

Robert Nicholls

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1/31/2018

Mr. Hopkins, Chairman
Town of Oak Bluffs Planning Board
56 School Street,
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

RE: Lagoon Ridge Development

Dear Mr. Hopkins:

I am writing as a person with a long association with the Vineyard, as a landowner, and a six-month summer resident. In particular, I wish to address the application of Mr. Davio Danielson to develop 32 acres of land in the Southern Woodlands area known as the Lagoon Ridge Development. Others have written describing the effect of an overabundance of Nitrogen in the Lagoon Pond. They cite the Massachusetts Estuary Project that documents the overloading of Nitrogen in the pond and the required reduction of inflow to reduce that overload to an acceptable level. In particular, I reference the letters from the presidents of the Lagoon Pond Association and the Tisbury Waterways, Inc found in the Oak Bluffs Document Server. I support their positions on the need for absolutely no more loading of Nitrogen—or nitrogenous products—into the Lagoon Pond.

There comes a time when we must stop the pollution of the Lagoon Pond and the time to stop is now. Any additional Nitrogen will exacerbate the already degraded condition. I would request that you, the Oak Bluffs Planning Board, deny the application of a Special Permit on the grounds that the Nitrogen added by the proposed septic system, however innovative, is still adding to the problem. The town is studying and costing other systems that will have a lesser impact on the water quality. Until these studies are complete, and policies are formulated, I suggest that the board refrain from endorsing projects that add **any** Nitrogen to the soil in the watershed of the Lagoon Pond.

A pause at this time provides an opportunity to put in place policies, regulations, system designs, and testing facilities that are essential components of any plan to revive the waters of Lagoon Pond. Of particular importance will be the requirements for testing and reporting. Further, there must be ways to enforce the standards. Clearly, there is a problem if a common group system, as is proposed in the Lagoon Ridge proposal, exceeds the design levels. Would the town close down the housing until the standard is met? What happens when an owner or resident cannot, or will not, pay for testing? This is not directed just to the Lagoon Ridge application; it would be endemic to all systems in a “nitrogen loading limited” location. These and many other questions must be answered before considering any permits in the watershed of the Lagoon Pond.

Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my opinions on the application from the Lagoon Ridge Development.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Nicholls