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From: joel halpern <jmhalpern@anthro.umass.edu>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2014 3:32 PM
To: Planning Department Email
Subject: FW: FW: Traffic Considerations with regard to the Retreat Proposal

From: joel halpern [<mailto:jmhalpern@anthro.umass.edu>]
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2014 3:03 PM
To: 'minplanning@amherstma.govor'
Subject: Traffic Considerations with regard to the Retreat Proposal

I am a resident of 671 North East Street and I write to you concerning the traffic implications of this project. This matter was brought home to me by the recent death of Hannah B. Frilot about 11 pm July 31. She was killed on this street in an auto accident as she walked along North East Street and apparently hit by a north bound driver. This accident, still under investigation, was reported in the Amherst Bulletin of August 8, p.A3. I am not leaping to any conclusions but as a frequent traveler on this road during the day and at night I did find it unusual and I did immediately wonder if Hannah and her companion had a flashlight or reflector stripes on their clothing. But regardless of these details one of the reasons that this tragedy has stuck in my mind is that several days later I almost had a similar encounter with a cyclist very near the site of that accident (the police have apparently drawn lines on the road)) and I was also heading north. Only my time was about noon. I was momentarily distracted by a conversation with my traveling companion. She said, "look out" and I immediately adjusted my wheel and no one was disturbed in the slightest. This is obviously a cue to me to pay close attention to the road. Generally when driving I am especially keen to stay away from the road shoulder and hew relatively closely to the center of the road. Of course, the center stripes are not universally present. Why do I pair these two incidents together -- one a great tragedy and the other a tiny incident? I do this to make the point that the area designated by the retreat is surrounded by a complex of country roads that are already heavily traveled and potentially dangerous at the present time, to the existing private car and commercial traffic which sometimes includes trailers and large heavy dump trucks.

I am aware that several traffic studies concerned with this project have already been done. It is clear to anyone who has traveled North East Street, Flat Hills Road, Henry Street, Market Hill Road and the surrounding area reaching to East Pleasant Street that the roads in this area are, in many places narrow, winding, traversing hilly terrain, lit only in a few restricted places and, are often narrow. Drivers of all ages may find this challenging, especially on an icy winter day.

In addition, Henry Street does, in part, have close contact with a well-used freight line. The trains in this area have, at times, had derailment problems within the greater Amherst area. Further, the railroad crossing have lights but, in most cases, there are no proper gates.

May I make a modest suggestion? Why not a small field trip in connection with this important project proposal. Would members of the committee, or at least some members, be willing to drive this area at night? In doing so could they have in mind that, in addition to present traffic, that if the Retreat is built there will be more than half a thousand post-teen drivers on this already over-burdened network. May I also politely suggest that the drive be timed to coincide with at least one of the freights. It assume that

it is entirely possible that at least some committee members live within earshot of these multi daily night passages and are already familiar with the train whistles and then the heavy rumbling sound of the freight cars . Might it not be even be a bad idea for those taking the drive to record their impressions. I'm sure that local residents would be glad to outline a specific itinerary and one which I would hope would include encountering a wait for at least one freight.

I suppose an evening stroll if you have a flashlight and stripes might be a bit much. If there is a planned bus stop the other side of the track for the Retreat it might be reasonable to expect some post-teen foot traffic. Putting about 700 more oost-teen driven cars on these roads at night at all hours, to say nothing about pizza delivery vans, may be a challenging matter to think about especially at the time that crowds might accumulate at train crossing times.

Joel M. Halpern