



February 3, 2021

Dear Members of the Commission Subcommittee:

Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) wishes to clarify our rationale regarding our request to build an income-generating solar array on the 9 Victory Drive site in Sandwich. Some have questioned how a solar array is pursuant to our long-time mission to provide affordable housing on Cape Cod. We feel that given the property's limitations and constraints, a solar array farm is the *most desirable, lowest intensive*, and—with a consistent income stream over at least the next twenty years allowing us to invest money in other programs and housing development projects—*most beneficial to our mission* at this point in time and in the foreseeable future.

Much has changed since HAC purchased the property in 1999. HAC leadership at the time believed such land could provide a visionary housing solution that could be a model for out-of-the-box thinking—many units of housing, community spaces, and available work opportunities. Through much of the 2000s HAC's focus was developing housing on the site through a 40B permitting process. Over the years, we carefully vetted multiple iterations of designs and project proposals. Because of the costs involved, mainly addressing the wastewater issue, none of these plans ever proved financially feasible. A couple of structures were built on the land, and we provided the opportunity to community members to farm vegetables on plots set aside for a community garden, but it was always a stop gap, hardly the best use of the property.

With a change in leadership in 2017, HAC began an agency-wide audit of its assets, which included all of our properties to determine how they should be utilized most effectively to advance HAC's mission. When we evaluated the Sandwich site, we looked into the following options: 1) reconsider developing housing on the site, 2) sell the property, 3) entertain proposals from various industrial developers with ideas ranging from modular housing factory to aquaponics, and 4) consider the site for solar development.

We consulted with a variety of experts about each of these ideas, including partner housing organizations, commercial real estate agents, and commercial developers. We hired a solar consultant, Suntility, to help us better understand that industry when it came to the viability of the fourth option. HAC staff also met with officials from the Town of Sandwich, including the Town Planner and Town Administrator, to discuss and evaluate all ideas on the table.

In the end, we decided that a solar development would be the highest and best use, and we put the development of the site out to bid to four solar developers, leading us to choose Lodestar for a lease agreement (we retain ownership). We are confident they have done a comprehensive review and submitted a proposal that takes into account all of the site's characteristics, Town regulators' expected concerns, and the overall best use of land at the end of the Sandwich industrial park.

This process has been an extensive investment, so this most recent decision wasn't one we made lightly. We hope this explanation of how we have arrived at our present situation clears up any confusion and that you consider us for subcommittee support.

Sincerely,  
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