

November 24, 2018

Dear Members of the Chilmark Board of Selectmen,

As you know from my remarks at our special town meeting, I am completely opposed to the construction of the bus turnaround in Menemsha. I have written multiple letters to the Planning Board, attended meetings, and had conversations about the topic.

Although the townspeople approved the expenditure of funds to create said turnaround that does not mean it is a good idea or that we actually need to spend the money. I do commend the Planning Board on the time they have spent addressing issues regarding Menemsha, but in this particular instance, I feel as if a "tunnel vision" approach was taken. Simpler alternative options, which have been suggested over the past number of months, have not been thoroughly exhausted.

My most recent letter to the Planning Board, dated November 14, summarized a number of suggestions I have made over the past months. My letter began with the following paragraph, which still rings true today:

As I look out my window at work, my eye is constantly caught by the fluttering orange surveyors tape fastened to the tops of the stakes laid out marking the proposed bus turnaround. I continue to feel dismayed by the forward progression of this plan and have found myself with sleepless nights trying to figure out why the forward momentum of this concept is a good idea.

I have talked to many townspeople and visitors and even initiated an informal Instagram survey. 96% of the folks who replied to my survey were opposed to the idea. Although the item passed, I do not think we should continue on with this particular project before trying other less costly and less invasive ideas. We need to do this because we need to continue to be good stewards to the lands in our town.

I politely request that you seek alternate options for the construction of the bus turnaround, at minimum for the summer of 2019. Let us address the parking lot congestion by reconfiguring the space we currently have. This concept is both less costly and less invasive. By the end of the summer we will be able to evaluate if this solution alleviates the problem.

I would like to propose the following:

Repaint the existing parking lot to maximize use of the current area provided. Continue to utilize the current bus stop location. This can easily be done without disruption of any of the open area vistas we currently enjoy and will eliminate the

need to create the proposed bus turnaround. It is a far less costly alternative that does not have such a drastic visual impact and actually lends itself to remedying the issues of overall traffic flow.

My reasons are as follows:

1. The change in the aesthetical beauty of this open space covered in grasses and roses (and, yes, poison ivy!) this construction will create is phenomenal.
2. This proposal does not solve the congestion that will continue to occur in the main portion of the Menemsha parking lot. Folks “buzzing the bight,” delivery trucks (of which there are numerous large box-style trucks in the congested months), errand runners, beach goers, commuters, and so on will continue to be impacted by the “pinch” point where the “road” portion of the lot opens up into the main section of the parking area.
3. Having the bus continue on its regular pattern of pulling over at the comfort station then continuing around the parking lot is actually an asset to the traffic officers who utilize the presence of the bus to keep cars flowing.
4. One huge issue with this proposal is that the buses cross the beach-restroom walkway! If this is implemented, folks will now have to navigate through vehicular traffic on a walkway that was created in order to alleviate just this issue! We are putting our children back into harm’s way once again.

Additional suggestions are:

1. Request smaller buses. The VTA should meet OUR needs not vice versa. (*On a similar note, have you heard the VTA has requested that the town of Edgartown cut down the big beautiful trees on Church Street to accommodate the buses? Wow.)
2. If Option 1 is not feasible, then stop the #4 bus from coming down the hill into Menemsha. Have it connect with the #12 at both the LDO and the CCC.
3. If necessary, after reconfiguring the parking lot layout, designate certain spaces for use by compact cars only.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gratefully,

Katie Carroll