Hi John that letter looks good could you please sign it for me. Thanks.
Lauren
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Cape Cod Commission
3225 Main Street
Barnstable, MA 02630

February 10, 2025

To the Cape Cod Commission:

My name is Lauren Baskin, and I am the President and Owner of Baskin's Ace Hardware in Orleans, Harwich Port, Dennis and S. Yarmouth. We have been operating these locations for over 40 years serving our Mid-Cape communities. I wrote a letter in support of affordable and workforce housing for the first phase of the Wilkens Lane project in 2022. I am writing now to support the second phase of this project and ask the subcommittee to promptly send this project with a favorable report to the full Commission for review.

For years it has been common knowledge that the Cape has struggled with an affordable housing issue and now - with the influence of the pandemic – the lack of affordable housing on the Cape has become a crisis. The affordable housing crisis is now affecting the viability of local businesses which are essential to all our Cape communities and their residents. Much of the local economy and the available employment on the Cape is in the service industry, which typically does not offer salaries that can support the astronomical price increases in the housing market.

Consequently, businesses have had to alter their business practices to survive. Some businesses have been forced to close 1 or 2 days each week because there is not enough help for them to properly operate. I also know another local businessman who had to purchase a property which he privately converted into affordable housing for his employees so he could continue to operate his business. If he did not do this, he was concerned that he would not have enough people to properly operate his business.

The shortage of employees on the Cape is negatively affecting every business sector. We at Baskin's Ace have struggled to find any young adults to help our operation despite being extremely flexible with hours, offering 50K to start and health insurance/401K. The median age of our employees is around 55 - 60 years old. The hardware business is a very physically intensive business which is harder on our aging employees. When I look ahead to the next 10 years, I know that if I don't find the new wave of employees to come up through the ranks - then the viability of my business will be in jeopardy. Over the past 5

summers we have relied heavily on hiring 14-year-olds to help us stay operational. The problem is that not all businesses can hire 14-year-olds and this clearly is not a sustainable solution to any business's success. If we don't look ahead and devise a long-term solution to this issue – then the Cape economy and all the business that support it will suffer, or worse, cease to exist.

It is important to look toward the future and implement a solution today that will solve not only today's housing challenges but also the challenges of tomorrow. This project is a good start. A housing project like this will allow young families and young adults to stay on the Cape and contribute to our local industries which are the heartbeat of our quintessential Cape communities.

Sincerely,

Lauren Baskin
President Baskin's Ace Hardware