

**Town of West Tisbury**  
PLANNING BOARD  
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RECEIVED

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June 29, 2015

Martha's Vineyard Commission  
DCPC  
P.O. Box 1447  
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Commissioners:

The Planning Board has been asked by Jo Ann Taylor to submit a letter to you explaining the reason we voted unanimously to truncate the designated special way on Old Coach road. This would be to respond to the Land Bank letter in which they ask you to vote to designate the whole length as originally requested.


When we were originally asked (by the West Tisbury Board of Selectmen) it was a last minute request and in order to include it with the other requests for designation and meet the deadline, we had to act in haste. In fact we did have some concerns about the designation so we did some research subsequent to submitting the request. Further we met with Paul Bangs, representing the Bangs family who own a large parcel in the area. We learned that the legal access to the Bangs property is not from State Road, as we had believed, but through the Island Farms Road Subdivision, and that the Bangs family actually holds a 40' right of way easement into their property over the Old Coach Road. At our public board meeting of April 13, 2015, Paul Bangs appeared before us to provide further information and to express his concerns about the designation of the portion of the special way that travels over the family's vacant 25 acre parcel of land (Map 16, Lot 118, 101 Old Coach Road). He confirmed that when the adjoining subdivision was allowed, a 40' right of way easement was granted by the developers to the Bangs family. Mr. Bangs explained that this property has been in his family for over 150 years. He does visit the property to cut firewood and to walk around a parcel that he loves. He said that he has always welcomed pedestrians to walk across the property and has posted signs encouraging walkers to do so. Some decades ago, his parents gave an easement (at no cost) so that electricity could be provided to a number of properties on Old County Road although the Bangs have no right of access along that easement (from State Road).

Mr. Bangs explained to the board that he and his siblings have been preserving the lot for their children and grandchildren. He fears that the lot could possibly become land locked and become un-sub dividable if the special way were to travel over his land. He and his family do not want to deprive their future generations the ability to use and enjoy the land.

Acting upon this new information the Planning Board voted unanimously to slightly shorten the length of the special way by removing the portion through the Bangs property. We have considered the alternatives and have discussed this several times and the board stands firmly by that vote. We feel that it was the right and proper thing to do. Further at our Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted in favor of the special way at the amended length, and to have it extend only to where it intersects with the boundaries between Map 16, Lots 125.27 and 125.28.

We have found the Bangs family to be very responsive to our concerns about special ways, and very cooperative in every way. We feel unanimously that they have been exceptionally good stewards of their property, and that we acted properly and in good faith. We also feel unanimously that to deprive them, potentially, of a viable way into their property so that they can continue to use the land, and possibly create several lots for their family would be confiscatory. Finally, to extend the designation to the longer length, with the various ramifications, would send a bad message to other land owners with long held family properties.

Best regards,

  
Virginia C. Jones, Chairman

Cc: Ernie Thomas  
Linda Sibley  
WT Board of Selectmen  
WT Byways Committee