Proposal for Wedding Venue

General

The applicant is David J. Reed. I am applying for a special permit to use my property at 371 Edgartown West Tisbury Road as a wedding venue on an occasional basis.

The property is well known to Islanders. It is the first house on the north side of the Edgartown West Tisbury Road as you travel west on that road from the airport. The property sticks out into the State Forest and the bike trails and fire lanes border the property on the east and west side. The property features a 5.5 acre field that is visible from the road.

I am not a resident of Martha's Vineyard but I am nearing retirement and am plan on residing at the property for considerably longer periods in the relatively near future. Before me my father John "Jack" Reed owned the property. Before him my grandfather, Roger Engley, owned the property. My brother, Edward Reed owns the land immediately to the east of this property.

I love this property and I love the Island of Martha's Vineyard. I have made substantial improvements to the interior of the home on the property always keeping in mind the character of the house and the character of the Island. My wife and I find ourselves in a position in which we need to do something with the property to earn money sufficient to pay the considerable expenses associated with keeping the property the way it is. The candidates are to rent the house as a short term rental via VRBO or Airbnb, subdivide and sell, or to rent the property as a wedding venue. The latter is our preference and thus this application.

Property

The property is as described above and as depicted in the Plan of Land prepared by Vineyard Land Surveying & Engineering, Inc., copy attached. The property is the western parcel of the two parcels depicted on the attached.

The field is hayed by the Athearn family with whom my family has had a very positive multi-generational relationship. The haying arrangement is apparently profitable for the Athearn family business but pays us only a nominal fee annually. We would like to continue and expand that relationship. Currently there is a plan to begin planting a significant garden sized plot in lavender. If that takes and becomes profitable for the Athearn family we would support planting additional portions of the field in lavender which we believe would enhance the appearance of on open field which we know is preferred by the Town as much as it is by us.

Proposed Business

We propose to use the property as a wedding venue. The idea would be to rent the property on Friday or Saturday evenings in the late Spring, Summer, and early Fall, primarily for wedding receptions with some wedding ceremonies taking place on the property as well.

Our expectation is that we would rent the property approximately 10-20 times per year. We would not anticipate providing catering services, that would be provided by third party vendors. Initially we would not anticipate providing anything more than the physical space. Over time we might contract for or provide a tent, tables, chairs, and other physical items necessary to host a wedding.

The rental price would be somewhere between $5,000-$10,000 per occasion. We have done some but not extensive market research. It appears that the wedding business is alive and well on Martha's Vineyard. In fact, my wife and I got married on Martha's Vineyard 33 years ago. Sadly we could not afford our own wedding now. The price of meals, alcohol, and facilities appears to have skyrocketed, sending the cost of a 100 guest wedding to $50,000 or well beyond at some venues. We believe our pricing combined with the ability for the bride, groom, and their families to source their own alcohol, source their own catering, and otherwise customize their wedding planning to their budget would make our site reasonably affordable even if only from the perspective of its relationship to other potential wedding venues on Martha's Vineyard. We would propose to offer a one third discount to brides or grooms whose parents are full time residents of the Island.

We would anticipate being in residence during weddings or receptions or having a person responsible for the property on premises during those occasions. We would anticipate tent setup, service setup, and other preparations to occur a day or two before a wedding, and to be taken down a day or two after a wedding.

Facilities' Location

In an effort to minimize the impact of the business on our one neighbor across the street and any interruption of the view of the field we would propose to have wedding tents erected in the part of the field which is behind the house and the garage. That part of the field is not only blocked from the street by the structures but is lower by several feet than the house and garage making temporary wedding facilities not very visible from the road at all.

Parking would be in the field at the front of the property to the right of the driveway. Our research shows that each car requires 300 sqft to park and for a driveway access. That is 300 sqft per car. The field is large and could accommodate any number of vehicles. We would propose that for any wedding requiring parking for more than 40 vehicles that the wedding party pay for an off-duty police officer to manage entry but primarily exit traffic onto the Edgartown West Tisbury Road. We recognize that parked cars and access to the road would be the significant impact in terms of sight lines and traffic. Ingress is far easier. Fortunately egress management would occur in the mid to later evening when the traffic on the road is substantially diminished.

Portable toilets would be required to be rented by wedding parties and would be sited so as to not be visible from the road.

Noise

We have an understanding that there may be a West Tisbury ordinance regarding amplified music after 10:00 pm and would of course comply with that ordinance if that is in place. We understand that in

theory our one neighbor across the street might be able to hear music from wedding celebrations. Weddings would occur a minimal number of times per year, and we would submit that the noise from any wedding reception music would be substantially less than the noise from cars travelling down the road at 45 mph.

Conclusion

We are hopeful of using our property in a way that could produce income sufficient to offset the costs of ownership of this property so that we can continue to primarily use the property in the manner in which it has been used for at least the past 70 years. We believe that utilizing the property in the manner proposed could provide a reasonable income; perhaps provide some tiny additional contribution to the economic welfare of the Island; provide a potentially more affordable wedding venue option on the Island, particularly for Islanders; have little impact on the one neighbor; and have very little impact on the rural character, the look and feel, and the nature of the property or its surrounding community. For these reasons we are hopeful that you will approve our request to utilize this property in the manner outlined herein.