

February 8, 2018

Oak Bluffs Planning Board  
56 School Street  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Re: Lagoon Ridge Development

Dear Members of the Oak Bluffs Planning Board:

We are writing to express our serious concerns about the proposed Lagoon Ridge project. As homeowners in the abutting Meadow View Farms and Tower Ridge communities, we believe that this project is poorly suited and sited to be a Flexible Development. We are even more concerned about the potentially severe impacts on the Lagoon, one of the island's most treasured yet endangered places.

With respect to the Lagoon, we are gravely concerned about the viability of the proposed amphidrome septic system. It is complex, costly to implement, and even more worrisome, costly to operate and maintain. It seems to have a limited track record in large-scale applications. Who will be responsible for it – the HOA? Could the “affordable” homebuyers afford the annual fees? What if something goes wrong – who on the island can service it? What if the HOA can't afford it, will the town become by default responsible? The chances for failure seem insupportably high, given that the consequences for the Lagoon and the town would be enormous.

As abutters, among our chief concerns is that the plan fails to meet the criteria for Flexible Development in numerous ways including: inadequate preserved open space; cluster housing that is overly dense relative to surrounding neighborhoods and thus negatively impacting property values (and consequently town revenues); and poor siting that is insensitive to existing homeowners. One of the most appealing features of Oak Bluffs communities between Barnes and County is the buffer lands surrounding the developments. It is a key reason why we chose our home. While we knew new development was possible, we assumed any new community would have similar restrictions that would protect our home, our lifestyle, and our investment. By allowing this cluster development, you will be irrevocably changing the nature and feel of our neighborhoods.

Lastly and importantly, with respect to all of these matters, we are deeply concerned about oversight, governance and enforcement. Approving plans without a clear understanding of how restrictions, covenants or contingencies – whether with respect to affordability, seniors, or maintaining the amphidrome system - will be carried out and enforced would be irresponsible.

Thank you for hearing our concerns. We respectfully ask that the Oak Bluffs Planning Board deny the application as proposed and seek a “better” plan for this site.

Thank you,

Lorinda Karoff and Jeff Younger – Meadow View Farms  
Aline Wolff and Susan Stehlik – Tower Ridge