

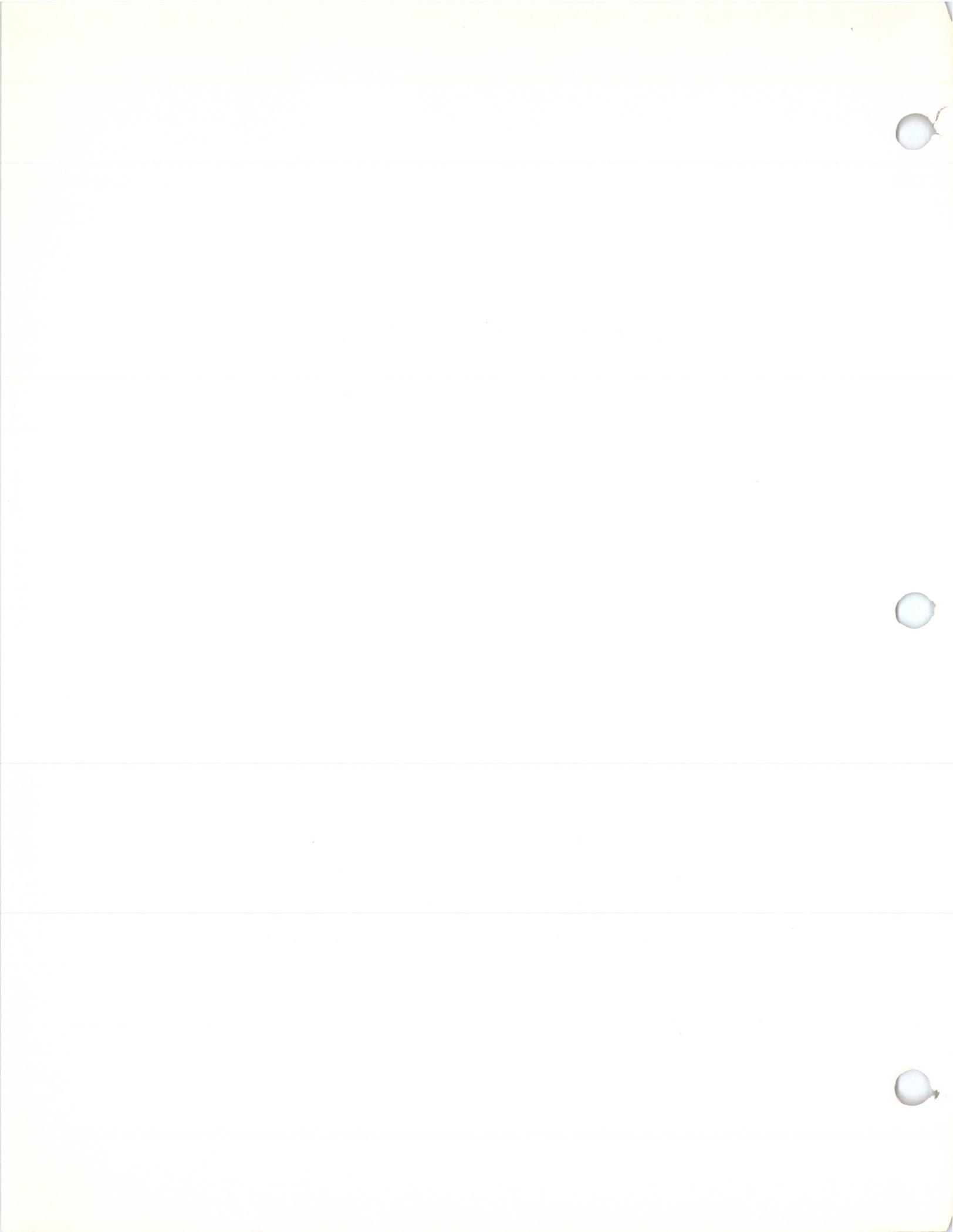
Chilmark Master Plan

Including the Open Space Plan

Prepared by the joint venture of:
the Chilmark Planning Board,
the Chilmark Conservation Commission,
and the Martha's Vineyard Commission

Chilmark, Massachusetts

April, 1985



Acknowledgements

The Chilmark Planning Board has prepared the Chilmark Master Plan in accord with Chapter 41, Section 81-D, of the Massachusetts General Laws, which states:

