

TOWN OF EDGARTOWN Date: 9/25/2023  
Community Preservation Committee  
70 Main Street, P.O. Box 5158 Edgartown, MA 02539  
508-627-6180

APPLICATION AND APPLICANT INFORMATION FORM  
AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ 10,000

Purpose (please check each that apply):

Open Space/ Recreation .X Affordable Housing \_\_\_\_\_ Historic Preservation X

Sponsor Name: Martha's Vineyard Garden Club

Mailing Address: POB 5061 Vineyard Haven, MA 02568-0947

Physical Address: 690-692 Edgartown Road, West Tisbury

Telephone: 973-722-9678

E-Mail: [president@marthasvineyardgardenclub.org](mailto:president@marthasvineyardgardenclub.org)

Summary of Proposal:

Describe Project: (attaching maps and any descriptive materials)

The 1840's Old Mill in West Tisbury is on the National Register of Historic Places and the only surviving granary, then weaving, mill on Martha's Vineyard. it is an underutilized island treasure which has not been updated to meet current building or safety standards.

This grant will be used to rebuild the Old Mill's narrow, steep interior stairs to meet the current building code, upgrade the electric service to run dehumidifiers and fans, and thus improve the safety and accessibility of the Old Mill.

List Sponsors (including, if applicable, governing Boards, Trustees, Directors, Management, etc...

The Martha's Vineyard Garden Club, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the sponsor of this project. Founded in 1924 and the first conservation organization on Martha's Vineyard, the Club acquired the Old Mill in 1942 to save it from demolition, restored it, registered it on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and is solely responsible for maintaining it.

Supporting Town Committee(s) ("NA" if none) NA \_\_\_\_\_

Submitter or Project Director:

Name Susan Hobart, MVGC President

Telephone# 973-722-9678

E-Mail [president@marthasvineyardgardenclub.org](mailto:president@marthasvineyardgardenclub.org)

## 1. Old Mill Safety Improvements Project Description, Objectives and Relevant Garden Club Experience

The Garden Club applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the West Tisbury CPC in 2022. It funded a building feasibility assessment that was completed by Sullivan + Associates Architects and Sourati Engineering in June 2023. The objective was an analysis of structural needs plus consideration of a wish list that included a restroom and utility sink (in the past, water was pumped from the stream to an interior sink then drained outside), climate control and other features which could expand the building's useful season and offer the Old Mill for public events not under the umbrella of the Garden Club.

The assessment report, which is included with this application, defines a roadmap for Old Mill improvements. To undertake all improvements identified in the report would cost in excess of \$200,000.

Although restored and structurally sound, the Old Mill would be safer and more attractive as a meeting venue with some improvements. The safety of the interior stairs, load-bearing capacity of the upper level due to beam span, and moisture and mold in the lower level have been concerns for several years. In addition, the building has no running water, heating, or plumbing, so is used only June through September.

Likely original to the building, the stairs are steep and narrow with patched treads, and abut the original irregular rock wall of the dam (a snake has been seen coming out of the wall onto one of the middle steps). To alleviate risk on the stairs, the Club recently designated them one way up, and exterior stairs as the exit.

This project is Phase I of the roadmap and specifically addresses safety concerns. The budget for the project is \$80,000. The project will address the following:

- Rebuild the stairs to meet the current code:
  - Widen the stairs to 48"
  - Extend the length of the stairs to comply with current run and rise specifications
  - Remove 4' of steel ceiling beam to accommodate headroom
  - Install steel post to support beam that was cut
- Install dehumidifiers to alleviate moisture and mold in basement level meeting area
- Add ceiling fans on both levels to improve air flow
- Upgrade electric to 200 amps if required.

The Garden Club has a long history of repairing and maintaining the Old Mill. Several decades ago, the Garden Club restored the Old Mill, registered it on the National Register of Historic Places, has continued to maintain it and manages any requisite repairs.

In 2013 the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club was awarded a West Tisbury Community Preservation grant of \$30,000 to renew the exterior of the Old Mill. The building's exterior needed a new roof, new sidewall shingles, trim painting, and a new ground floor rear door. The jobs were performed on schedule and under budget, leaving a balance of \$3,230 of grant money, which the Club received permission to apply to subsequent work.

The Building Inspector outlined required upgrades to the Old Mill. The electrical service, electrical fixtures (interior and exterior), illuminated exit signs, and fire extinguishers were upgraded. In

addition, a gate was installed for parking lot security. These projects, as well as replacing windows and annually painting the interior foundation wall, were funded by the Garden Club.

In 2018 a second grant from West Tisbury CPC for \$20,000 was used to replace badly rotted door bottoms and jambs with historically correct doors.

