

## **DRI # 462 – M2 – South Mountain Company, Inc.**

### **1. DESCRIPTION**

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- 1.1 Applicant:** South Mountain Company, Inc.
- 1.2 Project Location:** Red Arrow Road off Stoney Hill Road. West Tisbury Assessor's Map 8 Lot 37 (6.3 acres). The proposal is for the South Mountain property only, there are no changes proposed to the co-housing portion of the site.
- 1.3 Proposal:** The South Mountain Company would like to expand their building by a total of 2,769 square feet and increase the number of full-time on-site employees they are allowed by the MVC from 12 to 18. The footprint of their building would increase by 1,914 square feet. Currently the building is about 10,000 square feet with a 6,726 s.f. footprint.
- 1.4 Zoning:** RU – Rural Residential.
- 1.5 Surrounding Land Uses:** Woods, residences, co-housing, Desorcy Construction, and the Jehovah's Witnesses.
- 1.6 Project History:** DRI 462 was originally referred to the MVC on February 17, 1998. On June 25, 1998 the Martha's Vineyard Commission approved with conditions DRI 462, a proposal to construct a 16-unit clustered co-housing development and a separate commercial design/build construction company on 36.2 acres in West Tisbury (27.5 acres of the 36.2 acres were left as open space). The project was presented to the Town of West Tisbury as a Comprehensive Permit filed under MGL Chapter 40b. The South Mountain Company was the development consultant, designer, and builder of both the co-housing and their own offices. One of the rationales for allowing a relatively large commercial enterprise in the rural residential district was that the company could help defray road and infrastructure costs and thus help affordability.

The MVC imposed the following Conditions:

- 1a) Should the commercial venture cease the property would revert to residential.
- 1b) The MVC limited the number of full-time employees continually on-site to twelve (12).
- 1c) There should be no change of use or ownership of the common areas.
- 2a) Provide for a bike/pedestrian path within the no-build buffer zone along the east side of Stoney Hill Road and provide an easement along Old Holmes Hole Road if requested.
- 2b) Accepted the lighting plan and offer to turn off lights at 11:00 p.m. at South Mountain
- 2c) Not to disturb within a 50' radius of "old cellar hole" until W.T. Hist. Comm. sign off.
- 3a) Offer to participate fully in a road association for Stoney Hill Road.
- 3b) Offer to improve Stoney Hill Road from the development entrance to State Road.
- 3c) Offer to provide turn-outs along Stoney Hill Road.
- 3d) Offer to provide restrictions on the use of guest rooms in the common house.
- 4a) Offer to provide 4 units of affordable housing between 70% and 80% A.M.I. for 99 yrs.
- 4b) Copy of the final regulatory agreement between the applicant and the D.C.R.H.A.
- 4c) The rules and regulations for the development to be submitted for the MVC DRI 462 file.
- 5a) Offer to construct emergency access to the Fire Chief's specifications.

The MVC also noted that though the proposal was inconsistent with W.T. zoning, since it was submitted as a Chapter 40b Comprehensive Permit, the issue was best addressed by the Town. The West Tisbury ZBA then conducted a public hearing on the project adding several conditions to the MVC conditions.

**1.7 Project Summary:** The South Mountain Company would like to make three small expansions to their building increasing the total square footage by 2,769 square feet. Currently the building is about 10,000 square feet. The footprint of their building would increase by 1,914 square feet from the existing 6,726 s.f. footprint. The three physical expansions would include: an 855 s.f. office expansion built over an existing first floor shop annex; a 414 s.f. addition to the first floor shop; and a 1,500 s.f. addition to the first floor storage area. They would also like to increase the number of full-time employees they are allowed on-site from 12 to 18.

## **2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY**

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**2.1 DRI Referral:** West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals.

**2.2 DRI Trigger:** 3.102a (once a DRI always a DRI) and 3.301b. 3.301b states "Any development of commercial, storage, office and/or industrial lands ... that has new construction of addition(s) or auxiliary building(s) totaling 1,000 square feet or more of floor area, such square footage resulting in a total square footage of 2,000 feet or more".

