From: Barbara Murphy [mailto:88chilmark@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2016 2:09 PM
To: Paul Foley
Subject: squibnocket

Hi Paul; just a few more thoughts to add to the mix.

The road that connects the current parking lot with the homes at Squibnocket point is approximately half a mile long and it is all on the barrier beach, all subject to overwash, all just a sand and dirt road at grade (about 4' above mean high water). Trucks drive on it, old cars drive on it, even fancy new cars drive on it. It works. Reid's argument about a road on the beach not being good enough for today's needs just doesn't hold sand. Much of the decision making throughout this process has been driven by various perceptions of what is and is not permit-able. We should first ask, 'what makes sense' and then figure out how to get it permitted.

Paul, this is a copy of the letter I read at the MVC hearing last night. If you can post it to or give copies to or however you distribute such things to all the commissioners I would much appreciate it. Chris Murphy

Looking at the maps and google earth pictures you have been shown tonight I hope what comes through is that no two of them are the same. The barrier beach-dune-wetland-pond is always changing. The wind blows the top off the dune and slowly fills in the pond, the ocean breaks over the dune and carries a delta of sand and cobble toward the pond, and always the seaward edge keeps moving toward the land. This has been going on since the end of the last ice age and is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. During that time the sea level has risen about 360 feet. That is a hard concept to wrap your head around. To locate that long ago beach from the end of the ice age you would have to go many miles offshore: the issues with Squibnocket beach are not new.

You have heard the applicants present the problems as they see them and you have heard the solutions they propose. You have heard about the political and regulatory process the applicants have gone through. The question is: what is the MVC role here? The MVC is often in the position of making sure the project in question has been through all the important regulatory hoops, in this case they have. The MVC often helps broker compromises between applicants and other effected parties but in this case the town committee appointed by the moderator has worked long and hard to put forward a compromise that both parties could agree to. So what is the MVC's role here today? Maybe the MVC's role today is to bring a little more common sense to the problem in front of you.

The town of Chilmark's plan to remove the revetment and the parking lot and build a new parking area up the hill is a good one. It recognizes the reality of an unstoppable force and finds a place to retreat to. This really is a managed retreat that makes sense and I urge you all to agree and help them on their way.

Squibnocket Farm's plan for a steel and concrete bridge however, is not exactly a poster child for managed retreat. Instead of recognizing the beach, dune, wetland and pond as a living, moving, ever changing thing that we should adjust to, this plan firmly places an immovable object in front of an unstoppable force.

Historically, people and their vehicles have traveled back and forth to Squibnocket farm on the pond side of the dune where the sand and beach rubble meet the wetland. In the last few hundred years this has created a roadway and it has worked well. During the 19th century there was a thriving cod fishery from the

beach right here, with fish shacks and haul-outs for the dories. What the dory fisherman and the farm people had in common besides codfish was their ability to move with the beach and migrate their uses along with the rest of the beach/dune system. But, beginning in the 1950's the town, with the best of intentions, started building a bulkhead and removing the dune to create a parking lot for beach goers. Each time the bulkhead failed we moved it back a bit and built it stronger and higher. Today it is strong and high and still the unstoppable force of the ocean goes over it and under it and around it. Instead of allowing the force of the waves to run up the face of the dunes and dissipate, the revetment channels the wave's energy, blowing a hole in the dune structure. For example, the raised roadway with the stone revetment on both sides that connects the parking lot to the electric gate was built to fill in a gap made by waves hitting the corner of the parking lot revetment and blowing a hole in the dune.

If we follow the town's plan and remove the parking lot structure, the beach can heal and that is a good thing. But if we follow Squibnocket Farm's plan to keep part of the revetment to protect Money Hill so the bridge has a place to end, we are just moving the problem a few feet down the beach. Most of the half-mile long beach road to Squibnocket farm is doing just fine, only the part we have screwed up by placing rock structures in front of it has failed and we can fix that. We can remove the structures we put there. Or, we can continue our mistakes of the past and build more structures.

At the end of your deliberations if you approve the town's proposal and require the Squibnocket Farm proposal to come back with a more ecologically sound plan for a road at grade that moves as the beach-dune moves you would be setting a good example for the Island as a whole. Managing retreat is an Island-wide problem. A road at grade would be a lot cheaper to build in the short term and even with occasional maintenance it will be much, much cheaper than any possible scenario which involves replacing or moving or removing or adding to the proposed bridge. A simple road at grade as close to the pond as possible would have the least impact on the environment today and in the future.

So where are we? The MVC can rubber stamp the deal: beach for bridge. This would allow Squibnocket Farm to place an immovable bridge in the path of the unstoppable sea. Or the MVC can say wait, we are in favor of access but don't do something foolish, go back to the drawing board and try again.

Thank you for listening. Chris Murphy