



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS

Post Office Box 1327 • Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
Telephone 508-693-3554 • Fax 508-696-7736

Board of Selectmen

Gregory A. Coogan, *Chairman*
Kathleen A. Burton
Ronald L. DiOrio
Duncan Ross
Kerry Scott

September 11, 2009

Michael M. Dutton
Town Administrator

Mr. Mark London, Executive Director
Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Via: E-mail and USPS

Re: Copeland Plan DCPC

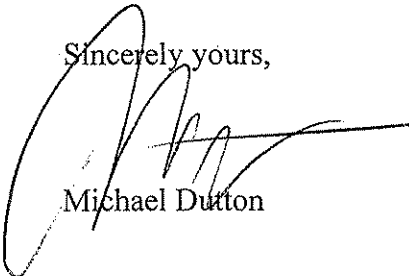
Dear Mark:

At its meeting on September 8, 2009, the Board of Selectmen voted to refer to the Commission the issue of whether the Copeland Plan DCPC is now duplicative of the Cottage City Historic District in the areas where they overlap.

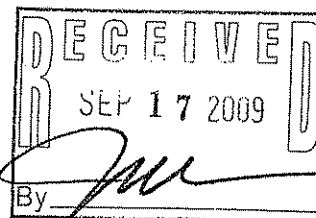
The Board voted to request that the Commission hold public hearings on the issue, and make a recommendation to the Oak Bluffs Selectmen for action by the Town Meeting.

I have enclosed correspondence from the Cottage City Historic District to better define the issues. Please let me know if you need any more information.

Sincerely yours,


Michael Dutton

Encl.
MMD/bms



Cottage City Historic District
P.O. Box 1327, Oak Bluffs, MA. 02557

August 13, 2009

Greg Coogan, Chairman
Members, Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 1327
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Greg and members of the board,

For quite some time, the Cottage City Historic District members have been discussing the need for the Copeland Plan DCPC within the CCHD boundaries. We have looked at both commissions carefully and feel that the CCHD process far exceeds the Copeland DCPC in making sure all projects are reviewed and that strict guidelines are enforced in order to protect and preserve the historic integrity of this important Oak Bluffs neighborhood. Additionally, we want to recommend that the Copeland Plan DCPC remain in the two areas (the properties surrounding Sunset Lake and a portion of the Highlands) that are not included in the CCHD. This will allow the Copeland Plan DCPC to focus better on those areas that are not currently being reviewed by the CCHD.

At our meeting last night, the commissioners voted to send a letter to you requesting to be placed on the September 8th agenda to discuss referring this question to the Martha's Vineyard Commission.

At a recent hearing held by the MVC to discuss by-law changes to the Copeland Plan DCPC, members of the CCHD tried to raise this issue and were told by the Commission Chair that a separate hearing would be required. They suggested that a referral from the Board of Selectmen to the MVC would suffice.

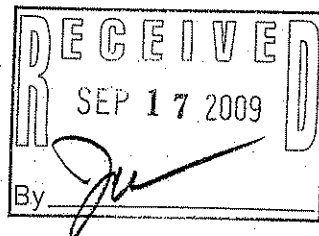
We are therefore requesting the above agenda item in hopes that the board will make the necessary referral for a hearing with the MVC on this matter.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter that I, as a member of the CCHD, submitted to the MVC. As a point of reference, it is meant to explain the history and my own experience associated with the Copeland Plan DCPC, the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission and the subsequent development of the CCHD.

Our members hope that you will agree to discuss this matter at the September 8th meeting.

Sincerely,

Renee Balter, Commissioner, CCHD



Is review mandatory	Is proponent automatically required to be reviewed	Does Comm have an application form	Does Comm follow 40A procedures for public hearings & abutter notification	No of years commission in existence	Number of projects reviewed	Are there guidelines	How is review triggered	Area of town that is protected
CPR NO	NO	NO	NO	16	Not sure, but would guess less than a dozen	NO	Zoning Admin decides	Copeland, North Bluff, Sunset Lake, part of the Highlands
CCHD YES	YES	YES A Copy is Attached	YES	6	in the one hundreds closer to 200+	YES A copy is attached	Automatic when seeking a building permit	Copeland, North Bluff
OBHC Demo Delay	YES	YES A copy is attached	YES	6	10-12	YES/ is part of the application	Automatic When seeking a permit to demo	Entire town - all buildings 100 yrs old or more

COMMENTS:

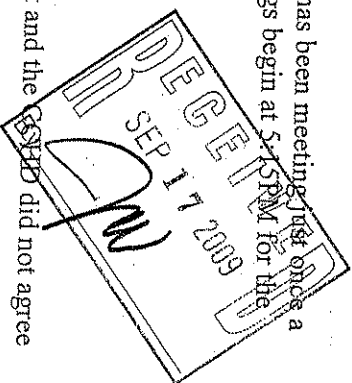
The Copeland Plan DCPC does not have regularly scheduled meetings.

The Cottage City Historic District has met twice monthly since October 2003. Because of the building slowdown, the CCHD has been meeting just once a month since June. When the number of applicants begins to increase, the CCHD plans to return to the original schedule. Meetings begin at 5:15 PM for the convenience of applicants who work.

The Oak Bluffs Historical Commission meets once a month on the third Wednesday at 4:30 PM.

QUESTIONS:

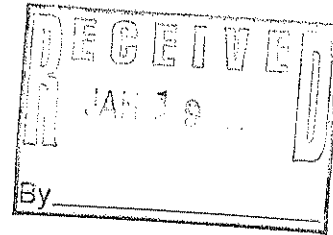
Since the CCHD must rule on every application in the district, what would happen if the Copeland Plan DCPC approved a project and the CCHD did not agree with the ruling and, in fact, made a totally different ruling?



The Cottage City Historic District Commission
P.O Box 1327
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

January 21, 2010

Martha's Vineyard Commission
New York Ave
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557



Re: Public Hearing for the purpose of discussing the Copeland DCPC

The Cottage City Historic District(CCHD) has requested that the Board of Selectmen ask the MVC to hold a public hearing to decide whether or not the Copeland DCPC is needed in the area of downtown that the CCHD encompasses.

When the Copeland DCPC was established in 1991 - 1993, there was no regulatory board in place that would help to preserve the architectural integrity of Oak Bluffs.

In 2000, the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission (OBHC), seeing the need for a stronger regulatory board, began the process that would enable the town to establish a State regulated Historic District for the Copeland neighborhood.

In 2003, at the Annual Town Meeting, the Oak Bluffs voters unanimously passed the Cottage City Historic District By-law.

It had taken the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission more than two years to complete the study required by the State of Massachusetts that included a survey to all property owners in the proposed historic district, public hearings, documentation that proved the need for such a district and a proposed bylaw for consideration. The state approved the study as presented.

The Town Meeting vote to approve the CCHD Bylaw provided assurance that almost 400 properties in the Copeland neighborhood. (including 50+ properties within the Copeland DCPC that were excluded from any kind of review) would be protected and that the Victorian architecture of Oak Bluffs would be preserved.

