

Notice of Public Hearing- 26 Firehouse Lane, Map 16, Parcel 191

Billie-Marie Morrison <bmorrison@cpklaw.com>

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To: Oak Bluffs Planning Board <planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>

Cc: Billie-Marie Morrison <bmorrison@cpklaw.com>

Good afternoon Ms. Leaird. Please accept this email as my comment and position statement for the upcoming Public Hearing on Thursday, February 20, 2020, at 7pm.

Thank you for the opportunity to email my comments and position statement.

By way of background, I was born and raised in MA and spent the majority of my life growing up on the Vineyard. Over the years, the island has transformed into a very unique respite for folks of all backgrounds, and yet has never lost its charm or uniqueness. That being said, I completely respect the responsibility of the OB Zoning Board and its employees, along with the difficult job of maintaining the integrity of the island while providing affordable, clean and environmentally friendly housing.

Firehouse Lane is a very unique street. It is a small, quiet, dead-end road behind the fire station, with easy access to Country Road and Circuit Ave.. The majority of the 5 homes on this street have been owned by the same persons for many, many years. I know, I have owned mine for almost 20 years, longer actually if the years of property ownership is included. Over the years, all of the houses on the street have transformed in one way or another, and these transformations have benefited the owners and the Town by having homeowners who take pride in their homes and work hard to keep them up, increasing the property values, which in turn results in higher taxes. All of the residents of the street have lived and enjoyed their homes, changing them as their lives and needs change, all while enjoying the ability of living on the island without being a multi-millionaire or beneficiary of a trust.

In the case of 26 Firehouse Lane, the apartment above the garage has been in existence for many, many years. It is a beautiful, clean, well-kept one bedroom apartment which has been utilized by the MV Hospital for many years as nice, affordable living environment for the very much needed hospital staff. As we all know, affordable housing is a problem on the island, as in many communities, especially communities which rely on tourism and the needs of the seasonal, 2nd homers and year-round residents.

As the years roll on, and the beauty of the island becomes more well-known, the need for affordable housing is stronger than ever. I believe with President Obama purchasing a home on the island, the island's notoriety will only increase, as we saw during the years of President Clinton's visits, followed by the visits of President Obama.

The Notice for the hearing in before us states "a Special Permit within Zoning Bylaws 3.5.5, or any action related thereto, to allow the construction of a conforming accessory structure-garage/guest apartment on a lot located in Residential Zone 1," however the apartment in question is already in existence, and has been for many, many years. By not allowing the special permit to be approved, this would provide no benefit to any person, except the new owner. If the permit is denied, the owners of the home who recently sold their house will be deprived of \$ 30,000.00. This would be a tragedy as they lived on the island for 35 years, paid their taxes and contributed to the community. The person who will benefit with a financial windfall is the new owner, who will gain \$ 30,000.00 by not having to fulfill the obligation of the purchase price (and contract), and will still get the benefit of the apartment that is in existence.

The apartment is beautiful, and it would be a shame that a technicality from years ago would place a prohibition on the property, and as we all know, will not affect the new owner because he will have complete access to the apartment and will be able to utilize it with no issue until he tries to sell the home. Then we will be back to where we are today. This will be a waste of tax payer dollars, a disservice to the sellers (long time island residents) as they will not realize the contractual amount bargained for in the sale of the home, and the new owner will walk into a \$ 30,000.00 windfall because of something that happened many, many years ago.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read my and email and sharing it with the other Board members.

Billie-Marie Morrison

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