

August 5, 2024

Nantucket Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)
c/o Kristie Ferrantella, Housing Director
Via Email: kferrantella@nantucket-ma.gov

RE: 13 Woodland Ave – Maury Proposal

Dear AHTF Members:

I am writing to express my concern and strong opposition to the proposed increase in zoning density within our community as proposed by Mr. Maury's development plans for the referenced property. Specifically, I request that you do not support this proposal in advance of the Special Town Meeting for the following reasons.

For his development to come to fruition, he has proposed that the zoning be changed from R-20 & LUG-2 to R-5. That represents a decrease in the required lot size from 80,000 s.f. to 5,000 s.f., which is a 16-times increase. That is wholly unfair to the surrounding area and neighbors who purchased properties in the more rural Country Overlay District. The property may abut Richmond to the north, however that is not reasonable justification for such a drastic change without consideration for the surrounding neighborhood in other directions.

The proposed zoning change will significantly increase the density of development on the properties, which will have several adverse impacts to the community. Most notably, there will be many more vehicle trips generated by so many additional dwellings unit which will result in a significant increase in traffic and congestion. Vehicles from this area will exit to Old South Road or Surfside Road, both of which have intersections that routinely back up to a failure level-of-service.

This proposal undermines existing zoning districts and has the potential to radically change the character of residential areas. The devil is in the details where this would allow significant additional density within underlying rural and less dense districts, without a truly affordable restriction or component.

While Mr. Maury proposes that the development will be limited to year-round occupancy, more than anything it represents a financial windfall to him and his partners, at the expense of the surrounding community. As proposed, there is not reasonable justification to increase the allowable density of these properties.

Specific Concerns

Infrastructure Strain: Our existing infrastructure—roads, schools, utilities, ferries— are at the point of breaking. It is one thing to build using existing zoning, but supporting increased density could lead to overcrowding and overburdened public services.

Quality of Life: Higher density often means more buildings, reduced green spaces, and increased traffic. These changes can negatively impact our quality of life, making our neighborhood less desirable for current and future residents.

Character and Aesthetics: Our community has a unique character and charm that we value. Introducing higher-density developments may alter the architectural landscape and diminish the sense of place we cherish.

Affordability: While proponents argue that increased density will lead to more affordable housing options, this isn't always the case. The proposal in your packet only specifies year-round occupancy and preferential sales. Furthermore, the community has committed significant funds toward affordable housing opportunities which are at various stages of development, with much thanks to you. We should allow time for those to come to fruition before making the drastic changes proposed for this development to proceed.

Community Engagement: The proposal lacks sufficient community input. Residents should have a say in shaping our neighborhood's future through a proper planning process, and decisions should be made collectively rather than imposed from a citizen's article promoting their own best interests.

It is important to note that after Public Hearings, the Planning Board and Finance Committee have each voted unanimously Not to Adopt the articles at Special Town Meeting related to these properties. Further, the Select Board has voted unanimously not to support the inclusion of the property in the Sewer District. Also, the Surfside Association has voiced concern and formally voted not to support the STM articles.

Please do not support this proposal prior to the Special Town Meeting as it is contrary to the overall best interests of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Arthur Gasbarro, PE, PLS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Arthur D. Gasbarro", is positioned below the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.