

# Robert F. Greenhill

16 Hoiks Hollow Road  
Nantucket, Massachusetts

Rec. @ 9/2/15  
hearing from  
D. Roogeveen on  
behalf of R. Greenhill

September 2, 2015

Dr. Ernest Steinauer, Chairman  
Nantucket Conservation Commission  
2 Bathing Beach Road  
Nantucket, MA 02554

Re: Continuing Opposition to Coastal Engineering Structures at Sconset Beach

Dear Dr. Steinauer:

I write to express continued opposition to the Town's and Sconset Beach Preservation Fund's geotube installation at the base of the Sconset Bluff, to any future proposals to expand it further, and to the lack of financial guarantees to provide continued nourishment even to the temporary structure currently installed.

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, I have been monitoring closely the proceedings before the Conservation Commission and DEP, in their review of this joint project between the Town of Nantucket and the Sconset Beach Preservation Fund.

My family and I are convinced that no one, not the Town, nor SBPF, nor the DEP, has come up with a solution to prevent or appropriately mitigate for the long-term adverse impacts of placing a geotube parallel to the shoreline along the base of Sconset Bluff. The proposed stack of three or four large smooth geotextile tubes will create, in effect, a stepped seawall, presenting vertical barriers to the ocean. In the event of any significant 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 Town'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. Principals within SBPF continue to talk of future expansion and the construction of a revetment. 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 successful enforcement against the Town by the Conservation Commission has been checkered at best.

Additionally, we have seen no realistic financial guarantees that the sand nourishment required even for the temporary life of the present installation. The costs are potentially staggering, and the obligation will continue indefinitely into the future, so long as coastal engineering structures remain on the beach and interfere with natural shoreline processes. SBPF has provided no such guarantees, nor has the Town of Nantucket.

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 may exacerbate the erosion facing others. And just dismissing such concerns as too complex, which we have heard at various times during these protracted hearings, does not provide a free pass to damaging downdrift shoreline.

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

I recognize that the Conservation Commission is not the agency proposing this project, but it is an agency of the Town of Nantucket. **We wish to place the Town and SBPF, which the Town has voluntarily joined with in this undertaking, that in the event this project causes harm to my property, I will hold SBPF, its officers, and directors personally, and SBPF members and property owners, together with the Town of Nantucket, responsible for all damages financial or otherwise.**

Sincerely,

  
Robert F. Greenhill