

My name is Dudley Levick. I am a member of the Edgartown By-Ways Committee. Last winter we began the process that led to this issue being presented before you. We saw the old trails being threatened in two ways. On one hand some paths were being lost to use. They became so overgrown that the people who were using them stopped doing so. There were also instances where landowners discouraged the use of paths with "no trespassing" signs or by incorporating the way into a landscaping project or a driveway, erasing the path. On the other hand, the trails were threatened by being re-invented as access roads to residential development. We found that we did not have clear, explicit legal definition of the status of these ways or of the uses to which they could be put.

The question was further muddled by the fact that Watcha and Pennywise already have sections that serve as vehicular access to residential development. This is a situation that was created incrementally over the last several decades. It is clear that if this process were to be continued, and these roads were to be extended indefinitely, they would become overburdened and dysfunctional. But there was no clear framework in which this problem could be addressed.

We want to create a network of trails for non-motorized traffic using the old rights of way. It seems that the press of circumstance has decided that now is the time to do that. There are several complicated questions involved. We hope that you will accept our request for consideration so that the expertise and authority of the MVC can be used to arrive at a resolution that will be fair and balanced and can serve as a model for dealing with similar situations in the future.