## 2. How Repairs to the Old Mill Accomplish Goals of the CPA

The Old Mill's restoration previously completed by the Garden Club and potential expansion of its accessibility to the public, support historic preservation, conservation, and recreation.

The Old Mill is a historic gem that is well-loved by Garden Club members and guests who have the privilege of visiting it, and an extraordinarily well-preserved piece of Martha's Vineyard history. People often ask if it is available for community events and recreational activities such as art or craft shows, but the Board has not made it available due to concerns about the current condition of the building.

The third mill on this location, and originally a granary mill, it last manufactured satinet, a dense fabric used by sailors in the whaling industry from wool supplied by the nearby sheep farm. Several pieces of the original equipment used to make satinet still reside in the building. In the future, an "Old Mill Day" or an exhibit portraying 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing life could be a teaching opportunity for school children as well as the public.

The Old Mill is an excellent small venue compared to other public buildings and could potentially be used by other nonprofit organizations for their fundraising programs.

The Mill's environmental impact is significant, as it abuts the pond, sits directly on the road, and is in a wetland area with a stream beneath it. The building has a lawn on one side, as well as its own parking lot. The Old Mill property is primarily wetlands. Ferns, clethra and other native plants line the stream and stone walls. The Club could expand the native plantings and label them as the basis for an educational wetland garden retreat. The stream and benches are a lovely setting for outdoor meetings and activities. A wooded path connects the West Tisbury library and the Old Mill.

## 3. How Improvements to the Old Mill Impact Edgartown's Citizens

Martha's Vineyard Garden Club is an island-wide, all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) organization established in 1924 and the island's oldest conservation organization. The Garden Club's mission is:

*to protect and enhance the beauty and natural assets of the Island of Martha's Vineyard by providing educational programs in conservation and horticulture; by encouraging community interest in and understanding of environmental problems; by supporting community efforts to protect our Island's environment and by taking a position on legislation affecting the environment.*

Members share a passion for conservation, gardening, and maintaining the Vineyard's unique environment. Meetings and events are both educational and social, with varied programs designed to meet personal and community needs.

The Garden Club has more than 200 members representing all island towns. Fully one third of the members reside in and/or own homes in Edgartown. Several of the current Board members reside in Edgartown.

**MARTHA'S VINEYARD GARDEN CLUB OFFICERS  
SEPTEMBER 2023**

<b>OFFICER</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TOWN</b>
President	Susan Hobart	OB
President Elect	Ty Johnston	WT
Vice President	Susie Wallo	OB
Secretary	Joan Eville	OB
Treasurer	Kathy Ploss	ED
Communications	Donna Arold	OB
Membership	Linda Shaw	OB
	Susan Shea	ED
Program	Kathie Skinner	WT
	Kathy Werber	WT
	Angela Egerton	ED
	Faun Hurwitz	ED
Chilmark VP	Irene Ziebarth	CH
Edgartown VP	Caroline Taylor	ED
Oak Bluffs VP	Sarah Lolley	OB
Vineyard Haven VP	Gay Smith	VH
West Tisbury VP	Sheila Fane	WT
<b>COMMITTEES</b>		
Old Mill	Carol Goldstein (B&G)	OB
	Susan Hobart (planning)	OB
Wakeman	Susie Wallo	OB
Greenhouse	Anne Kushwaha	ED
Special Projects	Joan Cavazuti	OB
Ag Fair	Larissa Rich	CH
Archives	Irene Ziebarth	CH
Blooming Art	Ty Johnston	WT
Conservation	Jennifer Blum	ED
Floral Design	Jayne Isford	OB
Garden Stroll	Anne Kushwaha	ED
Hospitality	Gay Smith	VH
	Trudy Williams	ED
Scholarship	Kathy Kitsock	ED
Windemere	Joan Eville	OB
100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration	Ty Johnston	WT

The Club's vision is to make this remarkable historic building an attraction available to islanders for community and other events. Members are extremely proud that the Club was able to protect this island treasure and want it to continue to be enjoyed. Unfortunately, the Mill is underutilized and unknown to most island residents and visitors. It is opened for two Garden Club fundraising events, four presentations, and a few casual gatherings July through September.

Outside speakers and their topics at the Old Mill this year are well attended, often address island concerns, and align tightly with the Club's mission:

- July: Samantha Look, Vineyard Conservation Society: *Love Song for the Vineyard Lawn*
- August: Liz Durkee, MV Commission: *Climate Change and the Natural Environment*
- September: John Forti, Ex. Dir. Bedrock Gardens & Author of the Heirloom Gardener Book: *Heirloom Gardening with Traditional Plants and Skills*

The Garden Club's largest and newest fundraiser this year, co-chaired by an Edgartown resident, most of which is intended to support the Old Mill, was the Edgartown Stroll in which the gardens of 6 properties in historic Edgartown were opened to the public.