This by-law was amended in 2005 to include all of the North Bluff as well. (same process was required)

As for the issue of demolition, the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission proposed a Demolition Delay Bylaw in 2003 (unanimously passed by the voters) that pertains to all properties town-wide that are 100 years old or more, providing a mandatory review, the process for public hearings and an official ruling by the OBHC that could result in a delay for up to six months, giving time for additional steps for preserving buildings of significant importance. Should the OBHC determine, after public input, that a building is extremely important, the project could in fact be referred to the MVC as a DRI. This process did occur once resulting in the preservation of a very significant property in the Highlands.

With such effective and meaningful systems in place, we believe that the Copeland DCPC is no longer necessary within the CCHD boundaries and, in fact, presents a totally unnecessary, expensive and cumbersome step for applicants with projects in the district.

We believe it is important to note that in six years, since the CCHD was established, we would estimate that 200+- projects have been reviewed by the CCHD.

The CCHD does not dispute the authentic motives that the MVC had in establishing the Copeland DCPC. In fact, our commission applauds the work you have done over the years to preserve and to protect the island's most endangered habitat, properties and way of life. Without this incredible effort, our island would have been irreparably damaged long ago.

We hope you will not misunderstand our message here and think that this is in any way a negative comment on the important work of the Commission. We are simply giving you the facts as we know them and asking you to decide if the Copeland DCPC is necessary.

Thank you for your time and effort in this matter.

Sincerely,

The Cottage City Historic District

David Wilson, chairman

Secretary, Barbara Baskin

Members: Renee Balter, Kathy Burton, Shelly Christiansen, Liz Cornel, Jim Westervelt

Alternate: Alison Shaw

Inclusions:

1. A chart showing a comparison of the essential procedures of all three commissions with comments and questions
2. A copy of the Copeland DCPC bylaw and all subsequent amendments
3. A copy of the Cottage City bylaw and all subsequent amendments
4. A copy of the CCHD guidelines and instructions for applicants/and the application
5. A copy of the OBHC Demolition Delay bylaw
6. A copy of the OBHC Demolition Delay application
7. A map showing the CCHD bounds and the Copeland DCPC exclusions within that district
8. A map showing the Copeland DCPC, Section E/area recommended to remain under Copeland DCPC
9. A map showing the correct boundaries of the Copeland DCPC, Sections A,B,C,D

	Is review mandatory?	Is proponent automatically required to be reviewed?	Does Comm have an application form?	Does Comm follow 40A procedures for abutter	# of years Comm in existence	# of projects reviewed	Are there guidelines?	How is review triggered?	Area of town protected
Copeland DCP	YES**	NO	NO	NO Not required in regulations do notify abutters 100' as courtesy	19	25-30	NO	Zoning Official decides	Copeland No Bluff Sunset Lake Highlands See map
Cottage City HD	YES	YES	YES Copy attached	YES	7	200+	YES Copy attached	Automatic when seeking a building permit	Copeland No Bluff see map
Oak Bluffs Historical Comm Demo Delay	YES	YES	YES Copy attached	YES	7	10-12	YES Copy attached	Automatic when seeking a permit to demolish	Entire town all buildings or partial buildings 100 yrs old or More

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

***While the Copeland DCP regulations say "Proposed new construction, additions to existing structures or changes to the exterior architectural features SHALL be reviewed by the Copeland DCP Board for appropriateness, a review is not automatically mandated. If the Building Official determines that the project is inapplicable or would cause significant economic hardship OR if the board doesn't meet within 30 days, then the project is NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW."

***There are 8 sections within the CCHD boundaries (approximately 50+ properties) in the Copeland DCP that are excluded from any kind of review (see CCHD boundary map showing Copeland exclusions)

The Cottage City Historic District has met on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month since it began in October 2003. Because of the building slowdown, the CCHD has been meeting just once a month since June, 2009. When the number of applicants begins to increase, the CCHD plans to return to the original schedule. Meetings begin at 5:15PM for the convenience of applicants who work and are currently scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday of each month. The CCHD has never missed a meeting because they could not get a quorum.

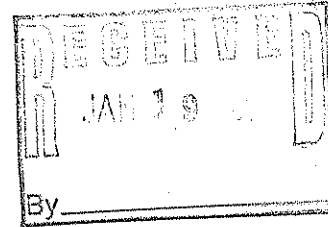
The Oak Bluffs Historical Commission meets once a month on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 4:30PM

The area of the Copeland DCP, Section E (see map) is not included in the Cottage City Historic District. The CCHD Commission recommends that this section remain under the jurisdiction of the Copeland DCP with the hope that the MVC and Copeland members develop regulations that will require mandatory review and guidelines that will insure protection for the Victorian architecture of this important downtown neighborhood.

OAK BLUFFS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, BOX 1327, OAK BLUFFS, MA

August 6, 2001

Brona Simon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State Archaeologist
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, MA 02125



Dear Brona,

As Chairman of the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission, I am responding to your letter of July 25 to Ronald Lyberger, with the enclosed photos of the Copeland Area of Oak Bluffs. I have also included a map of the area and a book that was published in honor of Oak Bluffs Centennial in 1980 that will give you some idea of the historic importance of this area.

Our commission is deeply concerned about preserving this neighborhood and would welcome your assistance in listing it in the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 800.4). We feel that this would be a positive step in helping to preserve a very important historic asset for our town.

Several years ago, the Copeland Area was designated a District of Critical Planning and Concern by the Martha's Vineyard Commission. Regulations have been written (the Copeland DCPC) and are currently part of the Town Zoning Bylaws. In our opinion, (the OBHC), these regulations are not sufficient to do the job necessary to accomplish any true historic preservation.

The recent placement of electric panel boxes to service grinder pumps for the coming wastewater treatment system for our town is an example of the lack of concern for this historic area and reason enough to take appropriate action to insure that future projects receive much more scrutiny.

I hope these pictures will help to convince you to take action to help save this remarkable gem of a neighborhood. Please let me know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Renee Balter, Chairman OBHC

OAK BLUFFS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Recommended mitigation for the wastewater utility boxes that have been placed throughout the Copeland District/Cottage City Historic District of Oak Bluffs

Submitted on August 12, 2003 at a public hearing conducted by the Board of Selectmen and the Wastewater Commissioners at the Community Room, Oak Bluffs School, Oak Bluffs, MA.

Members:

**David Wilson, Chairman
Priscilla Sylvia, Secretary
Renee Balter
Pam Melrose
Susan Thompson
Joan Desautelle**

The following is a list of the wastewater utility boxes located within the Copeland District neighborhood. The numbers correspond to the ones on the map. The Historical Commission has made an inspection of all boxes and has made recommendations to fence, shrub, fence and shrub or move the boxes listed below.

