

Dear bike path committee,

Nov 25, 2008

This letter is in response to your recent survey. We object to your reliance on this expedient and premature email survey as a source of data to be quoted and used at town finance committee meetings as grounds for demonstrating support for this bike path project.

Also, in the response to your stated goal of opening up your process to the community, we request that all future email reports and missives to the community, from your group, include the names of its authors.

- 1. Informing Voters and Transparency** - Community members learn about and process issues in diverse ways. Your email campaign alone leaves many people out. If your intention is to include all members in the process, you must give them much more than these expedient, non-transparent email surveys. It is much too early in the development of your project to ask people to vote on: a) the concept of a bike path that represents such a drastic, permanent change to Chappaquiddick, and b) spending limited state and local tax dollars for a proposal that remains unpopular and serves a minority of the community, especially during this time of widespread financial difficulties.
- 2. Permanent Change** – The ‘wide community input’ you seek can only be accomplished after providing us with more detailed information. You are requesting funding for a Permanent Change to Chappaquiddick, one that holds many potentially negative impacts on our quality of life here. Some impacts that require examination are: the disturbance of much loved and sometimes rare floral and wildlife habitat, scenic and rural character of our views and country roads, and uncompromising encroachment on Chappy family properties.
- 3. Special consideration** is required at countless points along the proposed path. There are multiple instances of: telephone pole relocation, road relocation, bridge building over wetlands, walkway construction over habitat, driveway intersections, roadside clearing, scraping and grading, roadway intersections, etc. Your committee is best served by a transparent, thorough examination of as many of these as possible, prior to soliciting ‘yes or no’ approvals.
- 4. Seeking quick approval** – It is unfair to expect a quick approval without spending time conducting multiple public meetings with comment periods, where details such as those above, are submitted for review and discussion among community and family members. Many people will be adversely impacted over the long term by the construction and existence of a permanent bicycle path 6-12 feet wide along our rolling country roads. Long term consequences require more discussion.

5. **Environmental impact** – There is nothing ecologically friendly about road construction, use of heavy equipment, asphalt production, installation and maintenance. These and all other environmental costs should be included in any determination of the project's value.
6. **Existing Bike Path** – Our town of Edgartown offers an excellent bike path easily reached from town. Chappaquiddick families can quickly access and enjoy that type of bicycling experience with a short ride on the ferry.
7. **Summer Traffic** – The high traffic period of concern lasts only 2 months of the year and usually repeats the ferry pattern of '3 cars at a time'. This does not call for an urban bike path system and permanent elimination of the historic and robust quality of Chappaquiddick's scenic and rural roadside character, nor any significant investment of limited public resources.
8. **Improving Ferry-Bicycle Traffic:** The bike path committee has claimed this to be a primary objective. Ferry owner Peter Wells has the option of petitioning the town to assist with the Chappy Point bicycle traffic issue by marking out a narrow lane on the inside of the automobile waiting line. Ferry operators can direct bikers to that lane when disembarking. This could be implemented right away, on a trial basis. Kudos to him for this simple, non-intrusive solution.
9. **Place for children on bikes** – Is it possible there is a small piece of land that could be made into a park for the children of Chappaquiddick? Could we make a safe place for our youngsters to play and learn to ride their bikes without being in the road at times when there are too many cars? We look forward to this type of place where we can bring our two grandchildren and our bikes and skates and play together.
10. **In closing,** I would ask about the prior effort to bring a bike path to Chappy. I understand that many people put their valuable time and energy toward answering the questions of 'Why and Why Not' construct a bike path on Chappaquiddick. Are we repeating their hard work? Are any of the answers to be found in the files of that effort?

Respectfully,

Geoffrey Kontje and Norma Costain Kontje

ncostain@msn.com