The Club's signature annual fundraiser is Blooming Art, which is held in the Old mill and was first held over 20 years ago. Approximately 35 Vineyard artists exhibit their works for sale, and Club members create floral designs to interpret each piece of art. More than 500 paid visitors came to this year's show, which lasted three days in June.

The Club also hosts a public Memorial Day weekend plant sale at the Old Mill, for which all plants have been grown locally in the Wakeman Center greenhouse by Garden Club members. Approximately 100 island residents visited the plant sale.

#### 4. Project Action Plan and Timeline

The Old Mill is used by the Club from mid-June into September. Most of the work will be done after September but installing dehumidifiers prior to summer humidity would be desirable. Construction of the stairs cannot commence until after the September meeting due to complexity of the project. An assumption is that vendors can begin work with the commitment of payment after July 1.

Action	Tentative Schedule
Prepare architecture, engineering drawings	1Q2024
Select electrician, evaluate electric	1Q2024
Upgrade electric	May/June
Select plumber, obtain permit & install dehumidifiers	May/June
Install fans	October - May
Select carpenter & obtain permits for stairs	September
Begin construction of stairs	October
Complete project	May 2025

#### 5. Financial Information

The Garden Club's major ongoing financial obligations are the Old Mill, which the Club solely owns, and the Wakeman Center. The Garden Club is part of the Wakeman Foundation agreement and a tenant of the Wakeman Center, where it holds its winter meetings and has sole use of the greenhouse. The 2023 budget allocation for the Old Mill is \$16,625 and Wakeman Center rent is \$6,200.

The Wakeman Foundation is responsible for heat, water and electricity to the greenhouse, but the Club is responsible for structural repairs. The greenhouse hasn't been improved in several years, and some repair will be required in 2024. The 2024 budget will be developed in October.

The Garden Club budget for 2023 and 990 form for 2022 are included with this application. The Garden Club has a sizable reserve intended for emergencies.

The projected budget for the Phase I Old Mill project is \$80,000, allocated as follows:

Item	Details	Amount
Architectural Drawings	Sullivan/Sourati	\$10,000
Rebuild stairs to code	Contractors TBD	\$20,000
Upgrade electric to 220 amps	Contractor TBD	\$25,000
Install dehumidifiers and fans	Contractors TBD	\$20,000
Contingency		\$5,000
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>		<b>\$80,000</b>

The Club has identified several potential sources of funding and is confident that the financial goal will be met.

Two members have each pledged \$10,000 for the Old Mill, which will enable the project to commence early in 2024 with the architectural and engineering drawings.

Jane Bradbury, who has a home on South Water Street will host a benefit gala on August 1. Her home is significant both because of the beautiful landscaping and "Union Jack" garden, as well as having been the home of the Garden Club's first president, Mrs. Miekelham, who also rescued the Old Mill from demolition.

The Garden Club is applying to each town's CPC for funding support, as Garden Club participation is island wide. The Club also applied to the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation for \$10,000.

Source of Funds	Target Amount	Committed	Comment
Donations	\$30,000	\$20,000	
Benefit Gala 8/1/24	\$20,000		Planning underway
Community Preservation Funds	\$10,000 from each town		Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, W. Tisbury
MV Community Foundation grant	\$10,000		Submitted application

The Garden Club hosted a very successful Edgartown Garden Stroll in August, which cleared \$14,000 after expenses. This was an inaugural event that was not included in the 2023 budget. These funds will be allocated among operating expenses, Wakeman Center greenhouse repairs and the Old Mill after the 2024 budget is developed.

A key assumption is that the Garden Club will end 2023 with a surplus that can be applied to the greenhouse expenses. A second assumption is that membership levels and revenues from Blooming Art and the Plant Sale will remain constant or increase year over year, particularly as 2024 will be the Club's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and special events and publicity will be planned.

A risk is whether the Old Mill will be in usable condition to hold the Blooming Art event in June, thereby causing a shortfall in planned fundraising revenues.

Once the Phase I project is completed, there will be no annual cost to Edgartown. The Club will evaluate whether and when to undertake a Phase II project and identify budget and potential sources of funding in 2025.

#### 6. Legal Ramifications and Impediments

The Garden Club owns the Old Mill and its surrounding land and knows of no legal ramifications for this project which is focused on interior work. The Board developed the Phase I plan and obtained membership approval by vote at the annual meeting in August.

#### 7. Permits and Licensing

The building feasibility assessment includes approvals and requirements that would have to be met for the projects.