*** Move

** Shrub and Fence

* Shrub only

**Box #101 The northern side of Waban Park

This box is so close to the edge of the road, there is no room for shrubs on the street side. This box is quite visible from the road and the park. Recommendation: Fencing that is movable to access the box and shrubs.

*Box # 107 The northwest corner of Waban Park

This box is perpendicular to the road and not quite as offensive as #101. Recommendation: Shrubs

**Box #110 Niantic Park at the corner of Pocasset and Tuckernuck

There is no room for shrubs on the street side of this box. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box. Also shrub.

**Box #121 Niantic Park almost across the street from Niantic Street

There is no room for shrubs on the street side of this box. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box. Also shrub.

** Box # 122 Niantic Park near the corner of Wamsutta and Circuit Avenues

There are trees close by that soften the impact of this box on the landscape. Recommendation: Minimal fencing and some shrubs

**Box #102 Pennacook Avenue near the corner of Sea View Avenue

This box is very obvious. It is too close to the street for just shrubs. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable for access to the box . Also shrub.

**Box #106 Pennacook Avenue near the corner of Naumkeeg Avenue

This box has a hedgerow behind it . It is still quite close to the street. Recommendation: To revisit with a possible recommendation to use minimal fencing and or shrubs

**Box #109 at the southwest corner of Naumkeeg and Pennacook Avenues

This box is also very close to the street. It does have an evergreen nearby. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box. Also shrub.

**Box #111 located at the southern edge of Pennacook Avenue park

This box is also very close to the street. There is room on three sides for shrubbery. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box. Also shrub.

**Box # 124 at the corner of Niantic Street and Pennacook Avenue on a small park.

This box is very close to the street. There is room on three sides for shrubbery. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box . Also shrub.

*Box # 112 on Samoset between Sea View and Naumkeeg Avenues

This box is placed nicely up close to an existing wooden fence. It is not too close to the street. Recommendation: Shrub.

** Box # 125 on Samoset Avenue between Naumkeeg and Grove Avenues

This box has been placed perpendicular to the street. There is a hedge behind it.

Recommendation: Minimal fencing and shrubs.

**Box # 126 on Samoset Avenue between Grove and Naumkeeg closer to Grove

This box is very close to the street. There is a tree and some shrubs nearby.

Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box. Also shrub.

** Box # 133 is opposite Samoset Avenue on Kennebec Avenue (daRosa's lot)

This box is quite obvious. It is very close to the street, a telephone pole, a large oak tree and a commercial parking lot. Recommendation: Fencing that is removable to access the box and possibly some small shrubs.

* Box # 138 on Kennebec Avenue just past the daRosa parking lot

This box has almost no land around it. It is very close to the porch of a private home.

Recommendation: Since there is no place to move this box to, fencing that is removable to access the box seems like the only viable solution.

*THE ELECTRIC PANAL in Viera Park

This electric panel in Viera Park is quite large and very obvious. Since there is ample land surrounding this installation, we recommend some substantial evergreens be planted around it.

SATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS TO DATE

THE ELECTRIC PANAL # 1 in Ocean Park near the corner of Grove and Ocean Avenues

This electrical panel at the corner of Grove and Ocean Avenue has been addressed nicely.

Privet hedges have been planted around the entire installation, shielding the view from both streets and the private homes that face Ocean Park.

WASTEWATER VENT in Ocean Park just opposite the bandstand on Ocean Avenue

This large vent has been addressed nicely. Privet hedges have been planted around the entire installation, shielding the view from the street, the private homes across the street and from the road.