**2.3 Pre-Application meeting with staff:** November 10, 2004

**2.4 LUPC:** 5:30 p.m. on December 13, 2004 (See LUPC Notes) 5 to 3 not to concur.

**2.5 Site Visit:** February 11, 2005

**2.6 Public Hearing:** Thursday December 16, 2004 @ 7:30 p.m. Staff Note: During LUPC it was pointed out that because this referral cited two items on the checklist, one requiring concurrence and one mandatory. After consulting counsel it was determined that it should probably go to a full public hearing based on the general rule that the more restrictive of the two DRI checklist sections should be applied. Therefore, a full Public Hearing will be held at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday February 17, 2005.

## **3. PLANNING CONCERNS**

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### **3.1 Some Key Issues**

- Can Stoney Hill Road handle the increased traffic?
- Expansion of a commercial/light industrial use in a residential neighborhood.
- Will expansion and new in-house jobs increase the noise level?

### **3.2 Environment**

- **Wastewater / Stormwater:** Because they use composting toilets the increase in employees should not affect nitrogen loading. The expansions may create slightly more runoff but the heavily vegetated property can easily handle it.
- **Vegetation:** Of the 36.2 acres of the combined site 27.5 acres were left as open space. On the South Mountain Co parcel 3.5 acres of the 6.3 acres remain as woods.
- **Habitat:** The property is largely woods and is connected by large parcels of woods to the State Forest and therefore probably a good habitat conduit.
- **Water:** Supplied by on-site well, usage is limited.
- **Energy:** The Company prides itself on being environmentally friendly and recently installed the island's lone windmill. The company also offers some innovative environmentally friendly incentives for employees.

### **3.3 Transportation**

- **Traffic:** Currently The South Mountain Company generates 110 weekday trips (55 in and 55 out) and 38 Saturday trips. The proposed addition of 2,769sqft office space is estimated to generate an additional 30 weekday trips and an additional 10 Saturday trips. The method for this estimate of trips the proposed expansion will generate is based on the number of trips being generated now multiplied by the percent increase in square footage of the proposed addition. In other words it is not based on land use but rather on the present use of the property.

The total number of trips on Stoney Hill Road in the Off-Season during the week is estimated to increase from 571 now to 601 with the proposed expansion. In the Peak Season during the week the total number of trips on Stoney Hill Road is estimated to increase from 1,115 now to 1,135 with the proposed expansion. The existing South Mountain office contributes 19% of traffic on Stoney Hill Road during off-peak season and 10% of traffic on Stoney Hill Road during peak season (Memorial Day to Labor Day). The proposed additions are estimated to increase the share of traffic on Stoney Hill Road generated by South Mountain from 19% to 23% during off-peak season and from 10% to 12% of traffic on Stoney Hill Road during peak season. At LUPC Commissioners inquired what types of vehicles were going to South Mountain. Traffic counters revealed that 59% of trips generated at South Mountain are passenger cars, 37% are pickup trucks, and 4% are large trucks.

### **3.4 Economic Development**

- **Economic Impact:** The South Mountain Company currently employs about 30 full time workers including designers and in-house craftsmen as well as builders in the field. They would like to increase their capacity for in-house work providing more skilled labor jobs for an island business.
- **Affordable Housing:** Four units of the original sixteen unit co-housing development were set-aside for families earning 70% - 80% of the area median income in 1998 as required by the state's Comprehensive Permit Law (Chapter 40B).

The proposal is to add a 2,769 square foot addition to the existing building. The MVC's recommended affordable housing mitigation would be \$1,384.50 toward the construction of new affordable housing. The applicant has offered to contribute \$5,000 as part of its continued participation in the Island's Affordable Housing Fund's Business Initiative for Housing Solutions.

### **3.5 Scenic Values**

- **Streetscape:** The building is not visible from any paved streets. While the building is alone in the woods it is the home of a design/build company and is, needless to say, well designed and built.
- **Architectural Detailing:** The proposed additions fit in well with the existing structure.

### **3.6 Local Impact/Abutters**

- With the exception of co-housing, which was part of the original development in 1998, the project was pretty much on its own in the woods until recently. Several houses have been built since in the vicinity. During the DRI 462 public hearing in 1998 several abutters did air concerns about the commercial aspect of the venture.

## **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

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### **4.1 Town Officials:**

**4.2 Public:** None as of yet