

109 Bayswater Ave
Ottawa, ON K1Y 2G2

and

370 Shubael Weeks Path
Tisbury, Massachusetts

July 2, 2020

Martha's Vineyard Commission

Via email to Ms. Jo-Ann Taylor at taylor@mvcommission.org, from rachel.eugster@gmail.com

Re: Proposal to Add Special Ways in Tisbury

Dear Ms. Taylor and Commissioners:

I write for information, out of some confusion about the process that has been followed regarding the proposal to designate Red Coat Hill and Shubael Weeks Path as Special Ways. I have been trying to follow this process as best I can from a distance, made all the more complicated within the context of the pandemic.

As I wrote to you in December, this proposal seemed to come forward without any involvement of the abutting landowners. (Our property lies at the intersection of these two roads.) Indeed, no official notices have reached me from any entity whatsoever, save one from the MVC, announcing the December 19, 2019 hearing, which arrived after that date had already passed.

Thus hampered by distance and spotty information, I have tried to provide input where I could, and my understanding was that the next step would be a public hearing before the MVC. However, I learned last week that this matter has now been not only heard by the Town, but also voted upon and passed—despite the fact that virtually none of the affected land owners were present, or even aware that it had come forward.

Was a step missed, or did I misunderstand the process? Will the landowners now have no opportunity to provide input?

Further, as Mr. Dan Seidman told me himself in a phone conversation when I learned of this matter, his impetus for launching this designation was to protect the ancient pines found along it. I quote from your description: "Alongside the paths are parts of the great Pitch Pine forests on the island. Many are specimen trees and ancient." Yet the town has granted my neighbor permission to cut down one of these very trees on my property, so long as my sisters and I give permission (which we do). What then was the point of the exercise if the designation hampers landowners while failing to protect the trees?

I will repeat my sisters' and my fervent support for preserving the character of these roads. But I also repeat our objection to the omission of landowners from the process that brought this designation forward, as well as our objection to the grandfathering of the existing gates closing these roads, which have caused many bitter disputes. To that I now add an expression of confusion on how this matter bypassed the hearing scheduled before you and came to a vote at the Town.

Thank you for any insight you can provide.

Sincerely,

Rachel Eugster
on behalf of my sisters Erica and Sandra, & myself