

Max Skjöldebrand  
(59 Field View Lane)  
PO Box 562  
West Tisbury, MA 02575  
(508) 696-9957  
(508) 560-2801  
maxskj@comcast.net  
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Howes House Building Committee

West Tisbury Town Hall

1059 State Road

P.O. Box 278

West Tisbury, MA 02575

To the Howes House Building Committee,

I am writing as a former member of the West Tisbury Library Building Committee (2012-2015).

I have signed up to receive notifications from the Howes House Building Committee. I have read all the meeting minutes posted to date under Howes House Building Committee on the Town website (i.e. those for meetings up to and including January 4, 2023 only; more recent meeting minutes not having been posted).

I looked at the drawings dated January 30 which caused me some concern. I drafted some comments on those but before sending those in I attended the meeting on February 15 (via Zoom) at which new drawings were discussed. However, I did not have the opportunity to see those new drawings in advance of that meeting. I have seen them since and they seem to represent a significant improvement on the previous drawings, especially insofar as the proposals impact the existing parking lot. Those drawings and the discussion at the meeting on February 15 rendered most of my comments on the earlier drawings moot.

However, I wish to draw the attention of the Building Committee to some relevant issues.

### **Building Proposal**

There seems to have been some difficulty in providing on the site the spaces required to meet the aspirations of the focus group analysis dated 10-24-2022.

I understand that the Library is now being involved in this project and that a suggestion has been made that the Library provide space and staff for some of the programming required by COA. I also understand that the Building Committee is now 'pausing' before proceeding with the current proposals.

If it becomes apparent that the requirements for space and programming can not be met with assistance from the Library, maybe it would be prudent in the 'pause' to invite the architects to consider other options further with sketch proposals.

The 2022 meeting minutes of the Feasibility Study Group indicate that some consideration was given to new build on both the existing site and on the Field Gallery site. Apparently, the Historic District Commission indicated that it might make sense to start over.

### **Site Considerations**

The January 30 proposals had serious impact on the existing parking lot and gave rise to considerable concern. They have now been superseded by the drawings discussed at the February 15 meeting. Nevertheless, the Building Committee and its consultants need to be aware of the following.

My recollection is that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in awarding the grant for the construction of the Library in 2012 made the grant subject to conditions relating, amongst other things, to the number of parking spaces, the surface treatment of the parking stalls, the disposal of rainwater from those stalls and the adjacent landscaping. Any modifications to the existing parking lot would presumably be subject to those conditions. For example, there was previously some mention of a "solar canopy." Any such installation would need to be carefully planned as to preserve (and not shade) the existing rain gardens. The rain gardens are an essential component to the overall parking lot, which was designed to minimize the impact of parked vehicles on the sensitive aquifer underlying the entire area.

With regard to the nitrogen-loading limits applicable to the Howes House/Library/Field Gallery site, I would refer the Building Committee and its consultants to The Martha's Vineyard Commission MVC Staff Report dated 2012-06-01 on DRI # 327-M West Tisbury Library Addition.

3.2 Environment Wastewater / Stormwater states "If the previously developed site already exceeds the nitrogen-loading limits in this policy, the total nitrogen loading of the property shall not be increased", the "property" comprising the Library, Howes House and Field Gallery. The estimated N-load for these existing uses at that time was 7.06 kg/yr. The estimated N-Load for the proposed Library + Howes House + Field Gallery was 6.93 kg/yr. The report noted "Therefore the N-load requirement for the proposed use with mitigation is less than the existing N-load". If these criteria still hold, the proposed Howes House project can increase the N-load by only 0.13 kg/yr, if that even. Please note that the Library installed composting toilets to mitigate the nitrogen load. Howes House will probably have to install composting toilets.

Sincerely yours,



Max Skjöldebrand

Cc:

Board of Selectmen

Historic District Commission

Library Trustees