

Shearer Cottage Comment

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To: Alex Elvin <elvin@mvmcommission.org>;

Hi Alex, I hope this finds you well.

This is to comment on the Shearer Cottage renovation in review by the MV Commission.

While I have an extensive professional, licensed broadcasting background I have been a seasonal and annual member of the Martha's Vineyard and Oak Bluffs community since 1955 where our family owns two homes (one in the OB Historic district that I helped establish) and am involved with the Island community.

I took my late father's place on the Boards of Overseers and Trustees of the Vineyard Open Land Foundation where I have served since 1979. I served on the Oak Bluffs Trails and Byways Committee from 1999 - 2002 and was an original member of the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission that identified and launched the Cottage City Historic District. I served on the OB Economic Development Comm in 2002 and was a member of the Board of the MV Museum from 2012 - 2019. I am presently a member of the Martha's Vineyard Cable TV Commission, representing OB and the Edgartown Board of Trade, representing the Vineyard Gazette Media Group where I am Director of Sales and Marketing.

I was the Vineyard Gazette's Oak Bluffs Town columnist from 2012 - 2017 and the author of two books; the multiple award winning Whaling Captains of Color - America's First Meritocracy and Historic Tales of Oak Bluffs. I am the author of several articles and commentaries published by the Vineyard Gazette and several others published by the MV Museum and an assortment of local and maritime related historical articles for other local and national publications.

The Gazette and I were heavily involved in the launch and fundraising for the National Museum of African American History and Culture when its plans were being finalized that saw the Town of Oak Bluffs become a permanent exhibit. That exhibit, besides including the story of Shearer Cottage also includes its historic guest book noting the many notable black people who stayed at Shearer Cottage in the days of this country's history of oppression and slavery that caused there to be very, very few places where black people could stay as evidenced in this article I penned earlier this year (See Green Book listing) <https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2021/04/23/then-and-now-dunmere-sea>.

I can be counted among the Vineyard and Oak Bluffs community in support of Shearer Cottage's expansion plans - and hope that the Commission will look favorably upon these improvements.

Skip Finley

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