

Tabernacle Addition

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

Cc: morrison@mvcommission.org <morrison@mvcommission.org>

Dear Ms. Hopkins:

My family, beginning with my grandparents has summered at 75 Trinity Park every year since 1914; several of us have lived year-round and gone to school in Oak Bluffs, and over the years worked numerous summer jobs there and in Vineyard Haven. We know and cherish the island, the campgrounds, and the Tabernacle.

I am appalled at the disrespect that is being shown to this historic structure and the members of the Campground family with the addition of these inappropriate bathrooms. In my opinion there is no justification for this. For over 150 years, religious services, community programs, concerts, and graduation ceremonies have been held in the Tabernacle without the need for permanent toilets. The use of portable toilets has been sufficient for many years. It seems to me that without 24 hour oversight the proposed bathrooms will become a public nuisance. A place for sleep-overs and happy-hours.

I worked as an environmental scientist for the U.S. Department of the Interior for over 21 years, 19 of which were with the National Park Service, and consulted on several National Register of Historic Places' designations. The Tabernacle and the Campgrounds are on the National Register. The goal of the Register is to provide an additional layer of protection for America's imperiled historic resources. The addition of these toilets is neither enhancing nor protecting this historic structure; it is diminishing it.

I strongly urge the Oak Bluffs Planning Board to reject, as you did in the past, this permit application for the addition of an auxiliary structure to the Tabernacle.

With respect,

Stephen Cofer-Shabica

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