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Williams Hill Class 4 road

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Cc: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>

Dear Selectboard members,

I disagree strongly with the notion of creating a public trail at the end of Williams Hill. I believe it will change the character of the neighborhood and is unwanted by the majority of the residents and nearby neighbors. If the Selectboard decides that a right of way exists and changes the classification of the road to a trail it's a meaningless gesture that fails to address the concerns of the affected population in a democratic way. None of the parties have asked for the "trail" classification and it's not a permanent classification. According to the Vermont Trails and Greenways Manual cited on the Richmond Trails Committee website "legal trails can always be "upgraded" to roads again...". The proposal by the Trails Committee was to put a trail on the Class 4 road. The clear majority of the residents on the road(s) signed the petition with the intent to eliminate all through traffic, vehicular or pedestrian. If the road is reclassified to a trail then I would assume there would need to be signage at both ends declaring that it's for non-motorized use. This signage would need to occur whether or not the Selectboard allows the Trail Committee to cut a trail on the property because the road is currently on maps as a Class 4 road and therefore allowed to be used by motorized vehicles. Signage at the ends seems like the only consistent way to keep vehicles off the property. The presence of these signs would in effect declare the presence of a path. The same type of sign is the only marking that delineates the beginning of the Snipe Ireland trail. The best way to address the concerns of the majority of the neighbors is to discontinue that section of Williams Hill Road as they've requested.

I think it's unrealistic and short sighted to create a public trail without available parking as the Trails Committee has proposed. These trails are published on the town's website and available to the general public. Users can travel from all over to access them. At the end of the Snipe Ireland Trail the landowner has taken it upon himself to provide parking on his own property to avoid trail users from parking in front of his garage. On the south end of the Johnnie Brook Trail I have seen users park on the Marquis' lawn, on the turnoff to the Hinesburg Road and in front of our office at 65 Huntington Road. Trail users seem to park wherever they can as the nearest public parking area from either end of Johnnie Brook trail is further away than the trail is long. Johnnie Brook Trail is .7 mile long (the same length as the proposed Williams Hill Trail) and the nearest public parking is .8 miles away. The nearest public parking to the proposed trail on Williams Hill is 3.4 miles away at the Volunteer's Green.

I don't believe there is enough space at the end of Williams Hill within the right of way to provide adequate parking as well as the required turn around area. This is a life safety concern as well as a quality of life concern for the immediate neighbors. The 2016 Town of Richmond Public Improvements Standards & Specifications applies to new roads as well as extensions of existing roads. I can only assume that these standards are intended as minimums for road construction to facilitate standard sized delivery as well as emergency vehicles. They state the minimum width of roads or street rights of ways shall not be less than 60'. The right of way for the traveled portion of Williams Hill is three rods (49.5'). A typical fire truck is about 40' long. Turning one around with less than 10' of additional space seems unrealistic especially in an emergency. All dead-end roads or streets need to have a cul-de-sac or approved turn around. A cul-de-sac apparently needs to have a minimum right of way of 120'. The smallest approved turn around alternative is a hammerhead turnaround with legs of the hammerhead extending 50' from the centerline intersection of the legs. That would require a minimum right of way of 64' (half of a 20' road width, 50' hammerhead, 2' shoulder on either side). To date the residents at the end of Williams Hill Road have allowed the town to use their driveway as part of their turn around. If one considers the use of the Parke's driveway as one leg of the hammerhead the leg on the town road is only about 60' feet long beyond the tee and the Parke's driveway is only 12 feet wide. If a vehicle was to park at the end of Williams Hill it will further reduce the available turning area. The nearest space that allows large vehicles to turn around is the intersection with Old County Lane. That's almost 7 tenths of a mile away. A fire truck, grader or other large vehicle would have to back up that distance and over a blind hill. Who will be policing the parking area? How will it be handled if cars block the

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turn around area? Before increasing the traffic on the dead end road that is Williams Hill I think it should be considered if the road meets the current design standards set by the town and the consequences of increasing and changing its use.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns about the proposal to modify Williams Hill Road. It's a hot button topic in the neighborhood. I appreciate the time and energy you are investing in it.

Thanks

John Linn

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