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December 28, 2020
Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of West Tisbury
P.O. Box 278
West Tisbury, MA 02575

Zoning Board of Appeals Members,

I come before the Board to amend a special permit (under section 9.3-3) to turn the existing “school building” at my residence of 10 Road to Great Neck into an Accessory Apartment under section 4.4-3(A) of the Town of West Tisbury By-Laws.

The current blue print (see attached) for the structure known as the School House measures 24’ X 34’ minus a 2’ X 8’ vestibule making a total of 800 square feet. The structure conforms to all building requirements and demands set by the town at the time of it’s build. There is no request for variances of any kind.

I intend to fulfill requirements for an accessory apartment and install a full kitchen. See attached plan.

The building has been used as a school every year for the past 23 years. I taught Montessori preschool in the building for ten years until leaving to join my family in the USVI. At that time it was rented by the Plum Hill Preschool and utilized each academic year until June 2020.

In 2001 I was granted a “Detached Bedroom Permit”, from Ernie Mendenhall as an accessory building to the single family residence on the same property. I have abided by the conditions of the permit and have used it every summer since for myself. There have been no complaints.

In late July the Plum Hill School found a property to purchase and informed me that they would not be renting this September, as they had planned. I then advertised, and Vineyard Montessori said they would like to rent for the fall, however, they found space closer to their school in Vineyard Haven. They had informed me of this in late August.

It seems my plans had changed as well. As of mid-July I intended to honor my contract to the school in Petaluma that I had taught at for the past two years. I have a 5 year old granddaughter out there whom I wanted to spend time with. Between the huge fires in neighboring Santa Rosa, and the rapid spike in Covid-19 in that area, (I have high risk conditions) I decided it wiser to stay put, and stay home, here in West Tisbury.

With this new intention to stay, I reviewed the conditions on the detached bedroom permit carefully. I noted that one condition states: 'not applicable during the school year'. I believe the condition was specified that way to deter someone living in the building while it was being used as a school - September through June, however, the condition is not specific to my current circumstance. Since the building is no longer used as a school, I reasoned that using it as a detached bedroom was acceptable.

Finally, there have been generous grants for preschools to make additions to their buildings, leaving my building less in demand in the community.

I am hoping with all this stated, that the Board will be understanding and consider granting me a permit for an accessory apartment as the best solution for this situation, and the most practical one.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Polucci
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