

April 24, 2015

Dear Members of the Nantucket Board of Selectmen:

I am writing to thank you for voting unanimously to support the alternative access route for upper Baxter Road. Even though it is increasingly unlikely that Baxter will need to be closed, we have accepted and met your requirement of putting a back-up plan in place just in case. With a second winter of the geotube project showing success in preventing erosion from the toe of the bluff, we are optimistic that we have found a way to protect Baxter over the long term without harming others.

Our community is pleased to have worked out a voluntary agreement among key property owners to accomplish this alternative access in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in summer 2013. As you know this voluntary agreement saves the Town a costly and potentially divisive eminent domain process that would have been required in order to meet your legal obligations to provide service to all impacted owners. It is critical that the agreement clarifies that the easements provided to the Town across private property are only available if the erosion project fails, not because of a future political decision to force its removal. There had been an energetic effort carried out by some claiming that the alternative route would facilitate the removal of our geotube project. We never agreed to that but the resulting confusion added greatly to the difficulty of working out a voluntary agreement. We are glad that issue has now been put to rest. .

If there is one thing that has become clear through this process it is just how important keeping Baxter Road open is for us all. Losing Baxter will strand numerous private homes, unnecessarily reduces the island's tax base, and ends easy access to Sankaty Lighthouse, one of our island's most popular destinations. We are proud of the way that our community has come together in the midst of a heated and confusing controversy, keeping our eyes on the big picture, and exhibiting a willingness to work cooperatively with the Town.

We hope that this success will enhance the chances for a settlement of the long running disputes with the Conservation Commission and usher in a new era of better cooperation in which we focus on learning as much as we can about how various erosion protection systems actually perform. Preserving what we know as Nantucket for future generations, in the face of global warming and rising sea levels, will require a lot of such learning.

Sincerely,

Josh Posner
President, Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund