

*UP-ISLAND COUNCIL ON AGING
CHILMARK AQUINNAH WEST TISBURY
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September 17, 2026

Dear Historic District Commission members,

I am writing to you regarding your public hearing on September 21, 2026.

The First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, and their plans to replace the aging Parish Hall, is on the agenda that day.

My interest in the West Tisbury Historic District Commission stems from the fact that I work in the neighborhood, and interact frequently with the church. I am the Assistant Director of The Up- Island Council on Aging. We are located at 1042 State Road, a few doors down and across the street from the church.

We are engaged in partnership with the Congregational Church on their Community Meal program, which feeds 150 island families every Wednesday in the off season. We keep in close touch to make sure our communities' most vulnerable population are fed and connected to services they may need. I stop in often to pick up meals for folks and check in with the people running the food program. We keep each other apprised (with the utmost confidentiality) of anyone we know that may benefit from the food program as well as other services.

While I understand your concerns regarding historic architectural matters, I also believe the church needs to have a space that functions safely and efficiently for

all of their programs. I believe that the updates can be made, and also be in keeping with the parameters of the Historic District.

I understand the concerns of the church very well, as we too are operating out of a very old building that needs attention. I know all too well the day - to - day creativity it takes to keep an old building and an inadequate space chugging along!

I do hope you will take my thoughts into consideration in your decision making.

Sincerely,

Susan Merrill