

**Aquinnah voters cried uncle**

To the Editor:

Aquinnah Board of Selectman Chairman, Carl Widdis, is quoted last week as expressing "encouragement that the voters are starting to be more reasonable with regards to Town finances." His remark came after Town voters approved the very same funding requests from the Aquinnah selectmen that they had turned down three times in row, earlier this year.

Carl Widdis is a strong person. He is a smart person. And, especially, he is a witty person. But, in this case, his judgment is far off base, I believe. And, in fact, I am not so sure he might not at least partially agree, in retrospect, as he looks his own words over, again.

The selectmen didn't end up getting most of the funds they asked for, last Thursday evening because there was a 'charm' in the room that night, because there had been a mass epiphany in Town, or because the selectmen had offered anything new to think about (at least not that most people knew about). They got their money this time because — as a friend of mine put it — the people of Aquinnah cried 'Uncle.'

But let the record show, they didn't cry 'uncle' because they were weak. They cried 'Uncle' because they are good people. They voted for those monies because a majority of the people of Aquinnah did not want to hurt the employees and other barely-reimbursed public officials trying to do their job without proper funding. They had nowhere to go, this time, except to say, "OK."

The turning down earlier this year of three similar (but substantially larger) funding requests from the selectmen, in relatively short succession, was a protest — over a grave lack of financial planning in Town. The last two rejections made plain the meaning of the first one.

So, under the circumstances, last week's vote, hardly empowers Carl to say, "I think this chapter is finally closed" and that he is "encouraged that the voters are starting to be more reasonable...."

What I think it means — reducing things to their essence — is that the selectmen toughed out their own people. What kind of satisfaction could anyone get from that?

Carlos Montoya  
Aquinnah

**Indifferent to voter concerns**

To the Editor:

The town of Aquinnah held a special town meeting on Dec. 16, during which the voters spent about \$55,000 from our stabilization fund in a show of good faith to restore money previously denied by the voters in Proposition 2.5 overrides. This puts the town on a frugal but responsible path for the balance of this fiscal year. That is the good news.

The bad news is that selectman Jim Newman again failed to even pretend to care about the concerns of town voters.

In response to a question from the floor concerning the costs associated with our federal housing project, Mr. Newman said he did not care about the \$500,000 it

costs the town and did not want to hear about it.

He said he does not care, but Beverly Wright cared. Donald Widdiss cares. Many tribal members care a great deal as it affects their taxes. Jennie Greene cares. Peter Temple of the planning board cares.

All these caring people see that the town was promised by the federal government and the state when they forced the project on the town against the financial concerns of our town boards, that we as a town would get relief from the project's burdens.

A positive aspect of the voters' refusal to keep funding a board of selectmen not responsible to the voters of the town on this as well as other issues is that the search for impact aid and other possible sources of funds has been begun in earnest. With the help of the tribe and diligent efforts of other townspeople and boards we may be able to make substantial progress in the long run.

Mr. Newman's refusal to understand that the wish for relief from a well intentioned but poorly detailed plan to provide federal housing for people is not an anti-tribal but anti-federal issue.

The tribe did not promise the town relief, and the townspeople are not suggesting the tribe pay for their students. We only want the selectmen to get us what we were promised when the original deal was signed. If Mr. Newman does not care, we should find some people who do.

John Walsh  
Member Finance Committee  
Aquinnah