

SPRING ROCK VILLAGE SUPPORT LETTERS

Letter 1 - Brewster Affordable Housing Trust

Letter 2 - Brewster Housing Authority

Letter 3 - Town of Brewster

Letter 4 - Abutter (Amanda Bebrin, 560 Millstone Road)



Town of Brewster

2198 Main Street
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Office of:
Housing Trust

July 6, 2023

Ms. Faythe Ellis, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Brewster Town Hall
2198 Main Street
Brewster, MA. 02631

Dear Ms. Ellis:

The Brewster Affordable Housing Trust (BAHT) supports Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) and Preservation of Affordable Housing's (POAH) funding request for the proposed affordable housing development on Millstone Road in Brewster. HAC and POAH were chosen by the Select Board to develop the property through a Request for Proposals ("RFP") process led by the Housing Trust. HAC and POAH responded positively to the vision crafted by the BAHT, Select Board, and Town staff, based off significant community input. Their careful design demonstrates a commitment to balancing housing needs, protecting open space, and respecting the privacy and character of the surrounding area.

Their compact, energy efficient neighborhood will be comprised of 45 newly built rental units, with 35 units designated as affordable at no more than 60% of the area median income (AMI) and 10 units as workforce housing affordable at no more than 80% of AMI. Their design will create environmentally positive buildings and include inviting ecologically suitable landscaping and public spaces. This development aligns with the goals outlined in Brewster's 2022 Housing Production Plan, which aims to increase and diversify year-round housing options in Brewster for a range of income levels and household types.

After carefully considering design elements, community public comment, and environmental factors, on June 13, 2023, the Brewster Zoning Board of Appeals approved a Comprehensive Permit, with conditions for HAC and POAH to develop the property. Furthermore, the Project's eligibility for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program was approved by DHCD on August 17, 2022, underscoring the viability and importance of this development. Local financial support from the Town of Brewster will be an important part of ensuring the financial feasibility of this development. In addition, local funding commitments are important to help leverage State and Federal resources.

Thank you for all you and your committee do for the Town of Brewster.

Tim Hackert

Tim Hackert, Chair
Brewster Affordable Housing Trust

BREWSTER HOUSING AUTHORITY

11 Frederick Court, Brewster, MA 02631

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Fax: 508-896-4050

July 5, 2023

Faythe Ellis, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Town of Brewster
2198 Main St
Brewster, MA 02631

Dear Ms. Ellis,

On behalf of the Brewster Housing Authority, I am writing this letter to express my support for the HAC and POAH's funding request for the proposed affordable housing development on Millstone Road in Brewster. The project's careful design demonstrates its commitment to balancing housing needs, protecting open space, and respecting the privacy and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The project aims to construct 45 newly built rental units, with 35 units designated as affordable at no more than 60% of the area median income (AMI) and 10 units as workforce housing affordable at no more than 80% of AMI. These units will go a long way towards supporting the Town's affordable housing goals.

This need is highlighted by the recent rental lottery held for Brewster Woods, which received 240 applications for 30 units of housing.

The project recently received a Comprehensive Permit from the Brewster Zoning Board of Appeals on June 13, 2023 after carefully considering of all design elements, community public comment, and environmental factors. The Project's eligibility for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program was approved by DHCD on August 17, 2022, which further underscoring the viability and importance of this development. Local financial support from the Town of Brewster will be an important part of ensuring that the project is financially feasible. In additional, local funding commitments are important to help leverage State and Federal resources.

The successful completion of this affordable housing project will significantly contribute to the well-being and vitality of our community. The project aligns with the goals and vision of Brewster and showcases a responsible approach to development that benefits both residents and the environment.

