

17 Durham Point Road
Durham NH 03824
13 June 2018

Mr. Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
Members of the Planning Board

Re: 27 Durham Point Road Conditional Use Application

Dear Mr. Behrendt and Members of the Planning Board,

With my husband, I own the parcel whose property line would be shared by the proposed wetlands-filling driveway.

I regret that neither I nor my husband can make the meeting tonight to express our concerns about the request to grant an "after the fact" approval for transformation of the driveway that was presented as a temporary logging road access to be granted a permanent status.

Further I regret that we were living abroad last year and could not provide feedback to the Planning and Conservations boards when the "temporary" logging road was approved and installed. I contacted the town in April 2017 and learned that indeed the logging road installation was supposed to be followed with several silt conservation measures as well as a substantive replanting plan.

I have been a practicing environmental scientist and geologist for 25 years. I have worked some in wetlands, though I am no expert. I am certainly no expert in wetlands zoning laws and planning policies. Regrettably, during this application time line, I have been out of town for several weeks and have accordingly not had time to seek out opinions on this particular arrangement of wetlands from wetlands and land use experts. That said, I would think these wetlands that lie between tidal zones and freshwater zones are important ones due to the many environmental services wetlands provide to the natural landscape, including flood control, water purification (e.g., silt minimization, road salt and storm run off) and protection of wildlife and wetlands vegetation.

Further, it seems to me that the following items are relevant in this case:

(1) There is a seasonal creek in the northern corner of our property, along the property line along which the driveway is planned for installation (and is, frankly, currently installed in a temporary fashion). I am concerned how the drainage of this area will be impacted by the installation, especially against the backdrop of a changing climate if/where the predicted heavy precipitation events emerge as the new norm.

(2) Most importantly: this application as presented fails to indicate that the proposed temporary driveway project that runs along our property line and through both wetlands setbacks and wetlands themselves is the sole way to access to the property.

According to Article 13 of the Municipal Code that governs the Wetlands Conservation Overlay District, the Planning Board is to approve conditional use, allowing for the "construction of ... driveways" only if several conditions are met. The first of these conditions is the proposed structure (in this case the driveway) can be located within a wetland if *"There is no alternative location on the parcel that is outside of the WCOD that is reasonably practical for the proposed use."*

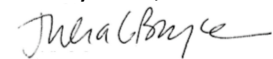
The 27 Durham Point Road property was purchased with the approved subdivision of a shared driveway to access the beautiful riverfront. Although the petitioner presents a note from the chief of police that the proposed driveway affords a safer location (with this I do not dispute as the larger issue may be the speed many cars travel down Durham Point Road), the town has already approved a reasonably practical location for the driveway in its existing shared location.

This existing driveway certainly does have ledges and gradients, as would be expected for driveway construction within the Exeter Diorite that underlies all of our properties, but I would plead that the Planning Board and Conservation Commission make every effort to see the petitioner work within the existing framework of the existing road that runs along high ground rather than fill and otherwise permanently disrupt some of the many wetlands that provide many environmental services to our town.

In summary, I respectfully request that the Planning Board postpone its decision until the Conservation Commission and experts at the State Department of Environmental Services evaluation the merits of the wetlands construction application.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion and your work on behalf of our town.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julia Bryce".

Julia Bryce