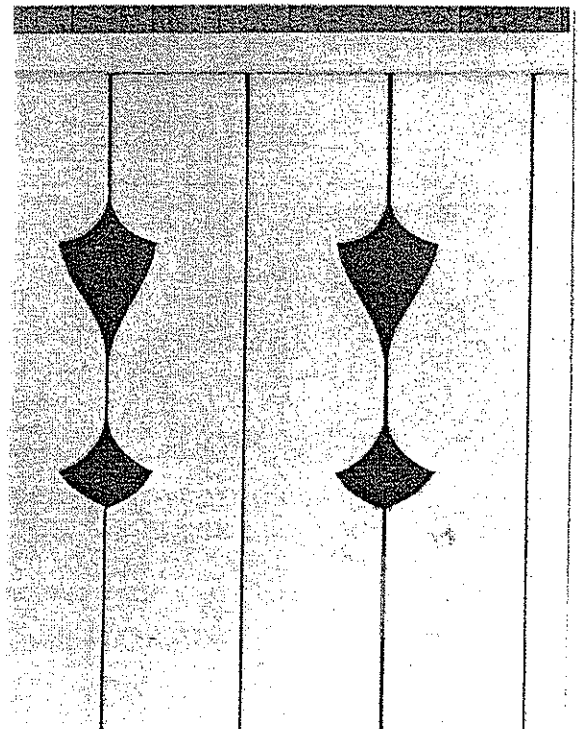
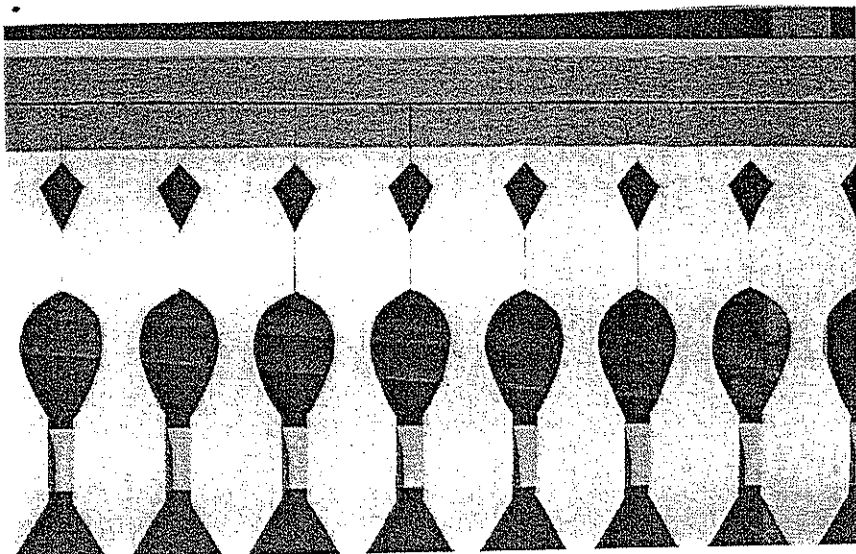
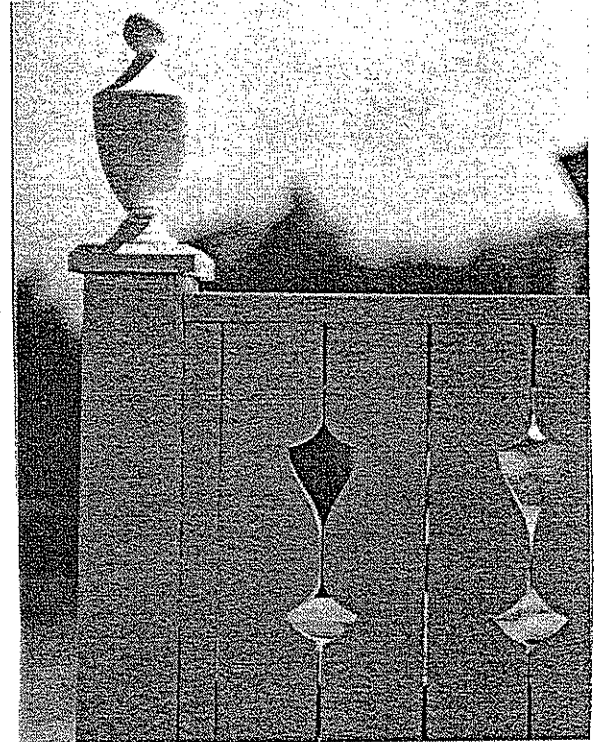
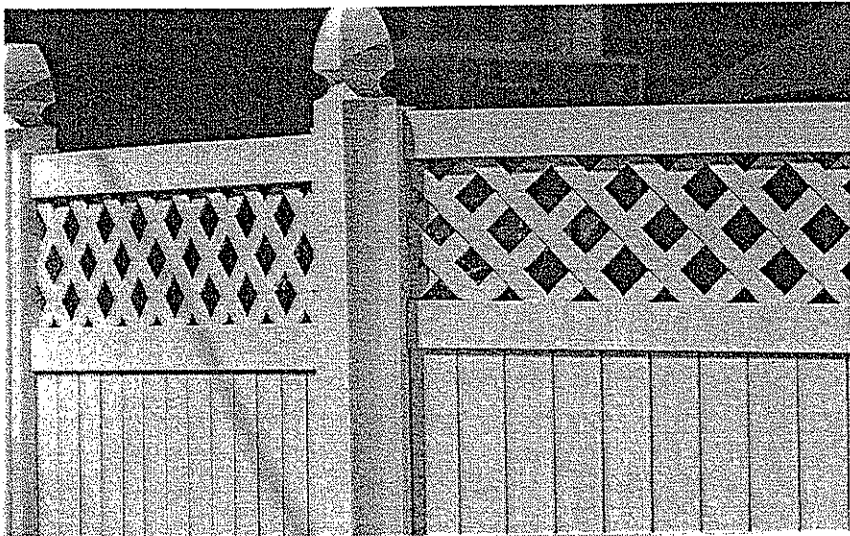
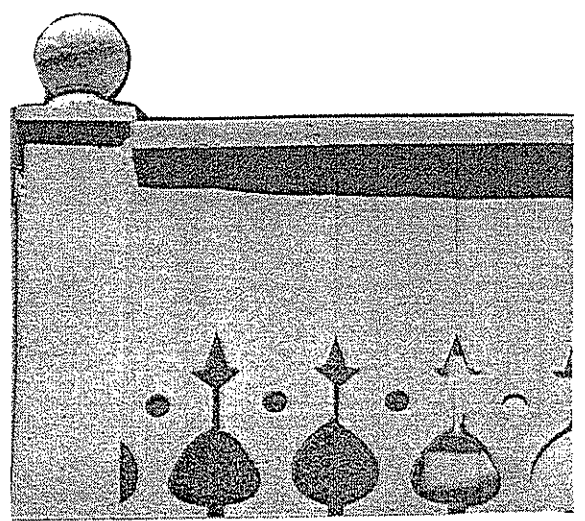
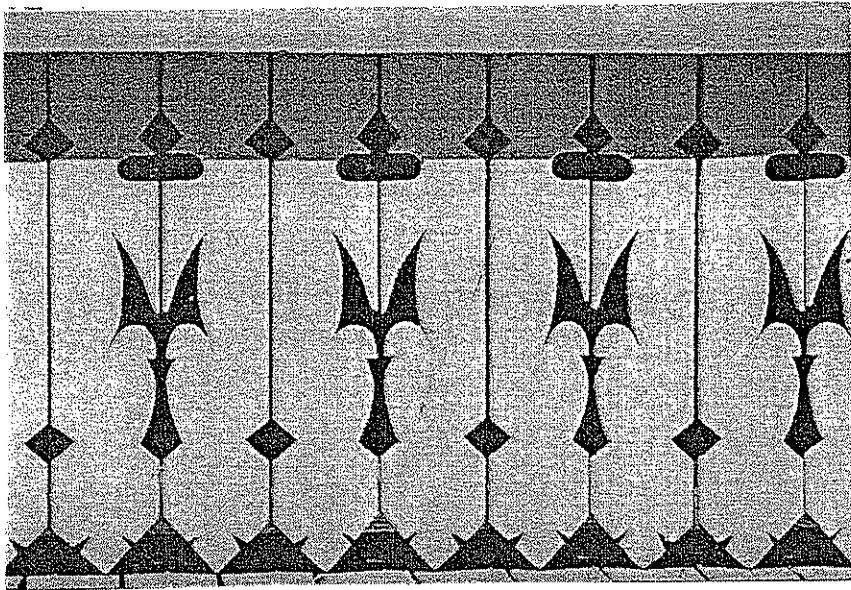
BOX # 130 on the southern edge of Hartford Park

This box has been addressed nicely with privet hedges. OBHC recommended the same.

BOX # 118 on the northern edge of Hartford Park

This box has been addressed nicely with a variety of shrubs. OBHC recommended the same

SUGGESTED FENCE STYLES



Homeowners throughout the Copeland District protested the placement of these intrusive boxes, but the damage already was done.

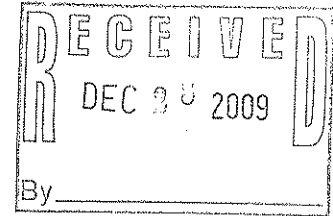


Narragansett Avenue



Pennacook Avenue

RONALD H. MECHUR
5 Nashawena Park, Post Office Box 636
Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts 02557-0636
508-693-5954
email: ronmechur@yahoo.com



December 28, 2009

Ref. Petition to Rescind the Copeland Plan Designation

Martha's Vineyard Commission:

On Thursday January 21, 2010 you have posted notice to consider testimony to rescind the designation of an important special overlay zoning district in the Town of Oak Bluffs.

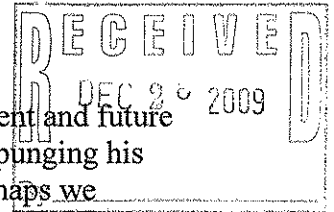
I write to you in that I am OPPOSED to the proposal to rescind the designation of the Copeland Plan District of Critical Planning Concern.

I was the original nominator of the District in 1991, and reside in the District. I am also a member of the Copeland Plan Review Committee. The idea of rescinding the designation was never brought to the Committee for its review and comment. I am also a trained landscape architect, and served as the second Executive Director of the MVC.

