

March 10, 2021

Dear Town Administrator:

The Martha's Vineyard Women's Forum ("MVWF") was founded in 2020 to create community among women, partner with other organizations to address pressing island needs, and support the participation of women in all areas of social life on the Vineyard. Meeting over Zoom during the pandemic, the forum includes over 60 island residents (seasonal and year-round) from all six towns.

As we move through Women's History Month and approach the season of spring Annual Town Meetings, the Martha's Vineyard Women's Forum respectfully asks that the Selectmen in Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, and West Tisbury add the following warrant to the upcoming Annual Town Meetings replacing the dated term of Selectmen with the more inclusive term Select Board.

"To see if the Town will vote to rename the Board of Selectmen to Select Board or take any action relative thereto."

At least 85 towns in Massachusetts, including Tisbury, have adopted this more inclusive terminology. In 2020, The Massachusetts Select Board Association (formerly Selectmen's Association) followed suit by changing their name, reflecting a movement among towns to adopt a gender-neutral name for their elected policy board.

Why prioritize making this change now?

We know from research that inclusive cultures perform with greater productivity. We also know that our words matter and may affect whether an individual or group feels included or excluded.

For a truly representative town government, it is essential that we do not artificially limit ourselves with real or perceived barriers to entry but rather thoughtfully dismantle obstacles--including antiquated language that, intentionally or not, is not inclusive--so that all are encouraged to participate fully.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership in working to make our towns more inclusive.

Sincerely,

The Martha's Vineyard Womens Forum ("MVWF")

Jane C. Edmonds, Co-Chair, Oak Bluffs

Katherine Putnam, Co-Chair, Edgartown

Denise Brown Allen, Oak Bluffs

Renee Allen, Oak Bluffs

Deborah Alves, Oak Bluffs

Jennifer Jones Austin, Oak Bluffs

Tammy Bishop, Edgartown

Kelly Brilliant, Oak Bluffs

Frederica Carpenter, Edgartown
Yvette Dapremont Bright, Oak Bluffs
Leah Brown, Oak Bluffs
Aliya F. Browne, Oak Bluffs
Sandra Carney, Oak Bluffs
Shelley Christiansen, Oak Bluffs
Marisha Clinton, Oak Bluffs
Deidre M. Davis, Oak Bluffs
Cindy Doyle, Vineyard Haven
Elizabeth Davis, Oak Bluffs
Lisa E. Davis, Oak Bluffs
Jill Cowan Davis, Oak Bluffs
Debra DeLorenzo, Vineyard Haven
Debbie Drakeford, Oak Bluffs
Lynne Edmonds, Oak Bluffs
Patty Favreau, West Tisbury
Heidi Feldman, Tisbury
Cheryl Finley, Oak Bluffs
Nancy Gardella, Tisbury
Amy R. Goldson, Oak Bluffs
Sharon Graham, Vineyard Haven
Sandra Grymes, Oak Bluffs
Melissa Hackney, W. Tisbury
Roni Hennessey, Edgartown
Marilyn Riley Hodge, Oak Bluffs
Lynn Howell, Oak Bluffs
Chrisette Hudlin, Oak Bluffs
Caroline Hunter, Oak Bluffs
Luanne Johnson, Oak Bluffs
Kelly Joyce, Oak Bluffs
Andrea Williams Kingslow, Oak Bluffs
Kimberley Kirk, Edgartown
Elizabeth H. Lee, West Tisbury
Dolores Leigh, Oak Bluffs
Julia Livingston, Edgartown
Jennifer Long, Oak Bluffs
Monica Lyle, Oak Bluffs
Robin Lynch, Edgartown
Ronnie Lytle, Oak Bluffs
Evelyne Martial, Vineyard Haven
Bertie J. Martin, Vineyard Haven
Marjorie Mason, Chilmark
Cheryl S. McCampbell, Oak Bluffs
Dominique Milton, Oak Bluffs
Gaial Grain Monk, Vineyard Haven

Kendall Reid, Oak Bluffs
Robin Rivera, Chilmark
Elizabeth Oakes, Edgartown
Sandra Pimental, Edgartown
Lil Province, W. Tisbury
India Rose, Vineyard Haven
Christine Savini, Oak Bluffs
Charlena Seymour, Oak Bluffs
Elizabeth Slaughter, Oak Bluffs
Ann Smith, Oak Bluffs
Kathy Smith, Edgartown
Marcia Smith, Oak Bluffs
Michelle Stent, Oak Bluffs
Nicole Stent, Oak Bluffs
Ann Stewart, Oak Bluffs
Julia Tarka, Edgartown
Linda Silva Thompson, Oak Bluffs
Marilyn Townes, Oak Bluffs
Karen Tewhey, Oak Bluffs
Martina Thornton, Edgartown
Gretchen Tucker Underwood, Oak Bluffs
Lee VanAllen, Oak Bluffs
Loren VanAllen, Oak Bluffs
Kris Vrooman, Oak Bluffs
Patricia Washington, Oak Bluffs
Pat West, Oak Bluffs
Naina Lassiter Williams, Oak Bluffs
Valerie Williams, Edgartown
Robin Maciel Wingate, Vineyard Haven
Rita Woodard, Edgartown
Minah Worley, Edgartown
Genie Ziegler, Oak Bluffs

For more information, please contact Jane C. Edmonds @781.400.3456 or Kate Putnam @914.413.8563. Thank you.