

Oak Bluffs Planning Board

From: Vici Surr <vicisurr@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 1, 2022 10:53 AM
To: morrison@mvcommission.org; Oak Bluffs Planning Board
Subject: Tabernacle Addition Concerns

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As a year-round MVCMA resident, and third generation Campgrounder, I am writing to ask you to reconsider allowing the building of an addition onto the back of the Tabernacle.

I am fully in favor of the new Tabernacle roof, but I am opposed to the portion of the project that includes an addition to the back of the Tabernacle, with “~1,300 one-story addition with backstage space for speakers and performers, a climate-controlled room for the MVCMA’s piano, 10 public toilets, and improved handicapped accessibility to the stage.”

Construction in a flood plain of this backstage, storage space, and public restrooms seems to me to be foolhardy at best. With the reality of climate change, and the very real possibility of more frequent high tide flooding and storm surges, intentionally building on a flood plain makes no sense, and may lead to very real increases in our insurance costs.

I am also concerned about the 2-1/2 foot deep swamp/wetland/bio-retention area designed to mitigate flooding waters and capture any rain run-off. This area directly behind the Tabernacle and in front of cottages on Trinity Circle will certainly become a mosquito breeding ground right in the heart of our community.

The MVCMA currently provides up to six portable toilets (which includes a handicapped accessible portable toilet). If the town needs more public restrooms, they should be added to a public area closer to the center of town and ferry landings, such as on or near Circuit Avenue.

In the past we have had a serious problem with drug sales and activity behind the Tabernacle. The addition of this building will only further encourage that activity. The safety of our residents and visitors should be taken into consideration.

Additionally, as noted in the 28 September 2020 letter from the Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce, tourism brings over \$450 million annually in direct and indirect spending to the island, generating more than \$10.1 million in local tax revenue. As noted in the leer, the MVCMA is enjoyed by tourists at no cost. The residents of the MVCMA, a privately owned property, should not be expected to shoulder the expense of providing public facilities to those tourists.

In comparison to many structures on the island, 1,300 square feet may not seem large to some people (remember the movie *One Big Home* which screened in the Tabernacle a few years ago?). But it is larger than most of the cottages on the campgrounds, certainly much larger than my own 878 square foot home.

I am concerned that we would be building a money pit, and the ongoing expenses of policing and upkeep would fall on the shoulders of the leaseholders. As an aging leaseholder on a fixed income, I am very concerned about rising lease fees due to the costs involved in maintaining this structure.

Again, I urge you to reconsider allowing the building of this addition, and stop the throwing of good money after bad.

Sincerely,
Victoria Surr

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