Rescinding an MVC designation of a critical area, or even a proposal to rescind an MVC designation, has never occurred; by doing so you would be setting a bad precedent. Since certain towns now have their own Wetlands Protection By-Law, should we now also rescind The Coastal District designated in 1976, another special overlay zoning area?

Morris Copeland is the landscape architect of this unique downtown area of Oak Bluffs. He was a contemporary of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, who most notably designed Central Park in New York City and the Fens in Boston. Morris Copeland was born in Roxbury in 1830, and died at the age of only 44. The University of Massachusetts press has written that "Robert Morris Copeland was one of a small number of American landscape practitioners whose written and built work helped establish the foundations for city planning and integrated park systems. Copeland merged many of the principles of scientific farming with landscape gardening. Although he died at a relatively young age, his accomplishments were substantial. He left behind several important designs for cemeteries, estates, suburbs, communities, and parks throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania."

Oak Bluffs voters were proud to memorialize his name for the past, present and future generations of Oak Bluffs. Rescinding the designation is tantamount to expunging his name from our history and would be an embarrassment in my opinion. Perhaps we should just plant a tree for him!!



Section 3 of the MVC Act, Regulatory Powers, grants the Commission the power to adopt regulations for districts of critical planning concern.....which may differ from the otherwise relevant local development ordinances and by-laws in their scope and magnitude.... Accordingly, the Historic District Act 40C, from which towns may adopt regulations for protection from inappropriate alteration to historic buildings, was deemed to be insufficient to protect this special island place.


The Commission's designation of the Copeland District preceded the town's adopting the Cottage City Historic District (although the town had the power to do that), and the regulations promulgated in the Copeland Plan District differ in their scope and magnitude from those in the Cottage City Historic District. For example, section 4C4 of the Copeland regulations requires "views from abutting properties shall be preserved". Many of the Victorian homes in the area have porches with views over abutting properties to parks and Vineyard Sound, which could be obstructed without this protection and thereby significantly alter Morris Copeland's intention.

Consequently, the MVC broad neighborhood and regional perspective considers an important design feature which local historic regulation does not have the power to protect. The local commission reviews each building proposal for its singular component of window style, exterior material etc.

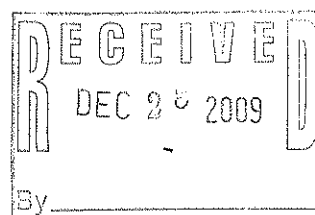
At one time in its history Oak Bluffs had a devastating fire. Would we not be far better off having the MVC broad power of protection supported by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court should a developer buy streets wholesale and attempt to rebuild an entire neighborhood out of character with its history? Should we now remove this protection for the short-sighted interests of a few local power brokers within the town? If there is a concern over too much land use regulation, it would be better to rescind the Cottage City Historic District, or at least consider a stream line permitting process.

For the reasons above, The Copeland District neighborhood is worthy of the same protection you afforded it 19 year ago. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ronald H. Mechur



This is the first page of the item you requested.

+ Show full citation

60

Robert Morris Copeland's Plans for Oak Bluffs

ELLEN WEISS

West Tisbury, Massachusetts

For Henry Beetle Hough

THE SECOND of Robert Morris Copeland's plans for Oak Bluffs, on the island of Martha's Vineyard, is well known from its publication by John W. Reps in 1965.¹ Less well known is another Copeland plan for the same site, bearing the same date, 25 October 1866, which was published in 1936 by Henry Beetle Hough.² In view of the early appearance of these plans in the history of professionally designed speculative subdivisions, something of their full history should be of interest.

Robert Morris Copeland's publications are today well known.³ His life and work as a landscape architect have yet to be explored. He was born in Roxbury to Boston merchant Benjamin Franklin Copeland and his wife Julia Ruggles, the latter of an old and prominent Roxbury family.⁴ In spite of being suspended from Harvard for applauding an organ grinder who was being chased from the Yard, Copeland was graduated in 1852.⁵ It is possible that he left school a few months early for an apprenticeship with the noted scientific agriculturist Rev. Morrill Allen of Duxbury.⁶ By 1852 or 1853 he was established as a "Landscape Gardener" in Auburndale,⁷ and by 1854 he was winning prizes for estate design from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.⁸ From 1854 to 1857 he farmed, apparently unsuccessfully, eighty acres which he owned in Lexington,⁹ and from 1857 was

living at his nine-acre rural retreat adjacent to Beaver Brook Falls in Belmont, drawings of which appear in *Country Life*. Copeland worked in partnership with H. W. S. Cleveland from 1854 to 1858, but by 1859 he was listed in Boston directories alone.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Copeland placed his young family with his father, now living in West Castleton, Vermont, and enlisted. Impetuous, idealistic, and very naïve, he took it upon himself to inform the people of Massachusetts, by way of his brother-in-law Charles Dunbar's *Daily Advertiser*, of the reverses to the Northern forces in the early months of the war in the hope that such news would stimulate New England men to volunteer. Instead, he was dismissed from service, without charges or explanation, and then, as he attempted to confront the injustice, became something of a cause in Boston academic and intellectual circles, with such notables as Emerson, Longfellow, Agassiz, John Russell Lowell, John Murray Forbes, and Josiah Quincy, Jr., signing petitions on his behalf. He eventually met with Lincoln, who not only supported Secretary of War Stanton on the issue, but seems to have become progressively irritated with Copeland during the course of the interview, calling him down as a troublemaker and renegade that the army could well do without.¹⁰ Deeply hurt by his disgrace, Copeland retired to West Castleton, continuing to live there even after he opened his Boston office in 1866. He was in Vermont in 1870 when he received the news that his dismissal had finally been revoked.

Most of Copeland's independent work, and presumably all of his town planning exercises, would date from the brief period between 1866 and his untimely death in 1874, during which he maintained an office in Boston and, from 1872, Philadelphia. An advertisement of his skills, which he had printed in red ink on the back of his office stationery, suggested that he be hired for the laying out of villages, parks,

1. John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton, 1965), p. 546.

2. Henry Beetle Hough, *Martha's Vineyard, Summer Resort, 1833-1933* (Rutland, 1936), opp. p. 172.

3. Copeland's major professional publications include *A Few Words on The Central Park* (Boston, 1856), written with H. W. S. Cleveland, *Country Life* (Boston, 1859), and *The Most Beautiful City in America, Essay and Plan for the Improvement of Boston* (Boston, 1872). There are two brief but illuminating modern discussions of Copeland's city planning theories: Jon A. Peterson, "The Origins of the Comprehensive City Planning Ideal in the United States, 1840-1912" (unpub. diss., Harvard University, 1967) pp. 113-115, and J. B. Jackson, *American Space: The Centennial Years, 1865-76* (New York, 1972), pp. 131-133.

4. Warren Turner Copeland, *The Copeland Family* (Rutland, 1937), p. 646.

5. Letter from B. F. Copeland to President Jared Sparks, Harvard University Archives.

6. Letter from B. F. Copeland to President Jared Sparks, 8 March 1852, Harvard University Archives.

7. Business card in *Claybrook* of 1852, Harvard University Archives.

8. Transactions of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, 1854, p. 4.

9. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County.

