

(Copy and pasted, received via e-mail.)

Dear Commissioners:

SBPF appreciates the discussion held at the 2/16/23 meeting. We recognize that efforts to protect Baxter Road and the bluff community take an inordinate amount of your time and attention. While we disagree with many of your actions and decisions, we acknowledge the substantial effort that you, as public service volunteers and Town staff, are putting into this project. The Commission appears generally to support the plans for removal of the geotube project developed by Mark Haley of Haley & Aldrich. Based on your comments and questions, we will submit more detailed plans, as requested. In accordance with prior agreements with the Town and permits from the ConCom, SBPF remains committed to carrying out the ConCom's removal order.

At the same time, we strongly believe that removing the geotubes is unnecessary, wasteful and harmful to many important island interests, including interests protected under the Wetlands Protection Act. As such we continue to be disappointed that the Commission is so dead set on removal, refusing even to consider the compliance and other plans developed in conjunction with and co-sponsored by the Town that would lead to a mutually acceptable resolution of the current morass. The Commission has the authority to revise its enforcement order, and we believe it is remarkably foolish for it to refuse to work with the Town toward a safe and environmentally appropriate solution.

We recognize, as we stated in our 10/5/22 letter to Chair Erisman (attached), that our failure to comply with the terms of the OOC has contributed to the unfortunate situation that we now face. As said in that letter, in retrospect we regret not terminating our role in the project at the end of 2020 when the Commission dismissed the recommendations of the Working Group formed by the Select Board. We have apologized for not doing so. At that time, we were optimistic, as were the Town's leaders, that with the help of newly hired Arcadis, a new page might be turned in the relationship with the Commission and the impasse would be resolved over permitting modifications to the pilot project needed from the outset to make it sustainable. Unfortunately, that has not happened.

The Commission has requested that, despite the impending removal of the geotubes and the withdrawal of our application that would expand the existing project, that we take responsibility for re-covering the geotubes as they are exposed by storms using the existing sand on the top of the project. As previously stated, we have stopped all maintenance and monitoring activities. The Commission knows, and as has been explained by many coastal experts including Robert Young and Greg Berman (the Commission's advisor), any negative impacts from exposed geotubes happen over a period of years, not weeks or months. Moreover, as soon as removal occurs a large volume of sand will immediately be available for contribution to the littoral system from the sand inside and behind the tubes, along with the sand on the bluff face that will soon collapse to the beach. However, in an effort to respond cooperatively to your request, SBPF proposes to have the geotubes re-covered with sand from the top of the geotubes in early April (within approximately 45 days), and if need be, again in June.

With respect to the request in Chair Erisman's February 23, 2023, letter for SBPF to file an annual report for 2022, we disagree that an annual report is required. The Commission has ordered that the project be removed, and we are in the process of removing it. Additional monitoring studies and reports would be an unnecessary expenditure of resources. We submit that it is unreasonable for the Commission to order, on the one hand, that the project must be removed and, on the other hand, that SBPF must continue to provide monitoring and reports as though the geotubes were going to remain in place. Please note however, that the concerns about sand delivery raised at last week's meeting are addressed by the quarterly reports which show that the full annual volume for 2022 as required by the permit was delivered on time. These reports also show that there continues to be no change in nearby beaches attributed to the geotubes.

We recognize and share your frustration with this complicated situation. If the Town can devise a reasonable alternative to removal of the geotubes, we are open to working collaboratively to implement it. Absent that development, as ordered, we will continue on the unfortunate path of removal, despite its avoidable negative impacts to our community and the entire island.

Sincerely,

Josh Posner, President, SBPF

Meridith Moldenhauer, SBPF Board member

Cc: Libby Gibson, Select Board