

Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Simon Athearn <simon@morninggloryfarm.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2023 8:42 AM
To: Zoning Board of Appeals
Subject: support for Grange use

Hi, I received an abutters letter about the grange use. I want to voice my encouragement for more activity in town, this is a great way to use the grange as it was previously and was built for. Our town lacks a community center or any gathering space where music, performances, art, Charter School plays, films and speakers etc are all wonderful things I would strongly encourage without defined maximums allowable. This is the center of the town and in the business district, with plenty of parking, safely off the road, and heaps of neighbor support and community support.

If we don't get places like this to use, some for or non-profit will build a new construction to do so as it's so lacking, I do not want to spread the community event space outside the center of town if possible.

Please allow the Preservation trust to use the building to the extent they wish to without special permits or a stated allotment, that would be government overreach, it is a building purpose made for this; please encourage it. My family has been having events at the grange since it was built and I have stacks of old playbills, meeting agendas, agricultural certificates and classes and so on in my attic as I took over an old house on Town Cove; please let it come back to life.

My Uncle John Athearn is having a hard time writing due to some medical issues we hope will settle down soon. He wanted to write in support of this as well. Feel free to call him if you wish to hear his vote of support.

John Athearn - my tenant at 29 Music Street house- 508 338-2805

Thank you,
Simon

Simon Athearn
Pronouns: He/ Him/ His
Morning Glory Farm
100 Meshacket Rd
Edgartown MA 02539
508 560 1144
simon@morninggloryfarm.com

2/16/23

To: Zoning Board of Appeals, West Tisbury

Re: Vineyard Preservation Trust, special permit application for Grange Hall

Dear Board members,
Unfortunately, I cannot make your meeting tonight.

I am glad that Vineyard Preservation Trust (VPT) has decided to file this special permit application, though my preference is that this was taking place without the specter of the existing lawsuit being used as a means to color the outcome of this process.

In the event that this public hearing is closed after tonight's discussion, I submit the following comments.

1. I went through the list of events submitted by VPT; many of these have not taken place at the Grange in many years, decades in some cases. Some events were only ever a one time deal. In the absence of those former smaller events, other, often larger events have taken their place. Additionally, I highlighted 7 of the listed events as RETAIL events, not 'expositions and displays by nonprofit and for profit organizations and other groups'.
2. Whatever uses are permitted at the Grange, the impact of that use should be confined to the Grange site, including noise, people and parking. For example, although town hall is closed on Sundays, the Congregational church has long utilized parking here, leaving parking spaces closer to the church for the elderly. Controlling vehicle and pedestrian traffic will likely require traffic details and/or VPT staff to guide access.
3. The town MUST do a better job of coordinating event permits across multiple venues in town to avoid event overlap and resulting negative traffic impacts.
4. For the last 150 years, the Grange was only ever a seasonal use building. Even during the 1991 renovation, conscious and informed decisions were made by VPT to NOT insulate the downstairs of the building, including buying and installing new single glazed windows- there was no intention to use the downstairs of the building year round. That VPT intends to undertake a multimillion dollar renovation of the Grange is entirely their choice, but their proposed budget should not drive permitted uses here. VPT representatives have repeatedly stated that they need these events to pay for this renovation, but this proposed renovation will turn this building into something it has never been before, and the year round capacity will certainly mean more of everything. I'm not necessarily opposed to year round use, but it is imperative that the zoning board reach a clear understanding with the applicant during this special permit process about carrying capacity at this site, and how it impacts the quality of life for all of us who live here.

Thank you,
Prudy Burt

P.O. Box 1044
West Tisbury, Ma., 02575
508-696-3836

Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Heather Capece <hcapece@mvpcs.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 2:42 PM
To: zba@westtisbury-ma.gov
Subject: Grange hall Zoning Permit

Attn: Larry Schubert, Chair

Dear members of the West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals, Feb. 14, 2022
As the Artistic Theater Director at the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School and as a resident of West Tisbury, I, Heather Robbins Capece, support the West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals to "allow the increase in the degree and intensity of use" of the Grange Hall. I would like to strongly support the year-round use of the Grange Hall for our community. I strongly support the activities at the Grange Hall that presently include the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School's use of the theater (classes, rehearsal and performances) and Circuit Arts programming of film screenings, music, and theatrical performances.

Over the years, I have directed our Charter school plays in the Grange Hall with the Vineyard Preservation Trust. At the Charter School, we do not have a stage or performance space; we have to rent a space to give our students the opportunity to learn about theater and all the aspects of putting on a show. At the Grange Hall, the students get to run the show including lights and sound, there is a kitchen that enables us to serve snacks, a backstage area for our "greenroom for the students," and comfortable audience seating where families can cheer our students on as these performances become memories our students will cherish as alumni.

Brian Ditchfield of Circuit Arts and the MV Public Charter School collaborated together last year in order for our school to be able to perform on a stage with our students also running the crew/tech jobs. We are again planning on rehearsing and performing our all-school play which will include 50 students in 4 shows, with Kindergarten through 4th grade performing in one show to give more students the opportunity to learn and have the experience of stage performance.

