

Melinda F Loberg
PO Box 2557
Vineyard Haven, MA. 02568

March 15, 2021

Martha's Vineyard Commission
c/o Lucy Morrison
Re: DRI 674 M. Old Stone Bank Condos
March 12, 2021

Dear Commissioners:

I attended your public hearing on March 11, 2021 where you considered the application to purchase and rehabilitate the Santander Bank property in Vineyard Haven. I appreciate that you left the hearing open for written comment as I had not gotten my thoughts together sufficiently to make a contribution during the hearing.

I agree with many that the proposal has positive aspects and I would support its ultimate approval pending satisfactorily addressing issues that were raised, e.g. potential flooding as sea level rises and erosion due to stormwater; architectural elements; rental sub-lets, and others listed by commission staff.

I noted, however, that little was said about public access. Vineyard Haven is notable for its rare, almost completely unbulkheaded, picturesque harbor that can be navigated on foot at the shoreline. The Town has taken pains when reviewing projects to keep unfettered access to the beach along the harbor through the permitting process. The ability to walk from the ferry to Owen Park and hang out on that section of shoreline is a unique pleasure for residents and visitors alike. I hope that continuing this open access will be part of the final agreement, either through the MVC or Planning Board processes.

The Town will need to accommodate this project with its public resources or it otherwise would not be able to proceed. First, in providing expanded wastewater flow, the town is making a commitment to allot its scarce resource to this project to the exclusion of other commercial needs in the B-1 and Waterfront Commercial Districts. Additional wastewater flow for these Districts will take years to develop. The Town must also allow residential access through its public parking lot. This means, in addition to the possibility of emergency vehicles needing access, fuel trucks, trash pick-up, UPS and Fed Ex deliveries, and, as was brought out in the hearing, the neighbor - all needing access and temporary spaces. Parking is at a premium in all of our town commercial centers, so any reduction in public parking will hurt businesses in the area. I would urge the exclusion of residential/guest parking from the Union St. lot in order to reserve this lot for public parking.

Because the town would be providing these resources, the free access by the public to the beach would be a fair and reasonable accommodation by the applicant.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this project.

Melinda Loberg