February 6, 2025
Cape Cod Commission
3225 Main St.
Barnstable, MA 02630
Re: Wilkens Lane – Phase II

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Wilkens Lane housing project in Barnstable. I am a lifelong Cape Cod resident just approaching middle-aged, and I have uniquely experienced my generation and the next finding increasing scarcity in affordable housing on the Cape.

I've always believed that the Cape has opportunities for young people in their careers willing to seek them out and work hard, and I still think this is the case. However – if one cannot find a place that they can afford to live in, this already difficult path can be made immensely moreso – sometimes even impossible.

After many discussions with my boss, A.J. Luke (owner of Luke's with two stores right in Barnstable), this is one reality we have faced over many discussions. Being in charge of scouting for new employees, both full-and-part-time, I have noticed the trend of replacement becoming increasingly difficult when employees leave. There are, I'm sure, other local factors as well, but the big issue we've seen is that a lot of our employment applications for full-time positions originate from neighboring towns off Cape, whereas they used to come from folks in the same towns as our stores. The overall quantity of these applications is also down significantly. Our part-time applicants are simply no longer as frequent as they once were, and every time we lose someone it gets more difficult to replace them. After 20 years with this family business, I've never seen the applicant pool as grim as it has been for the last couple of years.

This is why A.J. expressed interest in this project to me, and I agree with him: **more dwellings designed for habitation by Cape Codders** (as opposed to re-purposing them into AirBnB-style units), and particularly those that offer **a degree of affordability**, is absolutely something we can and should get behind.

I understand that there will be creative problem-solving involved in ensuring, as with any new development, that existing local residents *and* new residents are properly cared for. Making sure that funding is secured for additional resources that the fire department and other social services may need, ensuring water supply continuity etc. Further, I do wish that the percentage of affordable units at 13% was higher. However, I am also of the belief that while half measures are not ideal, they are better than "no measures". Any steps, incremental or otherwise, towards a solution are positive in my view. The families that are able to get into these units will certainly appreciate being able to stay home here on Cape Cod.

It strikes me that finding perfection in this area will be a difficult road, but that young people desperate to forge the kind of life here that I've been blessed with don't have time to wait, and that this housing development will be a wonderful step in the right direction for many young Cape Codders.

Sincerely,

John Pomeroy
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Luke's of Cape Cod
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