



COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY

MARTHA'S VINEYARD & ELIZABETH ISLANDS

c/o Alex Elvin, DRI Coordinator
Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

July 15, 2022

RE: Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard – DRI #720

Dear MV Commissioners:

At our recent meeting, the Dukes County Commissioners heard a presentation that updated us on the proposed project to replace the current Windermere facility with a new facility and program called Navigator Homes of Martha's Vineyard (NHMV). The Dukes County Commission approved sending a letter of support of this project. As we have learned this project is currently before your board as a Development of Regional Impact (#720).

As you are aware, the Martha's Vineyard Hospital intends to replace its aging skilled nursing center that will no longer be in compliance with current standards. It contracted with Navigator Homes of MV, a non-profit organization, to replace it with a new model of nursing home care, the Green House, that will serve 70 elders in five one-story homes with single & suite rooms, and shared living rooms, dining rooms, open kitchen and outdoor gardens and porches. While in complete conformance with the medical needs required of skilled nursing homes in Massachusetts, these residences feel like homes, not facilities. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, this model has been shown to drastically reduce COVID-19 cases and deaths at skilled nursing facilities. All residents of the existing nursing home will be transferred to the new facility, once completed. All staff who wish will also be employed at the new homes and have an opportunity to live in housing to be built by the hospital on a separate parcel. In addition, acreage will be set aside for conservation. In short, the project addresses lack of capacity for elders, a workforce housing shortage and open space for the community.

On the island, the 30% proportion of elderly people is higher than the state average and the fastest growing age demographic. It is projected that the need of the island population for skilled nursing facility placement will only grow over the next decade. It is our hope that Martha's Vineyard residents will not be left without a skilled nursing home for our seniors and families needing care for their elders. Having to go off-island to find care for a family member and then to worry about the difficulty of making visits to a loved-one is not in keeping with our island's capacity and determination to take care of our own.

Over the years we have been presented with various issues and challenges our rural community hospital is facing in providing excellent care for our residents and visitors. We recognize and applaud the efforts of the hospital in collaborating with various community organizations to work on solutions. We believe that this collaboration will be another success story that will improve the overall care provided to our community members.

Sincerely,



Martina Thornton,

On behalf of the

Dukes County Commission

Cc: David McDonough, President & CEO, Navigator Homes of MV