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Williams Hill Hearing

Fran Thomas <dtft5171@gmavt.net>

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To: Bard Hill <bardrhill@gmail.com>, Selectboard David Sander <david.sander@richmondvt.org>, June Heston <june.heston@richmondvt.org>, Christine Werneke <christine.werneke@richmondvt.org>, Jay Furr <jay.furr@richmondvt.org>
Cc: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>, Dave Thomas <dthomas@gmavt.net>

Dear Members of the Richmond Selectboard,

As longtime residents of Richmond and of Hillview Road, we are not in favor of the petition to discontinue the portion of Williams Hill up for consideration at the hearing on September 21, 2021. For many years we have walked up the open portion of Williams Hill and wondered why there was never a trail through the Town's right away to the road below. Now that we have an active Trails Committee, we are pleased to see that they would like to see a non-motorized trail here and are in support of this proposal. A trail on the class four section would connect Williams Hill with Palmer Lane and allow hikers, walkers and mountain bikers to then connect with trails in Hinesburg and Huntington. It would not be a destination trail, but would serve as a link between trails and the three towns.

When we were asked to sign a petition advocating for the complete discontinuance of the road, we were disappointed by the somewhat hostile and unfriendly tone of the petition. In fact one of its points seemed to discourage individuals like us, who daily walk along our Town roads, from even walking up Williams Hill. This is not what the Richmond that we know and love and have been actively involved, is and should be about. We should be welcoming and encouraging people to get exercise in order to stay healthy, mentally and physically.

Over the course of the past thirty years or so, we have had the opportunity to bike, hike and walk in every state of the USA. As members of the Vermont 251 Club, we are now working on visiting all of Vermont's 251 towns and gores and hiking, walking or doing some sort of physical activity in each town. Thus, we have hiked on class four roads, in Town Forests, on private land where the owners have allowed public use, on Town trails around schools and Town parks, in VT State Parks, Vermont Land Trust and Nature Conservancy Preserves, etc. We have encountered mountain bikers and other hikers and walkers. Everyone has been friendly, polite and welcoming.

Up until now, we have felt that the residents of Richmond were welcoming to those seeking outdoor activities. Outdoor enthusiasts support our local businesses enabling them to provide employment for our residents. We can continue to be a welcoming town by allowing a trail on the class four portion of Williams Hill and continuing our efforts to expand opportunities for outdoor recreation in Richmond.

Sincerely,

Fran & Dave Thomas