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Chilmark Planning Board:

A specific size restriction on homes is misguided if it does not reflect the circumstances of individual properties. Some properties can tolerate much larger homes than others. Furthermore, the proposed limit of 3,500 sq ft is not a reasonable starting point. If this discussion proceeds, it should start above 5,000 sq ft.

Size is a complicated issue with many ramifications. Before going down this road, we should ask why now for this discussion. It seems driven by the dispute between the Iscol and Zoia families. I do not know the details but would be inclined to side with the Iscols because they have been dedicated caretakers of our environment for many years. That being said, why should a dispute between neighbors jumpstart a crusade against house size?

A house size debate should arise because of a Chilmark problem not a neighbor dispute. And I ask, where is the Chilmark problem. I have been on North, Middle and South Roads daily for the last thirty years. I see no large homes along these roads. I often wonder how our roads could remain so beautiful and pristine with the growth and development during the last thirty years. I have also been on Menemsha, Squibnocket and Chilmark Ponds and see little change there too.

I look at the Squibnocket area development. Squibnocket Point is approximately 600 acres consisting of Squibnocket Farm and Squibnocket Associates. 15 home sites on such a large area is modest by any development standards. I suspect few if any areas along the eastern seaboard would have done as well. I see the same in the Herring Creek area in Edgartown. After contending with many development proposals, Herring Creek ended up with only a handful of homes on approximately 200 acres. Another remarkable achievement!

To be sure, Chilmark has some large new homes. Likely, the number of homes over 5,000 sq ft has risen. But size alone is not the issue. Visibility is the issue and many of these large homes blend nicely into the terrain and are well landscaped. If the issue is visibility and unsightliness, towns should not just focus on large homes since there are many unsightly properties visible from Vineyard roads which are not large.

The bottom line is simple. Chilmark should have a problem before finding a solution. I see no problem.

Robert Kenney
Chilmark resident