



Martha's Vineyard Commission

OLD STONE BUILDING • 33 NEW YORK AVENUE
P.O. BOX 1447, OAK BLUFFS, MASSACHUSETTS, 02557
PHONE 508-693-3453 • FAX 508-693-7894
INFO@MVCOMMISSION.ORG • WWW.MVCOMMISSION.ORG

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Dear Tim,

We wanted to provide you and the Chilmark Select Board with a summary of the Housing Roundtable that Governor Healey held on Martha's Vineyard during her visit June 22nd. In attendance at the meeting from the Commonwealth were:

Governor Maura Healey
Senator Julian Cyr
Representative Dylan Fernandes
Mark Attia, Mass Housing Director of Capital Formation
Alissa Magnotta, Housing Assistance Corporation, former co-chair of Healey/Driscoll Housing Transition Team
Patty Mitrokostas, Housing Assistance Corporation, Senior Director of Grants

Invitees from MV in attendance were:

Philippe Jordi, CEO Island Housing Trust
Pamela Craven, Board Chair Island Housing Trust
Denise Schepici, President MV Hospital and Windemere
Morgan Hodgson, Town of Aquinnah
Adam Turner, MVC Executive Director
Laura Silber, MVC Housing Planner
Dan O'Connell, former MA Sec of Housing and Economic Development
Arielle Faria, IHT Program Manager and Co-Chair of Coalition to Create the MV Housing Bank
Noah Lipnick, Administrator for Coalition to Create the MV Housing Bank

Topics discussed:

- 1) Transfer Fee – led off by Senator Cyr, there was significant discussion about the “missing middle” – MV residents and necessary workforce whose incomes are too high to qualify for “Affordable Housing” as defined by the state but are completely priced out of the market for housing on MV. Impact on infrastructure at all levels – social, economic, functional -- was noted and detailed by MV invitees.

Of note regarding the towns were the municipal employee housing needs, school district staff housing needs, and emergency services housing needs, which generally fall outside the funding parameters of most existing state funding mechanisms. Also noted were the impact on health care services, shortages of hospital workers, mental health workers,

business owners, and skilled workers, many of whom also make up the “missing middle.”

The loss of younger community members and the aging demographics of the Island was highlighted, in the context of a high level of “out-migration” from Massachusetts which is a considerable concern to the Governor’s administration from an economic stability standpoint.

Further impact on the most vulnerable populations was also discussed (underscored by the Governor’s subsequent visit to the Island Food Pantry)

The Governor reiterated her support for local option right for cities and towns to adopt a transfer fee. A direct request was made to the Governor to consider including a transfer fee funding mechanism in the Housing Bond Bill her administration is putting together, which is expected to be proposed this summer.

2) Seasonal Communities Designation

The Governor directly acknowledged that the crisis facing seasonal communities, particularly the Islands, looks very different than the housing crisis elsewhere in the Commonwealth because it is a housing shortage at all income levels. Availability of year-round housing cannot be addressed by simply creating a larger inventory of “market rate” units because of the demand for second homes and investment properties has driven market rates beyond the reach of most residents.

The idea of creating a **Seasonal Communities designation** for the Islands, Cape and Berkshires, which would be accompanied by a state toolkit of funding, incentives, mechanisms, and allowances for exemption from some state funding constraints was discussed in detail. Much like the Gateway Cities designation, this would open our region up for specific support from the state in all areas and create a way for the legislature and Governor’s office to better respond to our needs. Sen Cyr introduced a bill last session and again this session which provides a jumping off point for engagement with the Governor’s office on this.

Mechanisms could include state funding for municipal employee workforce housing, allowing year-round deed restrictions without attached income restrictions to create a permanent inventory of “middle market” year-round homes, etc.

The Governor requested specific follow up on this concept with her office from the Island’s legislative delegation and MVC. She also noted that Executive Orders may be used to implement necessary solutions more rapidly.

3) **The transfer of State-owned parcels to municipalities** was introduced by the Governor – those opportunities are limited on MV but there are more than one.

We expect a high level of engagement from this Administration with the Vineyard and Nantucket’s housing needs going forward, and there is a lot happening in the legislature regarding housing that will impact the Island. As an economic force in the Commonwealth

because of our tourism industry, the Vineyard has an opportunity to tap into governmental attention this session early, right as solutions are being shaped, to ensure they are shaped in a way that works for our unique needs.

We would like to set up a meeting with you to discuss further what the issues are and how your town might desire to proceed so that lines of communication are open and fluid. That will enable us to best identify and secure the state funding and program support needed by the towns and be sure that the needs of the Island are elevated in all regional and statewide housing conversations.

Best regards,

Adam Turner
Executive Director, MV Commission