

Dear Selectman and Town officials,

I am writing to let you know I am extremely against the plan of creating a bus turn around in Menemsha as the plan is currently laid out. It is our duty as stewards of this land to not perpetuate further destruction of natural and wild places, rich with living organisms and beauty for the benefit of our economy and convenience of visitors.

There must alternatives and I urge you to consider them.

Thank you very much,

Deb Dunn

Tue 12/11/2018 5:57 PM

To Chilmark Selectmen and Planning Board

From: Bob Klimm, 2 Creek Hill, Menemsha

Ladies, Gentlemen:

The attached letter prepared by Katie Carroll was forwarded to me from Barbara Armstrong. **I am an abutter to the proposed bus turnaround project, but do not believe I have ever received notifications from the Town concerning the current proposal for this project.**

I have tried to follow this project, and attended a town meeting a year or two ago. Ms. Carroll's letter is extremely well-written and summarizes the key negative issues associated with the proposed bus turn-around project. I concur with the entire content of that email.

My concerns have been primarily:

- The current proposal results in a direct, negative impact to my property at 2 Creek Hill from a visual and noise perspective. I have not been notified of the progress of the project – and have not been asked how the impact of the current proposal could be minimized by screening or other options.
- It is not the best location from a traffic circulation, pedestrian circulation, and safety standpoint. The destination of most of the people on the bus is the beach.
- The project will impact a vegetative wetland, and a saltwater marsh in a very sensitive area. It is hard to believe that the Conservation Commission would allow this option to go forward.
- It may be more convenient to the Bus Company, but that should not be a primary factor in the decision. If the area impacted by the current proposal was just added to the current parking lot area, a solution could be developed to address local parking and bus company issues, while impacting a much less environmentally sensitive area.

I am against the current proposal, but if the Town goes forward with it, could you at least add substantial bush and beach tree screening that could reduce some of the visual impact of the project to our, and our neighbors properties. I would be happy to discuss this with the Town, at your convenience.

Best regards,

Bob Klimm
2 Creek Hill, Menemsha
Tue 12/11/2018 3:55 PM

Dear Tim,

Sarah and I have added our signatures to the petition that Katie Carroll is circulating among registered voters requesting a Special Town Meeting to reconsider the proposal to construct a bus turnaround adjacent to the comfort station and parking area in Menemsha. We were travelling abroad at the time of the November 19th meeting unfortunately, which from the minutes appears to have been rather sparsely attended. I would ask that you relay to the Selectmen the views outlined below as they consider what steps to take in connection with further review of this proposal

As someone who is in Menemsha nearly every day during the fishing season and also the owner of property on Harbor Hill Road, I have had the opportunity to observe the traffic and visitor situation for almost 40 years. Some features of the proposed plans are very positive solutions such as the new footpath along Basin Road. In the summer when there are many cars driven by people who are unfamiliar with the narrow road and the large volume of pedestrians, there is a genuine issue of safety. Indeed, this is a serious concern all year round due to the restricted sightlines. By contrast, the bus turnaround is a "solution in search of a problem." It is indisputable that it will effect a significant permanent change in the character of the area by encroaching on open land. I think it would be conceded by all parties that at its maximum extent, the VTA buses only have an issue for six to eight weeks of the year. As has been discovered by urban planners and highway engineers over the past decades, it is very unrealistic and naive to adopt a static view of use patterns. Case studies of major highways such as the 405 freeway in Los Angeles that were expanded repeatedly to relieve traffic congestion show that most often, these projects simply end up attracting more traffic and the congestion is relieved only briefly. It is quite probable that the bus turnaround will do the same thing on a small scale. There will be no practical way to restrict its use and it will end up facilitating more traffic in an already congested area, ironically quite possibly impeding use by the VTA buses.

A cheaper, simpler, less disruptive solution can be found within the existing confines of the paved areas. As has been suggested by others, a careful redesign of the designated parking spots in the beach parking area should be able to facilitate the VTA operations. In addition, the VTA can use buses that are more suited to the scale of Menemsha and the limited volume of rider traffic.

One of the greatest strengths of Chilmark's governance over the years has been the caution of the Selectmen in preserving the rural character of the Town against the ever growing pressures of suburbanization to accommodate more and more cars and traffic. In a way, Chilmark's reluctance to change now puts it at the vanguard of modern planning. Major cities and small towns around the world are inverting the traditional approaches of building more roads and parking by closing off existing roads to create pedestrian zones. The cars are left to fend for themselves and people adapt by using public transport, bicycles and walking more. Somewhat counterintuitively, traffic congestion actually declines

I would strongly urge the Selectmen to reconsider the bus turnaround proposal and follow the long traditions of the Town -- don't spend money and don't change things without a very compelling reason.

