned by a Local Non-Profit, Island Grown Initiative and Food Pantry, who want to provide food opportunities for senior shopping, a source of groceries for low income folks and any other services related to their mission the ugly head of the Ewell Hopkins's OB Planning Board and the power mad MVC arises. Why?? To protect the parking on Dukes County Avenue and Everett Avenue for the summer rental Airb&b complex of Brian Packish? So public roadways are now dedicated to those who got their first? I don't think so.

Please reach out to the MVC and Ewell Hopkins to give them a piece of your mind with regard to this sudden concern for who has a right to use our public roads.

Power Corrupts, Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely.

Donald Muckerheide

9/29/23