



February 17, 2023

Lou Rogers, Chair  
Zoning Board of Appeal  
Town of Oak Bluffs  
PO Box 1327  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

**Re: Comprehensive Permit Application for Southern Tier**

Chairman Rogers:

Affirmative Investment and Island Housing Trust (AI/IHT) are pleased to submit this comprehensive permit application in connection with the proposed Southern Tier project, the construction of 60 affordable homes at the 85 Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road site. This comprehensive permit application is submitted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40(b), Section 20-23.

The sponsors of the project are Affirmative Investments (AI) of Boston and Island Housing Trust (IHT) of West Tisbury have a long history of developing affordable housing on the Vineyard and throughout Massachusetts. AI is a woman-owned, mission-driven firm focused on housing and economic opportunity for Low Income Persons while IHT provides permanent affordable housing for Island residents and has provided over 130 affordable units on the Island.

AI/IHT proposes to develop 60 new affordable apartments across two phases at the 85 Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road site. This new income-restricted housing is proposed to help address the town's affordability crisis, as there continues to be a significant need for affordable housing in Oak Bluffs.

The proposed development will consist of 60 rental apartments spread across 12 buildings incorporating a mix of 12 – 1BR apartments, 42 – 2BR apartments and 6 – 3BR apartments. The proposed neighborhood will have 80% of the new homes be family sized with 10% of the homes being 3-BR units.

All the new apartments will be permanently reserved for tenants whose incomes are at or below 110% of Area Median Income (AMI). The bulk of the apartments will be reserved for households earning between 50-60% of AMI.

Southern Tier is being developed to preserve the natural habitat and open space to the greatest extent possible. The site plan consists of numerous walking paths, open space and permanently preserved native habitat which provides the residents with a neighborhood nestled into a natural island setting. The neighborhood's paths connect to the Old Holmes Hole Road walking path allowing the residents to access the surrounding Southern Woodlands open space area. The neighborhood will have multiple bicycle racks throughout the site and will provide a crosswalk for access to the multi-use path across Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road. A Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority bus stop is located less than 1/



10<sup>th</sup> of a mile from the site thus providing residents with alternatives to the use of single occupant vehicles.

The proposed new buildings will be exceptionally energy efficient and sustainable. We will meet the Stretch Energy Code, achieve Energy Star Design Certification, install roof-mounted PV panels, and install all-electric appliances, including for the production of hot water and thereby eliminating all fossil fuels from the development. Going a step further, our high efficiency building envelope design will exceed Energy Code requirements and substantially reduce demand for both mechanical heating and cooling. We will perform quality assurance testing to confirm building air tightness and insulation as part of our construction process.

The Southern Tier site sits in a R-3 residential district. AI/IHT is seeking relief through variances and special permit approvals from the Zoning Board of Appeals through the Comprehensive Permit application for height, density, sign dimensions, setbacks, structures per lot, units per lot, and dwellings per building.

This application is being submitted in conformance with M.G.L. Chapter 40(b), Sections 20-23. The provisions of this statute empower the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant exemptions from local ordinances and act on behalf of all local boards in this regard if the proposed housing is reasonable and consistent with local needs. Because the proposed project creates 60 new desperately needed affordable apartments while not creating any serious health or safety issues, AI/IHT believes that this project meets those standards.

Approval of this comprehensive permit application by the Board is critical to the project, since all financing commitments will be contingent on zoning approval. We sincerely hope that the Board looks favorably upon this request, which will allow us to create vitally needed quality affordable housing in Edgartown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Nicholson'.

Craig Nicholson  
Sr Vice President, Real Estate