Thank you for considering my support for this important initiative. Should you require any additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Conn
Executive Director/Managing Agent



Town of Brewster

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Office of:
Housing

November 1, 2023

RE: Regional Housing and Spring Rock Village (0 Millstone Road) Affordable Housing

Dear Community Preservation Committee,

Housing is a regional issue on Cape Cod, with community members often working and living in other nearby towns. A lack of housing is affecting local businesses and schools in finding employees and providing services. Brewster Housing has a commitment to addressing our Cape Cod housing challenges on both a local and regional level. Collaboration improves the Lower Cape's ability to create and maintain more affordable and attainable housing.

Brewster has demonstrated a large and on-going commitment to the Spring Rock Village 45 rental home affordable housing initiative. In 2018, the Town purchased an access parcel with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and designated over 16 acres of Town-owned land for community housing purposes. Over the next several years the Affordable Housing Trust, with extensive community input, developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the property. The Select Board accepted Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) and Housing Assistance Corporation's (HAC) development proposal and signed a land disposition agreement in 2022. Currently a \$500,000 Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding request for Spring Rock Village is on the November Town Meeting Warrant. The Affordable Housing Trust also expects to receive an application from POAH & HAC for additional local funds.

Brewster's commitment to creating more housing options is shown in the Town adding 125 units to Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) over the past 7 years. The Town currently has 372 affordable units, 7.2% of the Town's year-round housing units. Yet, Brewster also recognizes the need to address the Cape's housing challenges regionally. At the Brewster Select Board's request, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) granted Spring Rock Village a 55% (24 unit) local preference and a 15% (7 unit) regional preference for Barnstable County.

Brewster's certified Housing Production Plan has a strategy to "Continue to work with nearby communities on the Cape by pooling CPA funds and other resources to construct affordable housing in suitable locations throughout the region and meet regional housing needs." Over the past seven years, Brewster has voted and approved over \$550,000 in CPA funds to five different local housing initiatives located in nearby towns ranging from Dennis to Wellfleet. Additionally, over the past six years, Brewster has both financially supported and participated in the Community Development Partnership's regional Cape Housing Institute.

Brewster, like many communities across Cape Cod, is challenged by the competing interests of year-round and seasonal housing. 42% of Brewster's housing stock and 36% of Barnstable County's housing stock is occupied part-time, seasonally, or only on occasion. Since the pandemic and growth in Cape Cod home values, the Town has seen an increase in rental homes being sold. This is exacerbating the existing

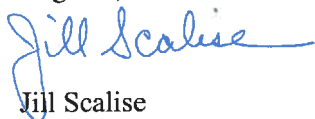
limited supply of rental housing in Brewster as well as other Cape Cod communities. Home ownership is also out of reach for many residents with a 2022 median home sales price of \$686,000 for Brewster and \$638,500 for Barnstable County. Brewster has a \$88,110 median income, slightly higher than Barnstable County at \$82,619. (Cape Cod Commission Brewster & Barnstable County Housing Profile 2023)

Despite Brewster efforts to create more diverse housing options, only 9% of Brewster's housing stock is rental housing versus 34% in Massachusetts and 19% in Barnstable County. 64% of Brewster renters are estimated to be either cost burdened or extremely cost burdened. This is similar to Barnstable County where 52% of renters are cost burdened. (US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, 2017-2021). The Brewster Housing Plan Needs Assessment reports that 78% of Brewster's very-low income (31-50% AMI) are housing cost burdened. In response to the great need, the Housing Trust has developed and financed (\$225,000 CPA funds) a rental assistance program which provides up to \$500/ month for cost burdened low-to-moderate income (up to 80% AMI) rental households. Currently eleven households are receiving ongoing rental assistance.

All five affordable rental properties in Town, the Brewster Housing Authority, Wells Court (senior housing), and King's Landing (multi-age), Brewster Woods (multi-age, opened in 2023) and Serenity Apartments in Brewster (Age 55+, opened in 2023), have wait lists for openings. Several waitlists are estimated to be over 5 years long. In 2022, there were 240 applicants for 27, extremely low-to-moderate income (up to 60% AMI) affordable apartments at Brewster Woods. During the same time in 2022, Serenity Apartments at Brewster received 72 applicants for 27, age 55+ affordable units at 80% AMI. For both Brewster Woods and Serenity Apartments, 81% of lottery applicants were from Barnstable County. Additionally, the Town Housing Coordinator regularly receives calls from Brewster and Barnstable County residents seeking affordable rental housing. Surrounding towns in Barnstable County have similar housing wait lists and people who live and work in Barnstable County are looking for affordable housing throughout the region.