For many years, we wished to rent the Grange Hall as a performance space but it was not open in the off-season so we had to search for other options. The Katherine Cornell was a stage we could use, but it has not been available to us since pre-2020. The Vineyard Playhouse was also a space we used to rent but it has not been available to us since 2010. It has been especially difficult for the Charter School to rent a space for our students where they have access to a stage.



Our hope is that the West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeal will recognize the importance of having a cultural and community space available beyond the summer months. Also, it is my hope that the Board will see the need for this space to be available to the community in collaboration with Brian Ditchfield and Circuit Arts and the Vineyard Preservation Trust to ensure that students, artists, and

community members have year-round access. This would allow for more access for our students to utilize the space for classes, rehearsals, and school performances.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Heather Robbins Capece
Resident of West Tisbury
10 Lottie's Lane
West Tisbury, Ma 02575

Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School
Artistic Theater Director

In the works and hopes in the space for 2023- and forward

April - The performance of the all school play(K-12) - A Witch's Princess Play
May- Rehearsal space for our upcoming performance for the Fringe Festival
June - Weekend of preview of our Performance for the Fringe Festival and activities
Nov and Dec MS/HS performance
2023-24 school year the hope to have classes on the stage for students
Collaborations with Brooke Ditchfield for Locals nights
2024 All school play
2024 Talent show

Previous Plays in the Grange Hall

Peter Pan and the Quest to Save Neverland 2022
The Hobbit 2019
Peter Pan 2014
A Midsummers Night's Dream 2013
You Can't Stamp Out love 2012
Captain Fantastic 2005

[Even the Smallest Person can change the course of the World..Tolkien](#)

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Molly Conole
PO Box 1136
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
407-376-5273
molly@mollyconole.com

February 16, 2023

Larry Schubert, Chair
West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals
PO Box 278
West Tisbury, MA 02575
zba@westtisbury-ma.gov
508-696-0107

To the West Tisbury Zoning Board:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed use of the Grange Hall by the Vineyard Preservation Trust and Circuit Arts / MV Film Festival.

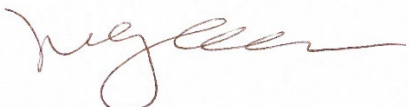
Having worked closely with the staff of Circuit Arts/MVFF as Administrator at the First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, I know them to be extremely responsible and thoughtful temporary “tenants.” Their use of our building for last year’s festival was a joyful and very smooth operation which we are happily going forward with again this year, too. What they have done to the upstairs at the Grange has only improved the space, and their management of the MV Film Festival has been at the highest professional level.

I have also worked closely with them as a professional musician and performer. They are committed to providing this island with the highest quality entertainment and programs for all ages. This is a great gift to our island. We are enriched by their excellent and varied programming.

A great organization can only reach people by having a venue, though, and The Grange is really a perfect one. It has historic use as an entertainment space, live theater and movie theater, and their work carries on that great tradition. It is located in the heart of the island and has a good amount of parking. The occasional food truck during events only adds to the festive atmosphere and provides necessary services to those attending these occasional events.

Thank you for considering my heartfelt support of this wonderful organization, and their reasonable request for use of this space.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Molly Conole', written in dark ink.

Molly Conole

February 14, 2023

Larry Schubert, Chair
Via email: zba@westtisbury-ma.gov
West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals
P.O. Box 278
West Tisbury, MA 02575

Dear Board Members,

I write to you as a life long resident of Music Street, an abutter to the Grange Hall and a West Tisbury Historic District Commission Member. I care deeply for the preservation of our Village.

The events which I have attended at the Grange Hall, and formerly at the Ag Hall, brought the community together in all seasons and were something to look forward to in the center of the Village. This need for a gathering place is why this building was erected almost 165 years ago, a need which we need to fill even more today. We cannot talk about expanding community gathering places, such as those at the Howes House, while at the same time looking to tamp down others historically held just across the road.

Our family is incredibly grateful to have year-round center of arts, culture, and nonprofit education at the Grange; and for the Vineyard Preservation Trust with it's mission is to serve the community by keeping the Grange Hall in public use. We look forward to seeing such a wonderful landmark of the Island continue to thrive as it always has. We see the need for a Special Permit as an unnecessary constraint on a historic gathering place and those who wish to utilize it to serve our community.

In the end, if this wonderful building is not allowed to continue to serve its intended purpose, what will it's future hold and who will continue to maintain it so diligently as it's current steward has?

Respectfully,



Joshua C. Gothard, RA

Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Kate Warner <kswarner57@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2023 6:28 PM
To: WT ZBA
Subject: Comments about Grange

Dear Larry Schubert, Chair

I most likely will not be at the hearing as I am sick. Because I am a direct abuttor, I have a few requests. They all have to do with consideration of neighbors and noise.

