

Feb. 22, 2010

To: The Edgartown Board of Selectmen  
The Edgartown Planning Board  
Re: The "Chappy Path Committee"

Dear Edgartown Selectmen and Planning Board Members:

Once again a minority of Chappaquiddick residents who favor the construction of a paved bike path on Chappaquiddick have found a way to push this unwanted and unnecessary project forward against the wishes of the majority of Chappaquiddick residents who strenuously oppose it:

They have underwritten a class project by a group of students at a Boston university to propose "options" for such a path – and have apparently maneuvered town officials on both your two boards into appearing to support the bike-path project itself.

As a homeowner on Chappaquiddick whose family has been connected to this extraordinary island community for almost a century, I dearly hope this is not so. A "mixed use bike path" – if built -- will have one and only one certain consequence for Chappaquiddick: it will bring hundreds if not thousands of additional visitors to the island every year and put the special qualities of the island at serious risk. This might be desirable for various commercial interests on the island, but not for the majority of Chappaquiddick residents who love the rural pace and quiet intimacy of the island as is. One thing is for sure: It will change the character of the island forever. It will cause more speed and more congestion on the macadam and dirt roadways, create longer and more frustrating lines for the ferry, despoil significant portions of island wetland and vegetation in its construction, spend thousands of taxpayer dollars that are in short supply, and inevitably lead to further intrusions on the quality of Chappaquiddick life.

Supporters of the path say it will make the road safer. I would ask: *Safer than what?* Unlike the roadways of Edgartown (and every other Vineyard town), there has never – repeat *never* – been a pedestrian or bicyclist fatality on a Chappy roadway caused by a motorist.

With all due respect, I would submit that the Edgartown Planning Board and Highway Department should not be holding public hearings on the merits of a student class project in Boston concerting options for a bike path on Chappaquiddick.

The question is not what the options are for a bike path that most Chappaquiddick residents reject. The only valid question at this point is whether any such bike path is necessary or desirable. The answer is a resounding "NO."

Yours truly,

Timothy Leland  
Chappaquiddick and Boston