Brewster has invested land, funds, and effort for well over 5 years on the Spring Rock Village housing opportunity. The Town also understands that housing is a regional issue, and a regional response is needed. This mixed age, mixed income (up to 80% AMI) affordable rental housing will meet a significant need in the town and the greater community. Regional preference will provide greater opportunities for Barnstable County residents and workers to live at Spring Rock Village. When Cape Cod towns work together, it benefits the whole community.

Regards,



Jill Scalise
Brewster Housing Coordinator

Faythe Ellis, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Town of Brewster
2198 Main St
Brewster, MA 02631

Ms. Ellis,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my continued support for this important housing development by HAC & POAH. I live at 560 Millstone Road and am a direct abutter of this project. When I bought my home four years ago, I knew that this parcel was slated for community housing, and I've participated in the process since the first visioning sessions, pre-pandemic. I appreciate the ongoing process to solicit public feedback, and the incorporation of that input into the design before us, specifically in the compact nature of the project to leave the majority of the parcel undisturbed, as well as the energy-efficient construction of the units.

As an abutter, I understand that the impact is different for me than it is for people who live elsewhere in town, as the new access road will run next to my house. It will be a change from the woods I'm accustomed to looking at, but Millstone is a residential area, and this is a residential development. It's a good fit in terms of uses, and we're a town of homeowners – yet safe and realistically priced year-round rentals are almost impossible to find. The trend of local workers and families leaving the Cape in search of housing they can afford is far from anecdotal at this point: per the Cape Cod Commission, fully half of Cape workers commute from off-Cape. This pattern isn't problematic only for our roads and bridges, and our environment – it's hollowing out our communities in an irreparable way.

There is a tremendous need for this project: the Brewster Housing Authority has a waitlist of more than 5 years, and they see incredibly low turnover. We can conclude that whoever will be moving into the Millstone units will intend to stay and make this their home long-term – and those are good neighbors to have.

Some other benefits of housing in my backyard: the developer will pay real estate taxes, which means increasing our tax base in a time when everything costs a lot of money. The real estate market has gotten far too expensive for local people to compete in: I wouldn't be able to afford my home today, and it's important for us to create pathways to residency that aren't contingent on being able to pay asking price or over for a house (the median sales price for April 2023 for Brewster is a whopping \$864,000, per the CCIAOR).

We often forget to talk about people when we talk about housing, a critical error, in my opinion. The people who will become my neighbors will probably be people who work jobs locally, who don't just help keep our businesses and services and amenities open, but also spend their money in those same places. People who will send their children to our schools that we fund through our hard-earned taxes. Beyond all that, they will be people who bring their time and talents to their new home, so that we can continue to be a vibrant and well-rounded community.

In a competitive society like ours, it's easy to view this in terms of winners and losers. A better perspective is that housing is an investment in our community's resilience, to ensure that Brewster remains viable into the future – whatever you love about living here, there are people who work to keep it that way, and I think it's incumbent on us to work hard to keep them here, too.

In closing, I could talk about how this project aligns with our Vision Plan, or how it moves us towards the goals in our updated Housing Production Plan. But instead, I'll ask the CPC and my fellow community members to

support this project so that we can extend the same opportunity that we've had to 45 new households: one to build the life they want, here in Brewster.

Combatting our housing crisis is going to require all the resources, tools, and strategies we can muster, but providing financial support to this project is one you can make. I encourage the CPC to allocate whatever funds you have available to this important project, and I thank you for your time.

Amanda Bebrin, Abutter
560 Millstone Road