

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to report that the Settlement Work Group which consists of top Town officials and SBPF has reached a tentative agreement that will end the Conservation Commission's appeal of the 900-foot erosion control system currently in place on 'Sconset Bluff. This agreement was reported on in the current issue of the Inky and will require support of the Conservation Commission.

As you will recall, earlier this year the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved the geotube structure and related sand mitigation and ongoing monitoring programs. When the Conservation Commission indicated its intent to appeal that ruling, creating the potential for significant additional costs for both the town and SBPF, the Board of Selectmen appointed a Work Group to discuss a possible resolution.

The agreement if adopted by the Con Com would allow SBPF to maintain the 900-foot geotube system for an additional three years, as well as install this fall a fourth geotube tier on designated lots, returns at either end of the structure, and improved vegetation and drainage. SBPF has agreed not to apply for permits to expand the project until January 2018. It is important to note, however, that should major storms create a new emergency threatening our community SBPF would be authorized to press for new protection. The settlement also confirms our previous commitment to provide alternate access to northern Baxter Road if the road is breached and also provides the Town with a One Big Beach agreement in the project area.

This agreement will be reviewed by the Conservation Commission in the coming weeks with an expected vote in September, in time to enable the additional construction to occur this fall.

While we were and continue to be confident in the legal standing for both the existing project and a potential expansion, we believe this settlement will avoid further waste of time and money on litigation. Equally important, the additional years of a successful project will result in islanders becoming more and more comfortable with its benefits. It is important that our community understand that we hope to work as cooperatively as possible in finding a solution to erosion at 'Sconset Beach and Bluff.

Over time we are confident that most people will come to agree that the project is effective and reasonable in this location and does not harm neighboring beaches. As the summer has unfolded, we have seen more than 250 daily visitors at the 'Sconset Bluff viewing area— and each guest has the opportunity to see that the project is working well and it has minimal impact on the visitor experience of those using the beach.

We are confident that the current system provides an important protection for our community and that with the added years of experience and data, we will be in a strong position to move forward with the expanded project we need to protect all of the threatened homes.

Thank you for your continued interest in this project. We will continue to keep you updated on our efforts.

Sincerely,

Josh Posner
President, SBPF