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**Subject:** Attached letters from Quidnet Squam Association and Robert Greenhill  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 1:40:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [Greenhill Letter.pdf](#)  
[BOS Letter.pdf](#)

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I am attaching two letters which I have been asked to send to the Board of Selectmen by their respective authors. One is a letter from the Quidnet Squam Association; the other is from Robert Greenhill. Both reference the Town's proposal to place geotubes on Sconset Beach. Both reference potential legal action against the Town. And both reference a proposed temporary compromise. The signed originals should arrive today and tomorrow by fedex.

I am copying the individual Selectmen at the email addresses provided on the Town's website.

Regards,  
Dirk

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Dirk Gardiner Roggeveen  
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508-221-0075

# ROBERT F. GREENHILL

November 18, 2013

Mr. Rick Atherton, Chairman  
Nantucket Board of Selectmen  
16 Broad Street  
Nantucket, MA 02554

Re: Opposition to Proposed Geotube Engineering Structure at the Base of Sconset Bluff.

Dear Mr. Atherton:

I write to express opposition to the Town's and Sconset Beach Preservation Fund's proposed geotube installation at the base of the Sconset Bluff, and to suggest an appropriate alternative. Additionally, I write to advise of my intent to join with the Quidnet Squam Association in pursuing legal remedies in the event such an installation is approved by the Conservation Commission and/or the Board of Selectmen.

By way of introduction, my family owns the property just to the north of where Sankaty Bluff ends at Hoicks Hollow, running north to the barrier beach enclosing Sesachacha Pond. Indeed, the Town crosses my property, with my permission, in order to annually open the pond to the ocean. This close-to-three-quarter-mile stretch of pristine shoreline is comprised of barrier beach and beach backed by fragile dunes. The beach itself is an important nesting area for endangered Piping Plovers and Least Terns.

Along with the Quidnet Squam Association, we have been monitoring closely the proceedings before the Conservation Commission, both with reference to the larger revetment proposal as well as to the geotube proposal, in both cases as joint projects between the Town of Nantucket and the Sconset Beach Preservation Fund.

We are convinced that no one, not the Town nor SBPF, has come up with a solution to prevent or appropriately mitigate for the adverse impacts of placing a geotube parallel to the shoreline along the base of Sconset Bluff. The proposed stack of four large smooth geotextile tubes will create, in effect, a stepped seawall, presenting vertical barriers to the ocean. In the event of a storm such a structure will quickly be stripped of any sand veneer and will then present all of the negative consequences testified to at both sets of hearings by experts both for the project proponents as well as those concerned about the project's impact on Nantucket's natural resources and their own property interests.

Nor are we comfortable with the Board's commitment to the temporary aspect of the proposed project. At least one Selectman has stated publicly that he was hoping the geotube installation would be permanent. The time frame presented as necessary for securing alternative access has been inflated. No realistic proposal for removal of the geotube engineering structure has been proposed, and once installed, removing such a structure likely will cause unanticipated damage to the very resources it is proposed to protect. Given these facts, there will be strong incentives against its removal, even as it is causing damage to downdrift beaches. And the history of enforcement against the Town by the Conservation Commission has been checkered at best.

Erosion along the eastern shore is not confined to Sconset Bluff: witness the loss of much of Codfish Park in the late 1990s; witness the erosion at Sankaty Head Beach Club and my family's property just to its north. We are all in this together, and the eventual need to retreat faces all of us. But property owners, including the Town, should not be allowed to "solve" their eroding property issues in a manner that exacerbates the erosion facing others. And just dismissing such concerns as too complex, which we have heard at various times during these hearings, does not provide a free pass to damaging downdrift shoreline.

We have observed how sand-filled jute fabric bags have successfully slowed erosion, while releasing sand into the ocean and the littoral currents during severe storm events. While such soft structures may not stop all erosion, they have proved successful at slowing erosion, which would seem to be the appropriate objective to provide the time necessary to secure and construct alternative access. It also would appear to be the appropriate installation if the Town is concerned with protecting the properties to the north and south, the beaches of which are supplied by sediment eroded from the bluff during storms.

My family and I recognize the Town's dilemma in having to provide alternative access to Baxter Road homes in the event Baxter Road eventually becomes impassible. But we are unwilling to see our property damaged as the result of the Town's late start in addressing the issue.

**We wish to place the Town on notice that we intend to join with the Quidnet Squam Association in pursuing any and all legal remedies available to protect our interests in the face of any approval and/or proposed installation of sand-filled geotextile fabric "geotubes" along the shoreline in such close proximity to our property.**

At the same time, because of our review of the relative environmental merits of the varying installations, we would not challenge the temporary installation of properly designed and permitted sand-filled structures constructed of jute, designed to release sand when necessary during significant storms. We would expect the Town to proceed with securing alternative access for Baxter Road residents with all due speed to insure that the natural sand transport process would be disrupted for the least possible period of time.

We hope that the Town can find its way to an appropriate course of action to deal with its Baxter Road problem without having to become enmeshed in adversarial proceedings. The proposed compromise of an appropriate soft jute-bag solution would accomplish that end.

Sincerely,

*Robert F. Greenhill*

**QUIDNET SQUAM ASSOCIATION**  
**NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS**

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Robi Blumenstein  
*Executive Vice-President*  
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Susan Florence Smith  
Bill Spears  
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November 19, 2013

Rick Atherton, Chairman  
Nantucket Board of Selectmen  
c/o Anne McAndrew, Office Administrator  
16 Broad Street  
Nantucket, MA 02554

Dear Mr. Atherton,

While the Town works to establish alternate access for the affected part of Baxter Road, the QSA will not oppose the installation and use of jute bags as temporary bluff protection, but continues to oppose the geotubes. It is our hope that even if the Con Com should approve the use of the geotubes, the BOS will join us in opposing them: jute bags are more environmentally friendly than geotubes or other revetments and much easier to install and remove. They are also a technology that has already been given limited approval by the Con Com and is now being used in a few places along the bluff and elsewhere on the island.

Should litigation become necessary in opposing the geotubes, the QSA will join the Greenhills and other interested owners of beachfront property in Quidnet and Squam. Nevertheless, I am sure we all understand the need for the Town government and the entire community to respond to what might be the collapse of part of Baxter Road. Something must be done, and the QSA does not oppose the installation of the jute bags to help in this effort.

Sincerely,

Richard Peterson, President  
1158 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY 10029  
as from  
43 Squam Road  
Nantucket, MA 02554

cc: Selectmen:

Bob DeCosta, Vice Chairman  
Bruce Miller  
Matt Fee  
Tobias Glidden