1. DESCRIPTION

1.1 Owner/Applicant: Martha’s Vineyard Camp Meeting Association (MVCMA); Dawn McKenna (MVCMA Interim General Manager), Ashley Khattach (MVCMA Capital Task Force)

1.2 Project Location: 0 Trinity Park (Map 81, Lot 3, Extension 1), Oak Bluffs

1.3 Proposal: Restoration and rehabilitation including an addition with backstage space, storage, and public restrooms.

1.4 Zoning: Residential 1 (R1); MVCMA

1.5 Local Permits: Site plan (Planning Board), special permit (ZBA), Conservation Commission approval for construction in floodplain, building permit, MVCMA certificate of appropriateness

1.6 Surrounding Land Uses: Residential uses in the Campground and R1 zoning district; Trinity Park and Trinity United Methodist Church; Circuit Ave.

1.7 Project History: The Tabernacle stands at the center of Trinity Park in Oak Bluffs and is considered the centerpiece of the Campground, which is overseen by the MVCMA. The first Tabernacle was constructed for the Methodist camp meeting revivals in 1870 using sail cloth and was capable of sheltering up to 4,000 people. It was replaced with the current cast iron structure with wooden rafters, three-tiered roof, and cupola in 1879. The original corrugated roof was replaced around 1932 with asbestos cement sheeting.

The Tabernacle is one of the oldest cast-iron structures in the US and is listed in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), as well as being part of the Wesleyan Grove National Historic Landmark District. It is also an official project of Save America’s Treasures, a federal program that recognizes projects of national importance. It is currently owned and maintained by the MVCMA, with concerts, lectures, graduation ceremonies, and other public uses, and accommodates up to 1,678 people with bench seating.

All six Island towns have approved the use of Community Preservation Funds for the proposed roof restoration, with additional allocations expected this year.

1.8 Project Summary: The proposal is phase 5 of a larger restoration project that began in 2002 and has included stabilization of the wrought iron columns, removal of lead paint, replacement of interior lights with historically appropriate fixtures, restoration of the cupola and replacement of the cross, and rebuilding of the upper clerestory. Phase 5 includes the following work:

- New corrugated fiber cement roof to replace existing asbestos cement roof
- Painting of wood roof purlins and edge trim
- Various architectural work, including new turnbuckle assemblies and U-straps
• New ~1,300 ft² one-story addition with backstage space for speakers and performers, a climate-controlled room for the MVCMA’s piano, 10 public toilets, and improved handicapped accessibility to the stage
• Sound booth improvements
• New fire alarm system and sprinklers
• Regrading and landscaping, including walkways and lighting

Total existing square footage: 16,331 ft²
Total proposed square footage: 17,631 ft² (1,300 ft² new construction)

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

2.1 DRI Referral: Oak Bluffs Building Department, March 15, 2022
2.2 DRI Trigger: 6.2a (Public assembly place – 3,500+ ft²), 6.2b (Public assembly place – 50+ seats)
2.3 LUPC: April 4, 2022
2.4 Public Hearing: To be determined

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Water and Wastewater: The MVCMA is connected to the town sewer, but the Tabernacle currently is not. The proposal includes a new sewer line and pump, but final approval from the town to connect to the system is still pending. The MVCMA currently provides up to six portable toilets, and will continue to do so until the new ones are connected. The new wastewater flow would at least partly replace existing flow from other restrooms in the area.

3.2 Public Facilities: The proposal is to restore and rehabilitate an existing public facility while maintaining the same total capacity. The project includes 10 restrooms (including one staff and one handicapped restroom), which supports an Oak Bluffs Comprehensive Master Plan goal of increasing the number of restrooms in the MVCMA. The MVCMA has received a variance from the Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gasfitters that reduces the required number of toilets for the Tabernacle from 26 to 10. All restrooms would be gender-neutral.

The proposed addition will have an occupancy load of six people, but is meant to support existing Tabernacle uses and will not increase the total capacity. There would be no change in the hours or days of operation.

3.3 Safety and Health: The proposal includes sprinklers in the new addition, as well as a fire alarm system throughout the structure, as required by the MA Automatic Sprinkler Appeals Board. The existing roof contains asbestos, but is not considered a current health concern since the structure is open to the air. The addition will improve handicapped access to the stage.

3.4 Stormwater and Drainage: A small portion of the Tabernacle is within the FEMA AE flood hazard area and the Oak Bluffs Floodplain Overlay District. The addition and utilities will require some regrading, including within the floodplain. The volume floodplain impact is about 3,389 ft³, and a bioretention area is proposed onsite as compensatory storage.

3.5 Energy: Utilities will be all-electric.
3.6 **Character and Identity:** The MVCMA issued a certificate of appropriateness for the project in February 2022, including conditions related to the addition, roof, a possible pergola, utilities, and site work. The applicant has stated that all exterior work will also conform to the US Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and that the new roof will match the profile of existing materials to the extent possible, while maintaining the historic acoustics of the building. According to the applicant, the proposed renovations are intended to “harmonize with the existing structure, to be respectful of it, and to complement it in terms of scale, massing, materials, and detailing.” None of the existing iron features will be replaced.

Alternative roof materials were considered, but fiber cement was chosen in part because the roof needs to be heavy enough to counter the effects of wind inside and around the structure.

The addition will incorporate materials to differentiate it from the historic structure, with wood siding, doors, and windows, a copper roof, and other features. The proposed addition is in the same location as a smaller addition that was removed in the early 1900s, and is intended to pay tribute to that structure. Architectural and structural drawings have been provided.

3.7 **Lighting and Landscape:** The project will involve new paths and landscape changes (subject to MVCMA review) to integrate the proposed addition. This would include replacing an existing asphalt path with stabilized aggregate, adding a bioretention area and planting beds/bushes, and removing at least one tree. A landscape plan has not yet been provided.

Exterior lighting would consist of downward-facing wall-mounted fixtures with automatic dimmers at 12 locations around the addition, including above each of the toilet doors. Lighting locations and fixture types for the project have been provided.