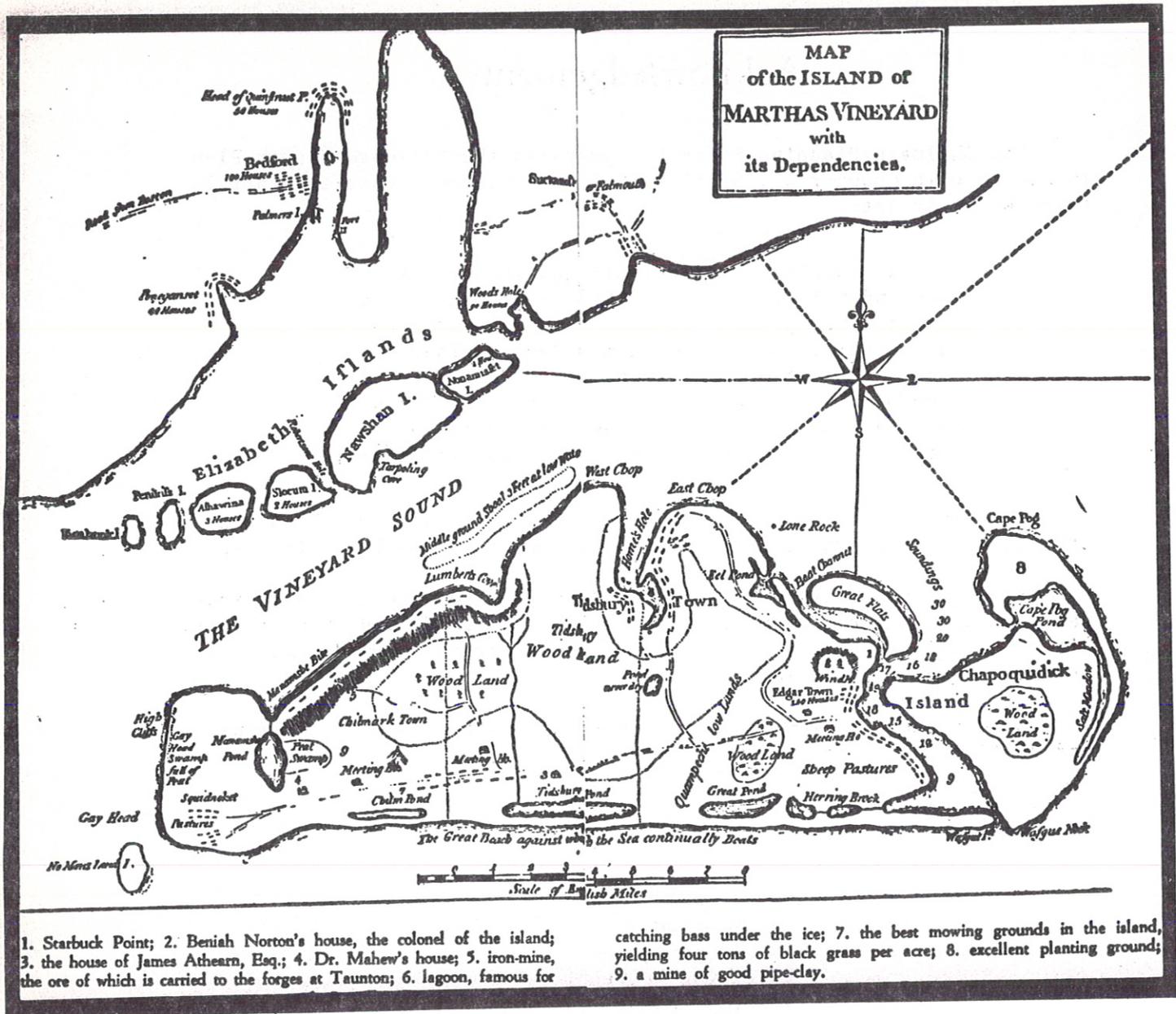
A planning board established in any city or town under Section eighty-one A shall make a master or study plan of such city or town or such parts thereof as the board may deem advisable and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan... Such plan shall be made, and may be added to or changed from time to time, by a majority vote of such planning board and shall be a public record.

The Planning Board wishes to thank the many people who have contributed their interest, time, and assistance in preparing this plan.

Special appreciation is given to James Muth of the Martha's Vineyard Commission for his unusual dedication, patience, and thoroughness. His competence in research, writing, and cartography provides much of the substance of this plan.

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Map by J. and Hector St. John De Crevecoeur, 1782.

Introduction

Chilmark is blessed with its location, its history, its geography, and its special qualities. It has all the advantages of small-town living, a rural atmosphere, and geographical diversity--the seashore, ponds, streams, woods, fields, flatlands, and hills. It has the boundaries of its stone walls, the openness of the remaining farms, the vistas from the roadsides, the continuity of its historical architecture, the town center with the beetlebungs, and Menemsha with its fishing shacks and its harbor.

In prior years Chilmark's isolation was its protection. Its limited populations were no threat to its water supplies or other natural resources, nor to the quality of its life. But will future generations living in Chilmark have the same pleasures we now enjoy? Even with acre-and-a-half, two-acre, and three-acre zoning, if pressure for development continues at its present intensity, Chilmark will become suburbanized.

The Master Plan is largely a study of the town including information on all aspects of the community and its resources. It also contains goals and objectives, which are defined as actions which may be taken toward accomplishing the goals. We hope this plan will give you a more complete understanding of Chilmark as a community, and of its resources, than you had before reading it.

We also hope this plan will inspire you to help protect these resources and the way of life we now have. Many remember the relative simplicity of the earlier years, and although changes have occurred, Chilmark still retains its rural quality and natural beauty. For this we are indebted to all who have had the foresight to protect it up to now. It remains to be seen whether we can do as well, as pressures for development continue to increase.

What can we do? We cannot stop growth, but we can direct it, and we may be able to slow it somewhat. Through the care and persistence of voters and town officials we can minimize its negative effects. While there is no single answer for protecting Chilmark's quality of life, it is obvious that we need to be concerned and to put our concerns to work, turning goals and objectives into actions which will preserve and enhance the qualities which we enjoy now, so that future generations may also know them.

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