Yours very truly,

Fred Khedouri. Fri 12/7/2018 9:49 AM

For the Chilmark Selectmen

We write to express our extreme concern and distress at the proposal to invade a wetland and a cherished scenic view by building parking and a bus turnaround.

While we live and vote in West Tisbury, we are Menemsha property owners and Chilmark tax payers. We are lucky to be the current owners of a 100-plus year old historic cottage on Harbor Hill Road and we take our duty to preserve it seriously, since it is part of the fabric and beloved character of this uniquely unspoiled traditional fishing port.

We hope you will also take your custodianship seriously. This proposal will have a serious, deleterious and irredeemable impact on the vista and character of the little village, while doing nothing significant to promote safety or relieve automobile congestion.

Furthermore, it makes a travesty of Massachusetts's stringent wetlands protections. Our West Tisbury residence is in a wetland so we are intimately familiar with the goals and constraints of the MA Rivers Act and its attendant regulations. To invade and degrade a salt marsh flies in the face of all reason and is in total contravention of the intentions of the legislation which all citizens of this state must abide by.

Regards

Geraldine Brooks and Tony Horwitz Thu 12/6/2018 5:27 PM

16 Mill Road West Tisbury

21 Harbor Hill Road Chilmark

Tim,

I seem to remember you saying a BOS meeting in the spring, that an agency from off island determined that the area for the bus turn around was dredge spoil, thierfor not a dune. Can you send me that report.

Thank you,

Debbie Tue 12/4/2018 11:22 AM

Hi Deb,

It is labeled that way on the site plan that was submitted with the Town's ConCom permit application. Doug Cooper delineated the area.

Chuck Wed 12/5/2018 8:11 AM

Dear Selectmen,

Although you all know how I feel, I will add my voice to my two neighbors for the record. I believe there is an alternate, and less costly plan for the existing bus turnaround that could be achieved by having the VTA use smaller buses for all runs. It is hard to accept a bus turnaround that was built to accommodate the VTAs largest buses for this small village, especially when so many of them are empty. Smaller buses and the removal of some parking spots (current plan removes 7) should allow for a reconfiguration of the beach parking to accommodate the buses. On paper the current plan may seem like the easiest plan, but it doesn't make it the best plan. I hate to see the degradation of this natural area. This is our watch, we need to protect what we have.

Thank you.

Barbara

Fri 11/30/2018 6:40 AM

Hi Warren,

I have read Katie's letter and she makes many valid points.

The bus out of the parking lot is not going to spare us congestion or less safety issues anymore than it already does. There are many larger vehicles such as landscape trucks with trailers, large construction trucks, trucks with boat trailers, school buses, suburbans etc... I think reconfiguring the parking lot spaces is the best alternative.

When was the last time an engineer did this? and what would be the cost of this? It would be a lot less money and there would be no impact on the natural habitat.

If we are going to remove (7) parking spaces with this turnaround just remove (7) spaces in the parking lot and allocate compact car parking spaces which

would definitely make a difference. Surely there is an engineer that has the ability to make this happen.

As mentioned regarding the VTA, the buses are smaller in the day and bigger at sunset. I have been living here and working here in Menemsha now seven or so

years, most of the buses are empty. What was discussed with the VTA? The questions at the town meeting and in Katie's letter regarding other options for the

VTA were valid solutions regarding re-routing. Menemsha is special. It is a small fishing village not a resort area. You cannot make it bigger. We should be protecting it

not destroying it.

I believe Katie's points are valid. The less invasive impact on the environment is the best solution. It should be considered first. A design by an engineer of a

reconfiguration of the parking lot should be the first step.

I appreciate all the effort and hard work the town has put into this project but I still do not understand why a design by a professional engineer of the parking

lot has not been considered first?

Thank you,

Annette Wed 11/28/2018 8:20 PM

Hello all,

Please see the attached letter regarding the bus turn around.

I realize a lot of effort was put into researching what is best for Menemsha, but I simply cannot agree that the proposed bus turn around is it. Although I truly appreciate the effort of the Planning Board I still feel as if we can do better for our community.

I would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt.

Thank you,

Katie Tue 11/27/2018 7:47 PM

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