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To Nantucket residents:

This letter is to inform the residents of Nantucket and anyone who appreciates the wellbeing of the Nantucket Island community of important facts regarding the proposed Nantucket Shooting Park project. Several of those opposing the project have sent letters and documents to the Nantucket Select Board as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, and State representative Ed Markey which have been referenced in a recent article in the Inquirer & Mirror. The opposition has expressed concern about potential lead contamination occurring from the projectiles being fired at the range. These concerns are not based on facts, but instead make assumptions based on other unspecified shooting ranges. Dr. Deborah Soffen was quoted in a newspaper article as saying “Despite best practices, lead contamination can still likely occur based on other communities in close proximity to outdoor ranges.” This letter will state facts that can be verified by official documents to better inform those who are interested in following the progress of this project whose mission is to build a community shooting and archery facility at the end of Shadbush Rd in Nantucket.

It has been reported and is true that members of Nantucket Hunting Association have been pursuing and obtaining permits to build a shooting and archery practice range for the last 17 years. A land use permit is required per Town bylaws and the NHA applied for one in the form of a Major Commercial Development (MCD) Permit. The application was opposed and challenged by a group of part time residents that testified to the Nantucket Planning Board during multiple public hearings as part of the permitting process. After six hearings the Planning Board unanimously granted the permit.

 During these hearings a Planning Board member as well as the Head of the Nantucket Land Council asked that more information be included in the application detailing the proposed lead mitigation plan. Prior to the next hearing an Environmental Stewardship Plan Summary was submitted. The plan utilized information from the document “Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges – United States Environmental Protection Agency EPA-902-B-01-00 Revised June 2005 Region 2”. Based on this EPA document, the plan summary explained the construction of a bullet backstop utilizing a liner, sand and materials that minimize water run-off, neutralize the PH levels of the soil and trap lead from migrating. The plan mentions that the materials will be tested and periodically removed and replaced with clean materials by an experienced, independent lead removal company. Only non-toxic shot (no lead) and non-toxic “clay” targets will be allowed on the Trap shotgun range.

The Land Council submitted a letter to the Planning Board written by a consultant recommending these best management practices and referencing the same EPA document. During the Planning Board’s hearing on December 17th, 2012, the Land Council representative recommended to the board that they include the Stewardship Plan and require annual water monitoring as conditions of the MCD permit. These ultimately became conditions 3, 6 and 10 of the approved MCD Permit. Some of the opposition group, including Edward M. Soffen, appealed the Planning Board’s decision to the Massachusetts Land Court. During the appeal, no complaint testimony or evidence was presented about lead contamination to the soil or ground water. After a lengthy trial where all NHA’s evidence was presented, the Land Court’s decision upheld the Planning Board’s approval of the MCD Permit in January 2018. The plaintiffs appealed the Land Court’s decision with the Appellate Court, which upheld the Land Court’s decision in April 2019. Finally, the opposition then appealed this decision to the Supreme Judicial Court who chose not to hear it.

Documents related to the Nantucket Shooting Park project can be found on the Nantucket Hunting Association’s web site. Nantuckethuntingassociation.com.

Respectfully

Steven Holdgate

President

Nantucket Hunting Association Inc.