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Chilmark Selectboard

Honorable Selectboard,

I write to you today to voice my concern for the currently proposed Peaked Hill Pastures proposal. I was sadly unable to make the previous meeting of the selectboard so I am asking that this letter be read into the record.

Our town, at town meeting, voted that the plan they wanted had certain clearly defined elements in it and it has been my hope and expectation that the town would follow the mandate of the voters to produce a housing project that reflected the strong consensus that our citizens asked and voted for. The elements of this proposal included some critical factors that we cannot brush off. An ownership group of 4 homes, 10 rentals, and most importantly the ability to preserve a significant chunk of our last remaining parcel of developable land for future consideration.

There have been some challenges put forth by the vote and those challenges required the town to take specific actions which may not have been contemplated at the time. To successfully complete this project the town either needed to change its zoning with regards to rental houses allowing more than 2 rentals per 3- acres of land or elect to do a 40-B development. As we see from looking over the inventory of housing developments on the island, every other town has had 40-B developments which allowed a developer the option of adapting the project scope to the needs of the town without changing the zoning and while removing the financial burden from the town.

We have heard from town counsel that any other style of development may permanently restrict the future use of the property. There needs to be no ambiguity over the future use of this, the last readily developable town property, and the select board suggesting we could use a 40B in the future after the current project is done is a statement made without absolute fact and with huge possible consequences that I cannot support. Let's not take a chance with our last buildable asset.

Finally, there is the question of finances. Chilmark has created an RFP that, according to the selectboard, it cannot fund or finance due to our current state of indebtedness. Additionally, the project as proposed, may be unfavorable to a developer with the financial restrictions included that minimize the ability to use outside funding sources like the CPC or grants. I don't think the town wants to develop property again and frankly I don't think we should. There are many other companies that do this with a much greater efficiency and experience than Chilmark and frankly I am confident they would do a better job and take the financial burden off the town and its taxpayers.

For these reasons I do not support the proposed housing project and hope the town can do a better job addressing the long-term needs of all the citizens.

*Jim Feiner*

Jim Feiner  
Chairperson, Chilmark Housing Committee.