My requests are as follows

- 1) please have trash picked up by your trash service 8:00-6:00. Not 5:30 in the morning as has often been the way.
- 2) please do your mowing 8:00-6:00, not late in the evening. Preferable if it is not on the weekend as well.
- 3) please do not hold events in close proximity to my house. There is plenty of room at the Grange to site things in the middle of the property or over by the Town Hall which is not occupied after 5:00 at night.
- 4) please park cars by the Grange and use the parking in the field by my house only when absolutely necessary and please don't store vehicles in the little area that is right by my property.
- 5) please be mindful of noise when weddings are held there and amplified music is being played.

Otherwise, I have no objection to expanded use at the Grange to allow for films and other community-related events.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests and for all the neighbors that abut the Grange property.

Kate Warner
1085 State Road

February 15, 2023

Mr. Larry Schubert, Chair
Town of West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals

Re: Public Hearing – February 16, 2023
Application for Special Permit from Vineyard Preservation Trust

Dear Mr. Schubert,

We, Andrea and Charles Winter, are seasonal residents of West Tisbury and live at 1073 State Road. Our property is contiguous to the Grange Hall. We are writing to object to the issuance of a Special Permit that has been requested by the Vineyard Preservation Trust.

We believe that it would be a mistake for the ZBA to approve such a broad application for a Special Permit without identifying those uses which are not permitted by the Zoning Bylaws and without specifically identifying the “increase in the degree and intensity of the non-conforming use of the Grange Hall”. Certainly, it is important to understand the number of weddings, the number of film showings, the number of concerts, and the timing of events, traffic, noise, etc.

We and our family have enjoyed many events “next door” and acknowledge that the Trust has been a good neighbor by “self-imposing rules to limit impacts to neighbors and protect the rural character of the center of the Town of West Tisbury”. Perhaps this is the time to include those rules in the application process.

We are, and have for many years been, in support of the mission of the Trust, most especially as it concerns the Grange Hall, and hope that an agreement can be reached as to how this beautiful and historic building can be used to both satisfy the goals of the Trust as well as the needs of the Community.

We are off-island and regret that we are unable to attend this hearing in person and we appreciate the opportunity to voice our objections in writing.

Respectfully,

Andrea and Charles Winter



First Congregational Church of West Tisbury

1051 State Road, PO Box 3000, PMB 3111, West Tisbury, MA 02575
508-693-2842, officewtiscong@gmail.com , www.fccowt.org

February 14, 2023

Larry Schubert, Chair
West Tisbury Zoning Board of Appeals
PO Box 278
West Tisbury, MA 02575
zba@westtisbury-ma.gov
508-696-0107

To the West Tisbury Zoning Board:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed use of the Grange Hall by the Vineyard Preservation Trust and Circuit Arts / MV Film Festival.

The First Congregational Church of West Tisbury has welcomed Circuit Arts / MV Film Festival / Cinema Circus to the neighborhood because we value the entertainment and educational programs they offer our community, especially children. As a neighbor to the Grange Hall, we embrace the year-round programming that is being proposed for the Grange because it fosters community and addresses the isolation so many of us experience in the off-season.

I hope that the ZBA will also support the proposed programming and the vitality it offers to our town center.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached directly at 646-924-9281.

Sincerely,

Rev. Cathlin Baker
cc: Brian Ditchfield, MVFF

Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Patricia Moore <mooreiipaddy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2023 3:58 PM
To: Claire Harrington
Cc: Brian Ditchfield; Nevette Previd; Paddy Moore
Subject: Grange Hall

Dear Chairman Larry Schubert and All Members of the ZBA:

I write, once again, to support the appeal being requested by Circuit Arts/MVFF and the Vineyard Preservation Trust for continued use of the theatre at the Grange Hall including their programming of film screenings, music, and theatrical performances in the upstairs theater.

I have lived in a house at the end of Alley Way, across State Road from the Grange, since 1974. My husband, Ben Moore, was the architect in charge of the 1990s renovation of the Grange, when we discovered signatures from the 1890s on boards used for the then-stage in the upstairs theater. We and our children have attended many events in this wonderful building, including summer films series started by Jamie Alley and continued by Richard Paradise before he moved "uptown," numerous weddings and funerals, Artisans Festivals, Antique Shows, and many other community celebrations. The space has been filled with good feelings, good humor, and usually fabulous music!

The only problem has been that it has not been available on a year round basis.

Now, through the vision and energy of The Vineyard Preservation Trust and Circuit Arts/MVFF, we have the opportunity to extend (NOT ALTER!) the original purpose for this building, continuing its long tradition of cultural activities for the year round — particularly winter — community. This time there will be special programming for children — again, badly needed during winter months up-island, as well as the film, education and other cultural activities for which the Grange is known --and very much in keeping with the Grange tradition.

I am very sorry not to be able to try to persuade you in person tonight, but I urge you, strongly, to approve these two wonderful organizations in their commitment to a year-round operation at the Grange. Many thanks.

Paddy Moore

Patricia W. Moore
Founder, Board Member Healthy Aging MV
Board Member Navigator Homes of MV
18 Alley Way
West Tisbury, MA 02575
(508) 693-1627

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does." — Margaret Mead