

To: Chilmark Board of Selectmen
Cc: Chilmark Conservation Commission

From: Catherine Thompson

July 31, 2017

Re: Menemsha Marsh walkway

The purpose of this letter is to request that the Board of Selectmen consider keeping a walkway across the marsh open, in an environmentally sound and safe way. It's a part of our neighborhood appreciated by taxpayers and other users. The path provides benefits to the greater community, as well.

Conservation of the salt marsh is most important. There exist environmentally appropriate solutions for walkways, such as the one just installed in Aquinnah. See this relevant article in the July 20, 2017 Vineyard Gazette:

[\[https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2017/07/20/walk-sea-me-once-more\]](https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2017/07/20/walk-sea-me-once-more)

More than 30 taxpayer households, their visitors, families, and friends as well as guests of the Inns, use the walkway. The path is quite busy in-season with all ages going to the harbor, beach, shopping, and restaurants. Five generations of my family have used the path. A path across the marsh is part of Chilmark's centuries-long heritage; in our neighborhood's property deeds, there is a right-of-way to Vineyard Sound.

The path is in regular use year-round. In the busy season, the path provides an alternative to driving. Crossing the marsh to the harbor reduces car traffic in Menemsha and offers an alternative to walking on the narrow sides of busy North Road. This reduction of traffic is a benefit to the greater community.

Funding considerations exist. Chuck Hodgkinson has explored funding options for walkways on behalf of the town, with two options presented. Other solutions may be available.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request to keep the path open for our neighborhood and community.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thompson