

Letter to Editor:

SBPF critical of BOS chair role

To the Editor:

It is unfortunate that Selectmen chairman Rick Atherton has elected to side with the extreme and uncompromising opposition to efforts to address beach erosion and save both a historic community and critical access to Sankaty Light (in his letter to the editor, "Unhappy with the state's geotube decision"). While we have been working collaboratively in accordance with votes of the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting, it would be nice if the chairman were trying to reconcile conflicting views on our island. Instead, the specter of further legal wrangling appears early and prominently in chairman Atherton's letter.

Continued opposition from such a key leader is particularly disheartening in light of the comprehensive review and analysis of the matter provided by the state's expert agency, the Department of Environmental Protection. Chairman Atherton repeats a number of the very arguments that were specifically addressed and dismissed by DEP as without merit. Has he not read the DEP's 20-page decision?

I am glad to see that chairman Atherton agrees that by providing sufficient sacrificial sand and regular monitoring the Sconset Beach Preservation Fund can assure that neighboring beaches will not be negatively impacted by the erosion-control project at Sconset Beach. That has been a paramount objective for SBPF and chairman Atherton's recognition that the proposed installation can achieve that result is a major step forward.

As to chairman Atherton's objective of maintaining a beach directly in front of the geotubes, Condition 15c of the DEP's Superseding Order of Conditions (SOC) provides precisely the protection he seeks. Hopefully that will satisfy the remainder of his concerns. And there is the further safeguard of a cash escrow to the town to cover the cost of removal if unanticipated harm is found.

It is simply bizarre that selectman Atherton and other opponents refuse to acknowledge that each of the reasons they give for their opposition has been fully addressed. Unfortunately, that doesn't stop them from just repeating their disproven assertions over and over again.

Isn't it now time for the parties to call off their respective lawyers and move forward with what the state has approved? There is much that can be learned for the benefit of the entire island without expending significant additional dollars on an apparently never-ending set of appeals.

Wouldn't we all be well served if that was the direction being advocated by our elected officials?

JOSH POSNER

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