10. Copeland published an account of his military injustice: *Statement of R. Morris Copeland, Assistant Adjutant-General and Major of Volunteers, Discharged from Service August 6, 1862* (Boston, 1864). The story was retold by his grandson, F. W. Copeland, in "The Righteous Major," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 207 (March 1961), 69-74. I am indebted to William A. Strong for this reference. The sense of Copeland's character emerging from the military fiasco is confirmed by other sources. All of the petitions on his behalf emphasize his integrity and honesty in the face of his impetuosity and lack of judgment. His father, coming to his defense in the matter of the organ grinder, described him as having "rather crude notions about independence which will wear off in time" and a manner "more earnest than respectful." An obituary in *The Gardeners Monthly* (Philadelphia), IV (May 1874), 146-147, praised his "splendid natural and cultivated oratorical gifts" and his "rare power of gaining friends to artistic propositions in quarters usually not open to other than mere monetary considerations." All records praise as well his energy and enthusiasm. The *Daily Advertiser* described him "impulsive and overflowing spirits, his enthusiasm for all out-of-door life and beauty, and his impatience with that spirit of 'improvement' which is doing so much to spoil or destroy it" (Harvard University Archives).

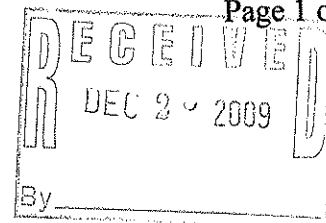
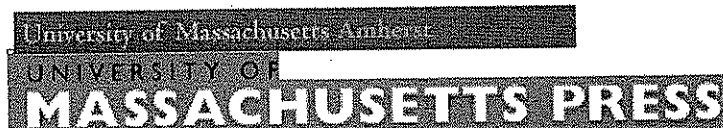
Robert Morris Copeland's Plans for Oak Bluffs, by Ellen Weiss © 1975 Society of Architectural Historians

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Country Life

A Handbook of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Landscape Gardening

Robert Morris Copeland

Introduction by William H. Tishler

A mid-nineteenth century guide to scientific farming and landscape gardening

Robert Morris Copeland (1830–1874) was one of a small number of American landscape practitioners whose written and built work helped establish the foundations for city planning and integrated park systems. As did his colleagues Frederick Law Olmsted and Horace Cleveland, Copeland merged many of the principles of scientific farming with landscape gardening. Although he died at a relatively young age, his accomplishments were substantial. He left behind several important designs for cemeteries, estates, suburbs, communities, and parks throughout New England, New York, and Pennsylvania.

In 1859, Copeland published *Country Life*, which quickly became a bible of scientific farming and landscape gardening, as it incorporated the latest agricultural practices with new engineering methods. Handsomely illustrated with plates and woodcuts, the book sold through six editions. Copeland organized the book into an agricultural year that provided practical and aesthetic advice on a month-by-month basis, according to area. He dedicated the book "to all lovers of nature and to all engaged in cultivating and adorning the earth," suggesting that a well-managed farm "can expand the mind and ennoble the soul."

A new introduction by William H. Tishler analyzes the importance of the book to mid-nineteenth-century America and chronicles Copeland's other important achievements, including his early concept for a metropolitan park system for Boston that foreshadowed Charles Eliot's efforts by many years.

William H. Tishler is professor emeritus of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin.

Landscape Architecture / Gardening
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May 2009

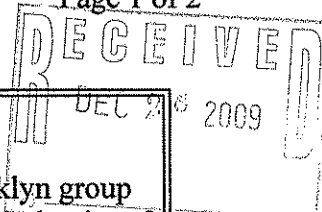
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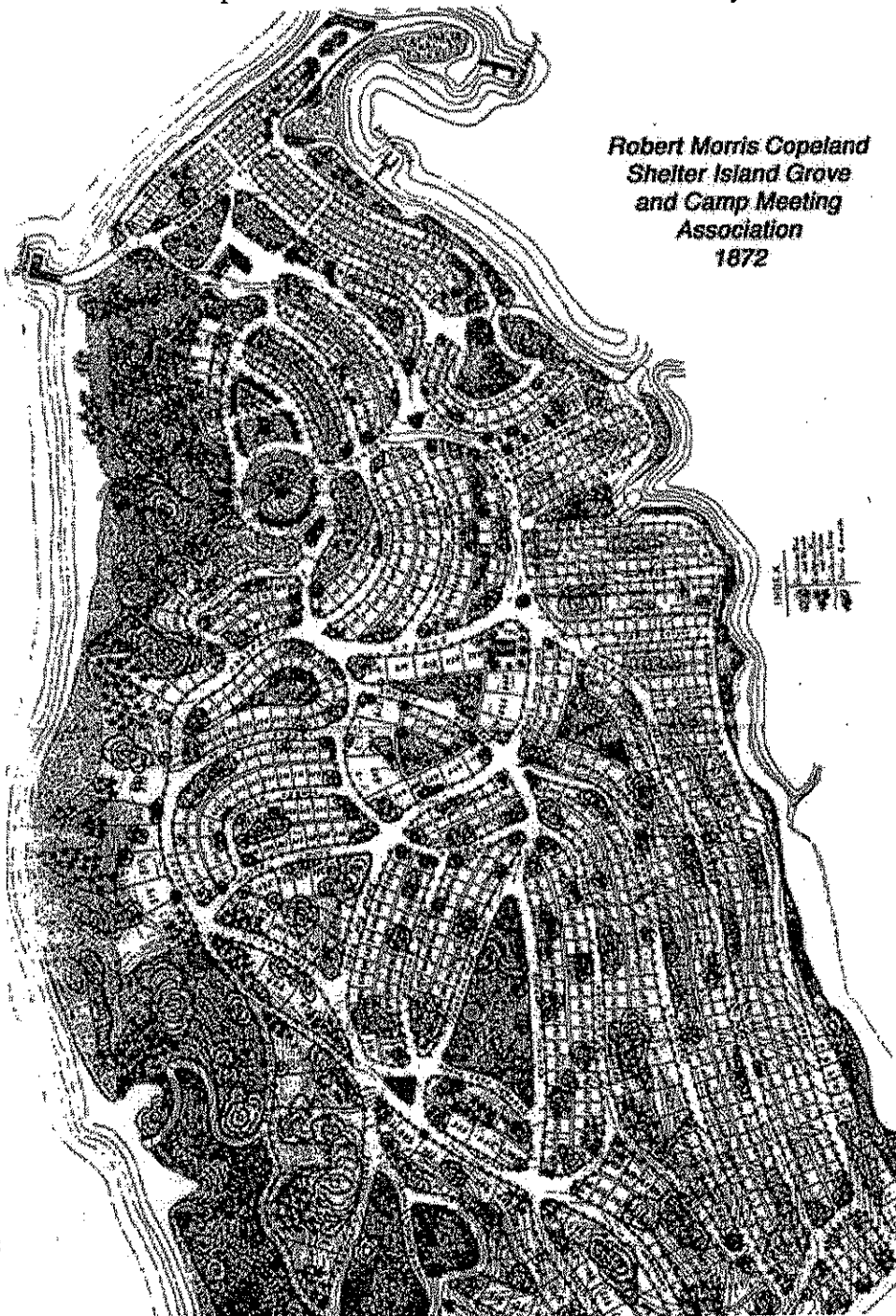
Robert Morris Copeland

Despite the fact that they did not own all of the land on the peninsula and the Brooklyn group had not yet incorporated, the pressure was on: by early 1872 plans for the hotel, the focal point of the new summer colony, were in process, and building would commence as soon as the weather broke. The opening for the 1872 season was planned for early July.

