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To the Martha's Vineyard Commission:

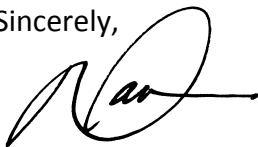
With the public record reopened, I'm taking one last opportunity to add to comments I made in two earlier letters to the Martha's Vineyard Commission regarding the Stillpoint project.

Previously I noted that weddings are a common off-mission device by which many Island nonprofits defray the cost of their missions. Responding to minority concerns about the impact of such activity, the Stillpoint applicants have voluntarily sacrificed this potential source of revenue. This gesture of good will on their part seems very much in keeping with the spirit of the Stillpoint project from its inception, which has already resulted in the transfer of large swaths of land to the Land Bank for perpetual conservation and public enjoyment.

What concerns me is that the MVC is proposing restrictions that directly impinge on the Stillpoint organization's ability to conduct its core mission of offering programs about social justice, the environment, and other topics of universal import. I'm at a loss to understand, for example, why the MVC would disallow enough parking for the number of people who can be reasonably expected to attend an educational event. Especially puzzling is the MVC's restriction of access to Land Bank property from Stillpoint, considering that I have not seen the MVC restrict the public from entering Land Bank properties from any other point of access. From my perspective as a member of the community, it looks as if Stillpoint is being held to standards that will cause unnecessary hardship and bring no demonstrable benefit. It's hard to see why.

I continue to believe strongly that the totality of this project — which has already averted an enormous amount of residential construction and damage to natural habitat and the ecology — adds immeasurably to the Island's long-term well-being. Stillpoint is an instance of the kind of public-private partnership that the Martha's Vineyard Commission should encourage and be holding up as an example. My fear is that the appearance by the MVC to be singling out Stillpoint for punitive treatment will deter similar collaborations in the future. With Stillpoint serving as a cautionary tale to individuals contemplating projects that include a conservation component, the loss of future opportunities of this kind would be a sad loss to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Waters", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dan Waters