

September 23, 2013

This is another in our series of updates on our efforts to protect Sconset Bluff. Doing our best to be sure that Nantucketers understand and support our efforts is critical. There will always be passionate opponents who steadfastly oppose measures to protect homes, infrastructure, and communities from erosion and storm damage. Hence, good communication and identifying supporters are essential to sustaining the committed work of Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund.

While our application for a revetment is still under review before the Conservation Commission, the urgency to protect the most threatened part of Baxter Road appears to finally be prioritized by the Town. At a recent meeting, all five selectmen agreed that the Town should aggressively pursue protecting the bluff and the road for this winter, including working directly with SBPF. Still, numerous challenges lay ahead

Our plan is to quickly present to the Board of Selectmen specific options for protecting the toe and top of the bluff. The preferred toe protection proposal is a Geotube protection system consisting of super-sized, sand-filled geotextile containers at the toe of a 550-foot or longer section of the bluff. The Town, as project sponsor, would submit the project to the Con Com for approval on an expedited basis. Installation could begin as soon as early October, and the work is expected to take approximately 2 to 4 weeks.

Simultaneously, efforts would be undertaken to stabilize the face of the bank for the winter since it is too late for vegetation to grow in before next spring. This would be a significant step forward. Meanwhile, property owners in the threatened north Baxter area continue to put the Town on notice regarding its obligation to protect the road and infrastructure.

Regarding our revetment effort, we have asked the ConCom for a short continuance so all concerned can focus on the geotube/emergency road protection and infrastructure effort. For the September 11 Con Com meeting, we brought Michael Bruno, Dean of the School of Science and Engineering at the Stevens Institute of Technology, to Nantucket to present his conclusions after reviewing our project in detail. ConCom members appeared to be impressed with his review, his credentials and his responses to their questions. We continue to believe our revetment plan can prevail, but it is going to take a bit more time to firmly establish the record in case we need to appeal a Con Com denial.

So, that's where we stand at this moment. In the next few weeks, we should know a lot more about whether the geotube project is moving and what that means for our path forward. We will keep you informed.

Best,

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