



Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>

Comments Regarding Class 4 Section of Williams Hill Road

1 message

Erik Filkorn <filkee@gmavt.net>

Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 9:05 PM

To: Christine Werneke <christine.werneke@richmondvt.org>

Cc: david.sander@richmondvt.org, bard.hill@richmondvt.org, june.heston@richmondvt.org, jay.furr@richmondvt.org, Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>, Ravi Venkataraman <rvenkataraman@richmondvt.gov>

Madam Chair,

As an abutting landowner on Class 4 section of Williams Hill Road, I write to express my opposition to the trail project. While the Town of Richmond has a right of way (ROW) and I have in the past attested to its existence by signing mileage certificates filed with the Agency of Transportation, and maintaining that right is a policy that I have supported in the past, its existence has always been theoretical at best. In practice it's easily been 100 years since it was of any use. Developing the ROW is not your only option and it is my hope that you will offer some weight to the desires of neighbors in the vicinity of the proposed project in your decision.

While I understand that mountain biking has been a great stimulant to the local economy and the community of enthusiasts is well-organized and I count many friends within the cohort, I cannot sit by and pretend that opening the road will be a net positive for my family or my neighborhood.

We moved to the end of Williams Hill Road in 1999 and have enjoyed the peace and peace of mind of knowing that anyone driving past was either visiting the Parke's or lost. Our dog barks at the mail truck around noon, the trash truck on Tuesdays, UPS in the evening and every bike or pedestrian all day long which thankfully does not amount to much.

Some years back, we exercised our own right to advance the public good by installing a wind turbine on our land. Many neighbors were initially supportive of the project and recognized our right to do it. Over time, it became clear that some neighbors were deeply disturbed by it and ultimately, in the interest of neighborhood comity over a clearly defined, permitted and defensible public good, we removed it. The divisions it sowed still resonate and I expect a fresh retrenchment of us/them on the hill if this project goes forward.

The whole exercise would be quite another matter if all (or even a majority) of the neighbors immediately adjacent to the asset were in support of the new use and leading the effort. This is not a well-worn shortcut that children use to get to the school bus. It is a muddy creek bed full of trees and trip hazards that should remain as it is.

The town certainly has the right to retain or develop the right of way, but this effort to link one community of affinity will be sure to divide and degrade an existing one. Please consider the community you are cutting through as you strive to connect others.

The dead-end road has been central to the character of this neighborhood over decades. I and my family will be sad to see it go.

Yours sincerely,

Erik Filkorn

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