

Letter To MVC Commissioners

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

Dear MVC Commissioners,

Firstly, thank you for your service! And secondly, I want to share a quick story with you, hoping that it may help as you deliberate the turf issue.

When I was working on the big house bylaw with the town of Chilmark, things got dicey. The people that were against it were angry, the people for it (myself included) were also angry, and all of this anger led to some hard meetings and difficult discussions.

When we were in the thick of this debate, it seemed like such a slog. Did anybody really want to attend another public hearing to discuss the issue?

Weeks passed, months passed (16 of them), and then in April 2013 the town meeting arrived and the bylaw passed with a 2/3 vote. That was almost a decade ago and the things that those against the bylaw predicted—no jobs, decreased property values, and lawsuits against the town—simply have not come true. Construction jobs abound, property values continue to increase, and to date not one homeowner has sued the town over our bylaw.

But what *did* happen, is that a boundary was set. Enough was truly enough. We said no to mega-mansions. Of course, affordable housing, water quality, and other issues remain. But one big issue, extra-large homes on small lots of land, has been dealt with.

Chilmark chose appropriate scale, rural character, and common sense. And if you demand grass fields, you will also be choosing appropriate scale, rural character, and common sense.

I really don't think that many people in Chilmark regret passing the big house bylaw. And if you choose grass, I don't think you will either.

Thank you.

Thomas Bena
Chilmark