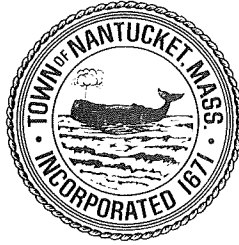


Town and County of Nantucket Select Board • County Commissioners

Brooke Mohr, Chair
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Matt Fee
Dawn E. Hill Holdgate
Malcolm W. MacNab



16 Broad Street
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554

Telephone (508) 228-7255
Facsimile (508) 228-7272
www.nantucket-ma.gov

C. Elizabeth Gibson
Town & County Manager

February 26, 2025

Dennis Renaud
Director, Determination of Need Program
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street
Marlborough, MA 01752

Subject: Determination of Need – Our Island Home/Nantucket, MA

Dear Mr. Renaud:

The Town of Nantucket, which owns and operates Our Island Home, a licensed 45-bed Skilled Nursing Facility, hereby files this Determination of Need (DoN) request for the construction of a new replacement facility on Nantucket at an estimated cost of \$106 million.

The proposed project includes the relocation of Our Island Home (OIH) from its current location at 9 East Creek Road, Nantucket, MA 02554 to Town-owned land at Sherburne Commons Way in Nantucket (a portion of which is currently leased to The Residences of Sherburne Commons, Inc. for an independent living facility, formerly licensed as an Assisted Living Facility). The Town later plans to demolish the current OIH building and build a new Senior Center on the E. Creek Road site. This application requests a transfer of the 45 licensed beds while maintaining the same levels of care: 22 Level II and 23 Level III beds.

There is no change of ownership as part of this DoN application. The Town of Nantucket will remain the owner of the facility and all residents of the current OIH on E. Creek Road will be safely transferred to the new facility once the project is completed.

The project is for the construction of a modern 45-bed single-room occupancy nursing facility on a portion of the 20-acre grounds of Sherburne Commons that will blend in with the architecture of Sherburne Commons and contribute to the continuum of care for island residents. The Project includes the cost for relocating Sherburne Commons staff housing for 16 employees, as well as other costs to mitigate the impact of construction on current residents of Sherburne Commons.

The design will greatly enhance privacy, dignity, and patient-centered care for the residents, and provide improved space for staff, families, and visitors that meets current DPH requirements and industry standards. The single rooms with walk-in shower/bathroom design will provide for better infection control, enhanced privacy for

residents and families, and assist in attracting more short-term rehab admissions. This is in line with the most recent guidelines from DPH and CMS to encourage single-room skilled nursing facilities as best practice to reduce infections and promote higher quality care. As one of the only municipally-owned nursing homes left in the Commonwealth, the Town and its residents are committed to providing the highest quality care and improved health outcomes for its senior population for years to come and consider this project as the cornerstone for accomplishing these goals on the island.

Brief History and Need for the New Our Island Home

Our Island Home's history dates back to 1780 when it was founded as the Town's "almshouse" for the indigent. The current OIH was built in 1981 with 3 private rooms and 21 semi-private rooms. The semi-private rooms do not have showers or bathtubs. The building was built along the "institutional" design model of the day with a core nursing station, 3 resident care wings, and a 4th wing for service and storage areas. It includes 1 small activity room, 1 dining room, 1 rehab space, and 2 group showers for the entire 45-bed facility. The core nursing station does not have visible sight lines to the resident care wings and was built behind walls with one small outside station for nursing staff.

In addition to space constraints, major plant upgrades would be needed to continue operating the current OIH including:

- Upgrade of Fire Suppression Systems, including replacement of sprinkler pipes and sprinkler heads
- Upgrade of HVAC System (no central A/C, only in common areas)
- Facility-wide electrical needs and installation of increased capacity
- Upgrade wastewater piping to prevent back up in kitchen and south wing
- Replace dining room and kitchen cabinetry, wash sink station, garbage disposal, and dishwasher
- Refurbish and modernize west wing shower
- Replace generator and shed
- Upgrade of IT infrastructure
- Replace exterior trim, siding, rake boards, patio, and parking lot
- Replace cedar fencing around facility patio area
- Upgrade garage.

Without making the facility larger, however, there would be no way to expand the interior space to meet today's requirements and standards.

The Town of Nantucket has realized for years that it needs a new nursing home to improve the quality of care for its seniors and has reviewed multiple proposals dating back to 1996. The voters of Nantucket have committed to providing long term care services for its senior population "on island" through various appropriations, including overrides. The relocation of OIH to the grounds of Sherburne Commons was approved at the Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting with an article for design funding. The current project has 2 standing committees: a steering committee which has met bi-weekly for over a year, and an advisory committee which meets periodically. The purpose of these committees is to ensure proper project governance and broad community input. A subgroup has met with several community groups and stakeholders and made presentations to the Town Select Board as well as

other Town committees. Final presentations are planned prior to the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election in May 2025, where final approval of the project and its cost will be sought.

Our Island Home employs a culturally diverse staff of over 65 people who live on Nantucket and receive all the benefits of being Town employees. The seniority and stability of OIH nursing staff is impressive, with a turnover rate of 20%, much lower than the state average of 33% (*Massachusetts Health Care Workforce Survey 2023*). The design of the new OIH will improve staff recruitment and retention by improving working conditions with attractive breakrooms, activity and care space for residents, and extra room for family and team meetings.

Objectives and Features of the New Our Island Home

The design, construction and program features of the new OIH was shaped by the public health principles of:

- Improved health outcomes, and
- Improved quality of life.

These architectural features include:

- All single rooms to support residents' privacy and dignity
- All rooms with walk-in showers to encourage independent functioning, where appropriate
- Resident wings designed as neighborhoods with different color schemes, names, and other designs to encourage a home-like environment
- Rooms large enough to be comfortable for families, and visitors
- Recessed room entry way to resemble private entry of home with personal items such as shadow boxes at bedroom entryway
- Outdoor enclosed courtyards adjacent to all resident care areas to encourage more light and access to outdoor activities, and easy access for residents to spend time outdoors in a safe place
- Large windows at ends of each hallway to spread more light into ends of hallways
- Attached wings with smaller connector bridges to allow wandering residents to roam freely without harm
- Open room concept for dining and activity spaces to accommodate need for large activities such as entertainment, group functions with families, etc.
- Lounge areas to relax and spend quiet time as needed.

With no increase in the number of licensed beds, the new OIH will comprise 59,267 (47,382 Resident Care Spaces on main floor) sq ft compared to the current OIH's 25,000 sq ft. This extra space will better serve the residents and offer flexibility to meet future needs.

A copy of the most recent SMRT Architecture presentation (January 21, 2025) is included as an attachment.

Conclusion

Despite the constraints of the current OIH, the Town and Facility design teams have focused on expanding and enhancing staff capabilities and programs to improve the quality of care for all the residents. This has been reflected in the increase in OIH's CMS Star Rating from 1 Star to 4 Stars in the past year.

With the Town's investment in the new OIH, the foundation will be set for continued excellence in care and quality of life for generations of Islanders to come. Thank you for your consideration of our DoN.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at townmanager@nantucket-ma.gov or (508) 228-7255.

Sincerely,



C. Elizabeth Gibson
Town Manager

Cc: Robert Eisenstein/Eisenstein Flaherty Associates
Craig Piper, SMRT
Jon Lemieux, Owner's Project Manager
Senator Julian Cyr
Representative Thomas Moakley