At the same time, Eben Horsford was also working with developers, led by Erastus P. Carpenter from Boston, to create a summer family hotel and colony on his land across Dering Harbor from the planned Prospect House, the focus to be the Manhansett House which would open for the summer season in 1873.

Landscape architect Robert Morris Copeland had come to Shelter Island to survey the Shelter Island Park project, at Carpenter's request, and ended up working with the Brooklyn group first. He had recently completed the project for Carpenter at Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, an extension of Wesleyan Grove. (See 1872 Copeland Design, Illustration 4.)

According to the 1993 registration to the National Park Service from Shelter Island Heights for a designation as a Historical District, which was compiled by Patricia Ryan, Copeland was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1830. He first practiced landscape architect with Horace William Shaler Cleveland, brother of President Grover Cleveland, establishing their partnership in about 1855 in Boston. They advertised themselves as able to "furnish



plans for the laying out and improvement of Cemeteries, Public Squares, Pleasure Grounds, Farms and Gardens, as well as for the construction of every species of Building connected with Agriculture, Horticulture, and general rural improvement." This partnership was dissolved during the Civil War years.

Copeland was a contemporary of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux and was competing for commissions.

Copeland's writing on landscape architecture was prolific. He was familiar with the popular planning convention of Methodists camps in the mid-nineteenth century of the "hub and wheel" layout in which the central element, the prayer grove, was surrounded by concentric rings of streets that were bisected by diagonal routes. He emphasized the controlled, picturesque settings for planned landscapes. This was a reaction to industrialization and urbanization. The picturesque movement sought to emphasize the bucolic and restorative qualities of nature and home life.

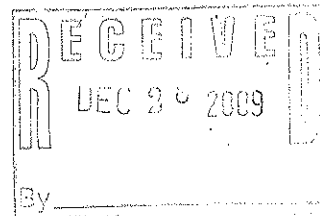
In these planned rural landscapes nature was manipulated for aesthetic purposes. Typically, the often hilly topography was accommodated by serpentine roads and paths which were organized to enhance already scenic views.

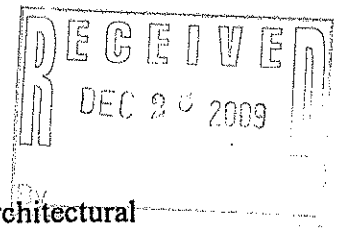
By mid-year 1872, Copeland and Charles H. Bateman, his surveyor, had completed their design for the development and lots were numbered.

The Copeland map shows the grand plan of the Brooklyn developers. It encompassed the entire peninsula and included winding roads with over 1,000 lots, mostly very small, some average, and some quite large. There was a boat wharf and a yacht wharf in Dering Harbor and Squire Chase's wharf was to be the steamer wharf for ferries from Greenport and from all over the near eastern seaboard. There are public parks throughout, the most prominent one being the open air amphitheater for a major activity of the resort, religious exhortation.

For this was not only to be a safe place for Brooklyn middle class families in the summer, it was to be a Methodist religious experience as well. Not only was the consolidator a minister, the name of the founding organization speaks profoundly of the purpose: Shelter Island Grove and Camp Meeting Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The 1872 map filed with Suffolk County on December 31, 1872, only shows the roads laid out and lots to have been auctioned in the summer of 1872: the northern portion of the peninsula. Actually lots outside of this filed map were also sold.





of the century (1900). No change to an exterior architectural feature shall radically alter the exterior appearance of the building or structure in such a way as to damage the visual integrity of the surrounding viewscape. The asymmetrical skyline of the district is to be preserved and enhanced. The physical character of the landscape shall enhance rather than detract from the prevalent Victorian architecture and shall enhance the inviting and open "village green" of the park. Variety is to be maintained as a key element in the fabric of the overall park presentation. Views from abutting properties shall be preserved.

b. Height

The maximum height of building and structure elements shall be 50 feet. The roofline shall be asymmetrical in keeping with the Victorian architecture prevalent in Oak Bluffs at the turn of the century (1900) and shall allow sufficient passage of air and light.

c. Demolition

This sub-section shall apply only to elective demolition, not to demolition ordered by appropriate authority for health or safety reasons.

(1.) Demolition shall be allowed only when the existing building or structure is determined to have no relationship to the district or when its retention would result in significant economic hardship and when all the requirements below have been satisfied.

(2.) If an applicant's request for permission to demolish a building or structure is based upon structural inability or advanced deterioration, a technical report prepared by an architect or engineer registered in Massachusetts shall be submitted, detailing the nature and extent of the specific problems, and providing reasonably accurate cost estimates for their correction.

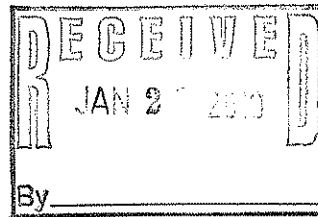
(3.) Applications for permission to demolish existing structures shall be accompanied by complete plans for the new development proposed on the site. There shall be submitted a timetable and a budget for both the demolition and the reconstruction as well as satisfactory evidence that adequate financing is available. The Town may require the posting of a performance bond or the establishment of an escrow account to guarantee the completion of any such project.

d. Window and Door Coverings

No building or structure in the Copeland Plan District shall use unfinished or unpainted plywood or other material to cover window or door areas except in case of emergency, and in an emergency, the covering shall be removed within 14 days.

Jo-Ann Taylor

From: B.Naparstek [bnaparstek@healthjourneys.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2010 8:48 PM
To: Taylor@mvcommission.org
Cc: london@mvcommission.org
Subject: RE: Copeland
Attachments: _AVG certification_.txt



To: MVC Commissioners

Cc: Mark London, Executive Director

Dear Commissioners:

I'm writing in hopes that the Copeland Commission will continue to serve the people of Oak Bluffs. I've watched it function for several years, and, to my mind, it's a body that pays attention, listens to all sides and earnestly tries to do the right thing. It functions as a worthy obstacle to possibilities of unsightly, inconsiderate and illegal things happening to our neighborhood and town. Can we ever have enough barriers to bad behavior, especially given how close our beautiful town has come in the past to being destroyed by greed, ineptitude and no thought for holistic planning?

