



BARNSTABLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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May 5, 2015

Kathy McNamara Ohman, President
F.O.R.W.A.R.D
P.O. Box 1174
South Dennis, MA 02660

Re: Letter of Support for a Small Scale Model
Housing Community Project in Dennis

Dear Ms. Ohman:

The Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners is in receipt of your letter providing information specific to the Mission of F.O.R.W.A.R.D (Friends or Relatives with Autism & Related Disabilities). We understand that a growing number of concerned citizens, some having adult children with Autism & related developmental disabilities, are rallying together to address a looming crisis, *"the need to establish a fully supervised independent living situation for young adults who have aged out of Special Needs education and supports"*.

As noted, 80% of adults with Autism live at home with few supports and an unclear plan for the future when their families are no longer able to care for them. Those who live at home are largely isolated after their work day or day habilitation program is over. They could be working together to make a greater contribution to their community.

F.O.R.W.A.R.D was established to identify a site on Cape Cod to develop a residential housing project that will meet their residential and community living needs. Your goal is to build four homes with four bedrooms each, to house 16 individuals, with an additional central "Common Room" available to residents, families, friends and community groups.

Through this effort, F.O.R.W.A.R.D envisions an environment where people with challenging communication and social skills feel comfortable in a shared living situation with 24/7 supervision: preparing meals or participating in a group activity in the Common Room, for

example. Your hope is for a community for the developmentally disabled where residents can visit between homes with ease and safety.

The Board of Regional Commissioners appreciates your efforts to engage the community in understanding some of the challenges that face people with Autism. We understand that this fall you will co-host Autism training with ALEC, (the Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition), for the Dennis Fire and Police departments. The three hour training provides information to help first responders identify and effectively assist people on the Autism Spectrum.

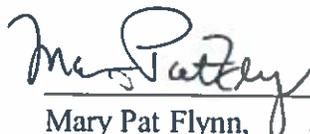
We acknowledge that you are in the planning stages to undertake the development of a small scale model housing community in Dennis that will provide a safe and supportive environment. As such, you are seeking community support to build four homes that will provide a fully supervised, "independent" living situation for young adults who have aged out of Special Needs education and supports.

At its meeting on May 6, 2015, the Barnstable County Board of Regional Commissioners acknowledges your tremendous efforts in assisting those individuals with Autism and related disabilities and adopts this letter of support for the development of a Small Scale Model Housing Community Project in Dennis

Sincerely,



Sheila Lyons,
Chairman



Mary Pat Flynn,
Vice Chairman



Leo Cakounes,
Commissioner