

EASY AS ONE, TWO, THREE

I dropped in on a friend who was recovering from foot surgery the other day. He was showing me a large oak tree off his back deck that a recent storm had done a terrible number on. He was sure it couldn't be saved and was waiting until he recovered and was planning on taking it down himself.

He went on to say that at the same time he was going to cut some limbs here and there on his property to recover a view of the water that he used to have.

Reminding him that I was a Conservation Commissioner for Chatham, and that he would be wise to check with the Agent in the office before starting that chain saw, almost caused him to have apoplexy. "Why?", he cried. "Because I can see that you are within 100 feet of the water and therefore under Cons Com regulations." I said.

"Oh, I'm talking to the wrong person", he said, "I don't want anyone on my property telling me what to do. And you'll never let me take down the tree or let me have a couple of views of the water. And I suppose you'll make me attend a meeting, hire an engineer, and it will all cost me a fortune!"

"Not necessarily", was my reply. An Administrative Review may be all that is required. The steps are easy:

First: take photos. Of the severely damaged tree and the existing views from the deck. Most folks have digital camera or a relative with one. Print the pictures (full size on regular printer paper is o.k.).

Second: draw on the picture, with a magic marker, indicate the tree to be felled. Then indicate the various view windows you want to create by removal of limbs.

Third: hop in the car, walk into the conservation office and ask to speak with the Agent. Show the pictures and explain what you want. She might visit you to verify your plans. She'll show the pictures to the Commissioners. View windows are important to property owners on waterfront.

*The Conservation Commission objective is to help the home owner get what he/she wants in compliance with state and local wetlands protection regulations.*