When our North Bluff neighborhood chose to seek justice in fighting the illegal structure, whimsically monikered the Garage Mahal by the Gazette in 2004, we gained considerable experience in the four years that followed, with the court system, the ZBA, the Historic District Committee, the MVC and Copeland. All were involved, one way or another, in trying to remediate this issue.

Of these 5 entities, four became critical to our success at differing times. The ZBA stopped the illegal building mid-construction when our erstwhile Building Inspector and the Selectmen who supervised him turned a blind eye to what was going on. Without this response, we'd have been stopped in our tracks, with nowhere to turn.

The courts gave the process its due, considering the issue from every angle, and, lengthy and costly as each judicial step was, ultimately provided the leverage (with the help of the MVC) to encourage the owners to tear down their own structure themselves. (In 2004, this was seen as a flat-out, risible impossibility.)

And when the owners of the structure chose to build a replacement more in keeping with the neighborhood, but still too large, too inconsistent with the tone and feel of the Craftsman cottages surrounding it, and suspiciously appearing to lend itself to multiple rentals, the only body that chose to challenge and modify the design was Copeland. The Historic District committee, which can sometimes be quite hardnosed, and which had more reason to object to an oversized, contemporary house with an attached garage, rolled over completely; and the ZBA, which had been our salvation earlier, did the same, in spite of worthy concerns about usage, noise pollution and small zoning violations.

When all was said and done, the actions of Copeland at the tail end of this overlong process proved to be consistent, energetic and trustworthy, long after everyone else was (understandably) weary and flattened by Garage-Mahal fatigue.

I'm grateful for that. It's good for citizens to have a place to turn to. If there is any duplication of effort - and I'm not sure there is - I say, good. Oak Bluffs and our little neighborhood will continue to need all the protection it can get, as more and more

inappropriate building schemes pop up like mushrooms after a Spring rain. Keep the Copeland Commission working, please, and allow it to keep up the good work it does.

Sincerely,

Belleruth Naparstek
6 Saco Ave
Oak Bluffs, MA

January 20, 2010

Gail M. Barmakian
64B Canonicus Avenue
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Commission Members:

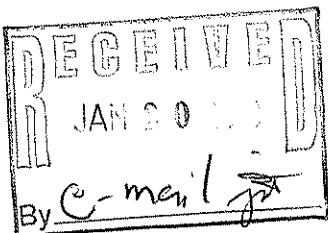
My name is Gail Barmakian and I was member of the Oak Bluffs Zoning Board for over ten years, serving as its chairman for approximately three years. More importantly, I am a resident in an area of town designated as part of the Copeland District. As a member of the Zoning Board for many years, I am aware of the intricacies of the Copeland District by-laws, how they work as well the by-laws of the Cottage City Historic District.

I speak to you as resident protected by the Copeland designation. I was very dismayed to hear that there is a possibility that this designation, actually a protection, may be done away with. When my family was building houses on Canonicus Avenue several years ago, we had to go before the Cottage City Historic Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Marthas Vineyard Commission, the Zoning Board and the Copeland Board. Even though this process took longer than most, not once did we complain, but willingly complied with these conditions recognizing the fact that they were there to afford protection and to ensure that the special character of our Town be preserved.

Personally, I would be very worried should this Board be done away with as well as the protection it affords. Even though the respective by-laws may overlap, the Copeland by-law is more comprehensive and "has more teeth" so to speak. It is also more suited to protect the historical significance of the Copeland Plan. I would refer you to an article written by Ellen Weiss of West Tisbury entitled "Robert Morris Copeland's Plan for Oak Bluffs" for a greater appreciation of what the Copeland design means to us. I also urge you to vote NOT to do away with this protection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gail Barmakian



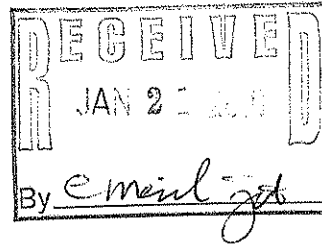
KERRY SCOTT
POB 1167
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

January 20, 2010

MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION
POB 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

BY EMAIL TO London@mvcommission.org
Taylor@mvcommission.org

BY FAX TO 508-693-7894



Dear Commissioners:

I write with a strong sense of disbelief that the Cottage City Historical Commission (CCHC) has actually spearheaded a move to have the Copeland District of Critical Planning Concern (DCPC) eliminated.

The Copeland DCPC is without a doubt one of the most important protections available to our historic town and we shouldn't even consider eliminating it. If anything, we should work to strengthen and improve it. After all, the Town of Oak Bluffs has long benefitted from the protections of the Copeland DCPC, with all the power and might of the MVC backing it up, including those times when DCPC Commission decisions have faced legal challenges.

There is Island-wide recognition that DCPC's are especially valuable where there are threats to the historic resources of our Island and surrounding waters.

Ironically, the petition to topple the Copeland DCPC was referred to the MVC at the very same meeting at which the Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen was discussing how to best use the powers of DCPC legislation vis a vis the Oceans Act and the siting of major commercial wind farms. On the one hand, we were celebrating the powerful protections of DCPC's and, on the other, being asked to eliminate one of the most critical DCPC's in Oak Bluffs.

Without the Copeland DCPC, Oak Bluffs and the entire Island would be still be living with the three-story apartment building on the North Bluff. The CCHC was invited to participate in that process with the Copeland DCPC Commission and the MVC, so it has been recently demonstrated that the committees can and should be working together. Instead, one commission wants to eliminate the other.

It's important to note that Copeland covers areas of town not in the Cottage City Historic District, including some beaches and parks.

I served as the Board of Selectmen's representative to and chair of the Copeland DCPC for the past six years. The commission has been convened for several very important hearings and we have heard over and over again from residents of Copeland neighborhoods how thankful they are that Copeland exists and is a tool for protecting their neighborhoods.

As staunch a supporter as I am of DCPC's, I have a couple of recommendations that may improve their function. I do not believe the MVC requirement that the Building Official convene the Copeland DCPC and sit on the committee as a voting member is sound policy. It puts the Building Official in an inherently conflicting position, as he reviews and votes in his capacity as a DCPC member on a project he later has to permit as Building Official. The regulations could be altered to have the Zoning Administrator convene hearings, but the Zoning Administrator should not be a sitting member of the committee either, due to the nature of that position.

To the extent the public is unnecessarily inconvenienced by truly duplicative missions and review processes, the Town of Oak Bluffs should consider ways to make that process less onerous. While it's never a good idea to eliminate useful review boards, if it really has become an either/or proposition, I believe we must preserve the board which confers the greatest power and authority to continue to protect our rich architectural heritage and I know that to be the Copeland DCPC.

I am disappointed that the Cottage City Historical Commission is interested in destroying an institution that has served our town so well. Turf battles are always unpleasant—this one is especially difficult because its potential for harm is so great.

I offer these opinions as a Selectman, but not on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.

I urge the Commission to deny this request.

Sincerely,

Kerry Scott