

Update # 5 from the Chappy Path Steering Committee

September 20, 2009

We have had a busy summer and want to bring our Chappy neighbors up to date on our activities and plans and ask you for your continued support.

Summer Open Meetings. We held 2 open meetings (in June and July) this summer at the Chappy Community Center to discuss the options for a path along the Chappy road from the Dike bridge to the ferry, as well as three possible demonstration paths and the options for a surface which includes a composition resembling sand. In the July meeting, we reviewed the newly completed survey for Dike Bridge road. The meetings were well attended (40-80) and the discussion was lively. Based on the discussions, we concluded that the best next step was to get the town to sponsor an official process to address the issues of safety and transportation on Chappy.

Selectmen. In August we went to the Selectmen to ask for an *ad hoc* committee to develop a specific plan for a shared use path on Chappaquiddick. We stated that the time has clearly come to move forward with a much needed path for the safety and enjoyment of our residents. We suggested that the committee could develop an engineering feasibility and permitting plan for a shared use path from the Chappy Ferry to the Dike Bridge, options to promote safety and aesthetics, estimate the cost, and report results to the Selectmen. The Selectmen listened to our proposal and the arguments of some of the opponents, and recommended that we go to the Planning Board to see if they would address the safety issue and need for alternatives.

Planning Board. On Tuesday September 1, we met with the Planning Board and presented our proposal that for safety reasons we need to separate the motor vehicles from the pedestrians and bicyclists on the Chappy Road. We illustrated our case with posters of congestion of bikers and cars, of strollers and vehicles and cars passing bikers on blind curves. We went over in some length the survey of the road and possible solutions to the areas where wetlands exist. We also indicated the

potential for initial demonstration paths that could show the feasibility and desirability of a path (the Gardner property, Land Bank property and the Dike bridge road) and be less expensive. We also acknowledged the suggestion of some of the opponents that bike lanes might be an alternative solution. We stated that while the apparent frequency of bike or pedestrian accidents have been low, car-bicycle accidents have occurred in the past and will likely occur in the future with the increasing traffic, size of the vehicles and speed. We indicated that we felt that public safety was a high priority for the government.

We were pleased that the Planning Board listened carefully and asked thoughtful and probing questions. All were able to speak their opinions. The opposition was well represented and made clear and civil arguments against the need of a path. Overall the discussion lasted over an hour. The Planning Board's action was to refer the question to experts on bike paths and transportation at the Martha's Vineyard Commission and urge them to sponsor meetings with advocates of the path and opponents, to develop a base of facts concerning traffic on Chappy and evaluate the need for a path or other solution. After these meetings, the Planning Board will hold a second meeting to discuss the options and recommendations of the MVC.

Chappy Vote. We are planning to sponsor an opinion poll that would give Chappy residents a chance to vote on whether a bike/recreational path is desirable on Chappy and what form it should take. Suggestions on the methodology and questions are welcome.

We need your support. We invite you to join our efforts and be listed as a member of the Chappy Path Committee. You will receive periodic newsletters and a chance to shape our strategy and proposals. **Please respond by email if you or members of your family would like to join the committee.** Also please forward this to your Chappy friends and ask them to contact us if they are interested in updates on the path or helping with the project.