

Oak Bluffs Planning Board

From: Diane Regan <dtregan@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 7:54 PM
To: Oak Bluffs Planning Board
Subject: Tabernacle Project Review

Dear Ms. Kim Leaird, Administrator, Oak Bluffs Planning Board

I am writing to express my disapproval of the proposed new Tabernacle accessory structure as currently submitted by the MVCMA. This project is not ready to proceed.

My family has owned a cottage on the MVCMA for three generations. I am concerned about the impact this project will have to the historical and religious integrity of the MVCMA and the financial resources of leaseholders.

1. The funding for this accessory structure and for the complete Tabernacle project is currently unknown. The MVCMA is not a democracy. The MVCMA Board of Directors is not a leaseholder elected board. The approximately 320 leaseholders have not received any comprehensive information packet concerning the Tabernacle project and cost. It will be these leaseholders however not the MVCMA that will bear the project's financial burden through mandatory lease assessments. From 2016-2025 leaseholders have been paying a Board approved mandatory assessment for the restoration of Tabernacle benches and chairs.
1. The accessory structure violates the MVCMA's own Construction Handbook for Leaseholders, Architects, Designers and Contractors. While the Sept. 2021 application stated that this is a replacement of a structure that was present 112 years ago, a more recent MVCMA ARC Dec. 2021 ruling determined that once a structure is demolished, even the day before in the process of renovation, that a replacing structure would be assessed as "new", since the old structure no longer exists. Any new structure must meet current MVCMA criteria. Based on this Dec 2021 decision, Architects cannot add unconfirming structures simply because they were there before. A 1300 ft² structure grossly exceeds current handbook criteria. The COA issued by the MVCMA should be reviewed for current compliance.
1. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation posted on the MVCMA website states "*1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that required minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*" A brand new 1300 ft² new accessory structure will be a more than a minimal change to the site and environment surrounding the Tabernacle. The MVCMA's centerpiece is the Tabernacle and its visual round appeal. Any new accessory structure within the grassy area should be evaluated with regards to the scope and context of the surrounding park environment. Cottages around the Tabernacle have small 40 feet frontage, some cottages being a total of only 800 ft² in size. When viewed in scope and context, this large, wide accessory structure will not harmonize but will detract from the round character of the Tabernacle and overpower the charming scale of the cottages in the circle surrounding the circular Tabernacle. The leaseholders have seen no plans.
1. The application states that 10 public toilets will help the Town of Oak Bluffs meet its comprehensive master plan goal of public restrooms in the campground. The MVCMA camp meeting season is only 2 months a year. The MVCMA is private land. There is no indication who will be responsible for the physical upkeep and fiscal operation of these public toilets, the town or leaseholders? More information is needed.

1. Future Fundraising events – It is mentioned that with this structure the Tabernacle will be able to host large future fundraising events. According to Town of Oak Bluffs Assessor records, the MVCMA is in a Residence One, R-1 District. The MVCMA is a tax exempt 501(c)3 religious charity. The MVCMA is historic simply because we have maintained our cottages. The MVCMA has typically held one special event a season. As a religious, residential community, the MVCMA is not in the large event planning business. The MVCMA community is encouraged to keep quiet during the summer months with rules and fines that limit the use of power tools, excess noise and nighttime conversation. As a private, residential community, the MVCMA is not required to have public parking for every 5 Tabernacle seats or appropriate outdoor lighting. The MVCMA discourages outdoor light pollution and discourages non family cottage occupancy with a graduated weekly surcharge to renting leaseholders limited to a maximum of 6 weeks. No commercial vehicles are allowed on MVCMA property during July and August. The MVCMA strongly promotes its residential status especially during the summer season. Several large secular events held to solicit funds do not support the religious charity mission and residential status of the MVCMA. There are other island venues better suited for this.

In summary, there is still much to be determined regarding the utility and cost for a permanent accessory structure attached to the Tabernacle. Until the project is more detailed and the leaseholders are more informed I would like to request your withholding approval for this part of the project.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Diane Regan
9 Bayliss Ave, Oak Bluffs.