

Oak Bluffs Planning Board

From: Ferriell, Jeff <JFerriell@law.capital.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 13, 2022 3:33 PM
To: Ewell Hopkins
Cc: Oak Bluffs Planning Board; Andrew Patch; Andrew Patch - 23 Clinton
Subject: MVCMA Tabernacle Project
Attachments: MVCMA Tabernacle Project - Ferriell Letter in Support.pdf

Good afternoon

Please see my attached letter in support of the MVCMA's proposal to replace the roof on the Tabernacle and to build an addition at the rear of the Tabernacle to facilitate the use of the Tabernacle by Campgrounders, other residents of Oak Bluffs, and the entire Island.

Prof. Jeff Ferriell

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May 13, 2022

Mr. Ewell Hopkins, Chairperson, Oak Bluffs Planning Board

Dear Mr. Hopkins and other members of the Board -

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the projects proposed by the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association, Inc., to 1) replace the roof of the Tabernacle and 2) construct an addition to the rear of the Tabernacle to provide a "Green Room" for performances and other Tabernacle Events, storage for our Steinway piano, and permanent restrooms.

I have been a seasonal resident of Oak Bluffs, at 8 Cottage Park, for the last 35 years, with my time on the island always increasing as the years have progressed. When, in 2008 I was elected as a member of the MVCMA Board of Trustees I began spending the better part of my summers at our cottage. Since 2013, when I was elected to the first of three consecutive one-year terms as President of the MVCMA, I have spent nearly the entire summer in the Campgrounds, from just before Memorial Day until the weekend after Illumination, when I must always return to Columbus, for the resumption of classes, at Capital University Law School where I teach Contracts, Commercial Law, Bankruptcy, and Professional Responsibility.

Among the features I most admire about the Campgrounds is its historic architecture. As I'm sure you know, since 1979 the MVCMA has been one of the 94,000 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and since 2005 one of only approximately 2500 locations throughout the United States that have been designated as a National Historic Landmark (with only 191 in Massachusetts). When I was President of the MVCMA I made historic preservation of the MVCMA Office (the first building in what is now Oak Bluffs), the Tabernacle (built in 1879), and the 310 or so historic residential cottages situated on the grounds of the MVCMA one of my top priorities.

Both as a former MVCMA Board member and President, and as a member of the Columbus, Ohio, German Village, Architectural Review Commission, I am confident that the proposed changes to the Tabernacle are consistent with the historic architecture of the Campgrounds and the Tabernacle itself. The addition has been designed to be reminiscent of and to pay tribute to the smaller Tabernacle addition that was removed in the early 1900s, from the same location, at the rear of the Tabernacle. Significantly, the proposed structure has been designed to ensure that it will conform to the United States Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties and will not detract from the MVCMA's prestigious status as a National Historic Landmark.

The construction of the bathrooms will permit removal of the unsightly and expensive porta-potties. I'm accustomed to using facilities like these on large group bike rides and running

events, but they have no place in the MVCMA and only detract from its charm and historic character.

The MVCMA Board has been considering building an addition of this type for approximately 20 years. When I first joined the MVCMA Board nearly 16 years ago, it was among the most controversial items on the Board's agenda. I am glad that the current Board has finally recognized that the need for this addition to the Tabernacle. It will undoubtedly facilitate both the religious and other activities of the MVCMA and make the Tabernacle and the Campgrounds more valuable resources for Oak Bluffs and the entire island.

I strongly encourage you to vote to approve this significant project and to lend whatever support you can to enable the MVCMA to complete this project and bring its facilities online, as soon as reasonably possible.

Very truly yours,

Jeff Ferriell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Ferriell".

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