

September 13, 2021

Julia R Parke
228 Henry Street Apt 4
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dr. Elizabeth C Parke PhD
128 Fallingbrook Road
Toronto, ON
M1N2T6 Canada

**Joint owners of parcel ID PA0649 at 649 Palmer Lane, Richmond, Vermont 05477
To be included as testimony during the September 21st 2021 public hearing**

Dear Town Manager and Selectboard Members,

We write again (please also see our letter dated July 1 2021) ahead of the upcoming hearing on the discontinuance of Williams Hill Road as direct property abutters to the alleged right of way to highlight our ongoing concerns. We hold deep reservations regarding how this process has been handled, the lack of considerations for ethical and responsible land stewardship, community relations, and meaningful, accessible access to trails in the Richmond community.

Williams Hill Road is a close knit community where we grew up and where we are lucky to own property. Stewarding the land in sustainable ways from harvesting wood for heating to allowing meadow lands to revert to forested areas guides our approach to our property. Delicate stream banks and waterways criss-cross the property at 1360 Williams Hill Road and our parcel at 649 Palmer Lane. We both have run, skied, and walked trails constructed at 1360 and on our property. We know and understand the importance of trails for wellness and we also know the potentially destructive nature of unrestrained and unrestricted mountain biking. Not surprisingly, we support the wisdom of the town's decision to prohibit mounting biking in the recently acquired Andrew's Town Forest, as well as the refusal of a number of our neighbors to allow mountain bikers to cross their land. Inherent in those decisions is the clear effort to protect both wildlife and the contiguous habitat units so coveted in the Town Plan.

In addition to concerns over land stewardship and impacts of mountain bike trails on riparian environments there persists the question of plans for parking, which continues to demonstrate a deep lack of concern for neighbors. Cars parked to access the alleged ROW would prelude emergency vehicles' access and endanger the health and safety of the neighborhood.

Desire for access to trails is important and multi-functional trails that focus on access for a range of bodies and abilities strikes us as a key topic for the trails committee to undertake. However, the close to 1000 foot climb from the town center to the top of Williams Hill Road is neither accessible to most bodies, nor is it possible to push a stroller or use a mobility device on it. We've run and biked it. It's a grueling climb. We encourage connectivity to other trails and in that vein, suggest the consideration of a trail between the Park and Ride and GMT bus stop to be a priority, not a delicate section of forest with uncertain legal status that serves the minority—albeit a vocal and entitled minority— of Richmond residents contravening the desires and safety of the residents of Williams Hill Road.

Respectfully,

Julia

Elizabeth