



CHILMARK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOX 180  
CHILMARK, MASSACHUSETTS 02535

Date: September 14, 2012  
To: Chilmark Board of Selectmen  
From: Chilmark Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
Re: Beetlebung Corner congestion created by Community Center events.

We are concerned about the impact of events held at and sponsored by the Chilmark Community Center on other town activities, including the offerings of the Martha's Vineyard Film Festival's Wednesday summer series and the timing of the CCC morning adult classes. Library patrons are having difficulty getting access to our building and we hope you can help us find a solution.

The film festival has grown appreciably every year and now draws 600 or more customers to Beetlebung Corner every Wednesday. This year they've added outdoor music entertainment and instituted a plan to increase attendance at the early family festival called Cinema Circus. For several years, the festival has routinely attracted substantially more people than available parking spaces throughout town. We also share a water supply and septic system with the Community Center and fear that this volume of use, occurring on an evening when the library also has programs scheduled and is full, is overtaxing these systems.

We field complaints every week from town residents and taxpayers who tell us that they are frequently unable to get to the library on Wednesdays because every available parking space in town - at the library, the Community Center, the Post Office, the school and the Bank - are already taken. There are cars parked all along the shoulders of the road as well. The library is open until 7:30 on Wednesdays and that is when we hold programs. Our schedule is part of an island-wide cooperative effort, set decades ago, to provide evening library services to the island. We are the only up-island library open late on Wednesdays and we offer services to the entire island. Chilmark patrons are likewise served by our neighboring towns on other evenings.

This year the festival organizers placed a teenaged volunteer parking lot attendant at our driveway on Wednesday evenings. Even with this volunteer we still have had incidents of festival customers ignoring his instructions and parking in our lot, blocking our handicapped access ramp, parking illegally and blocking legally parked patrons from accessing their vehicles.

When the summer film festival began several years ago with a movie beginning at 8 p.m. it was a very nice complement to the library's long-standing Wednesday night lecture series, which is held at 5:30. Overflow parking for our lecture series was available at the Community Center and the library parking lot was available for movie customers. Since then they've added dinner service, music entertainment, an early children's movie, an outdoor family festival, and food service at the early festival as well. From an 8 p.m. movie, the festival has grown into a weekly multi-media entertainment event. Each incremental expansion has made it more difficult for us to serve our patrons on Wednesday evening.

Our summer lectures drew an average of 55 people in 2011. This was down from an average of 74 people in 2010 by design – we reduced our advertising in 2011 because of the number of people telling us every week that they drove all the way here and could not park. By comparison, the early children's movie and family festival draws an average of 150 people and the festival overall routinely draws more than 600 customers each week.

We don't dispute the value of the programming the festival offers – people from all over the island choose to pay to attend. However, we don't think this business, which offers a product for a fee to customers from the entire island, should be permitted to overwhelm the taxpayer-supported services of the Chilmark Free Public Library. We believe it is imperative that our residents and taxpayers have access to this town department during its regular hours of operation.

We have asked the Film Festival organizers to consider moving their entire festival or just the early children's portion to another night, when there would be ample parking available and their expansion plans would not interfere with the operation of a town department. They declined and instead announced plans to attract even more people to town on Wednesday evenings.

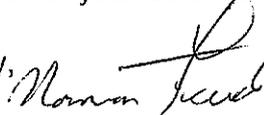
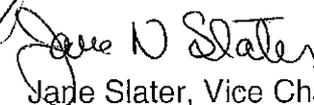
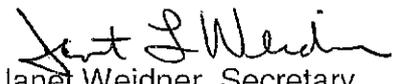
We also experience a daily parking problem with the CCC adult classes and camp families. The CCC programming committee this year agreed to move the daily yoga class back to 9 -10:30 a.m. This has greatly improved the parking congestion but we are concerned that the committee has said they may move the class back to a later time.

Their two-year experiment of holding yoga classes at 10:30-noon created significant disruption and confusion for library patrons, bank customers and CCC customers as well. Their yoga customers overtook the CCC parking lot and the library parking lot. Library customers could not get to our building during our busiest morning hours. When parents arrived at noon to pick up campers there was no place for them to go. It was a daily nightmare of people taking over the library lot, including illegally parking in our handicapped spot, on our lawn and over our access ramp and sometimes even abandoning their cars in the middle of the library lot, blocking in the cars legally parked here.

We hope the Board of Selectmen can assist addressing these problems and we hope that solutions to these issues can be found by next month so that we can begin planning for next year. We ask that the Board of Selectmen set up a meeting of all of the stakeholders, including businesses and all other entities which are located in the

Beetlebung Corner area. The goal would be to develop a solution that would allow library patrons to have reasonable access to our building during our regular hours and would promote the safety of the public who are accessing all of the businesses located in our town center

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,     
Norman Freed, Chairman      Jane Slater, Vice Chairman      Janet Weidner, Secretary