

**From:** [Carroll, John](#)  
**To:** [Karen Edwards](#)  
**Cc:** [Todd Selig](#); [Richard Reine](#); [April Talon](#); [Jen Berry](#)  
**Subject:** town interests vs. applicant's interests, and a caution from Public Works  
**Date:** Sunday, May 16, 2021 10:52:50 PM

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To the Planning Board,

It goes without saying that the Planning Board must be fair to, and give a fair hearing to, all applicants appearing before it for permits. But, in making its judgements, the Planning Board's first obligation is to serve and protect the interests of the people of Durham. At the last Planning Board meeting (May 12), in the discussion on private vs. public road ownership, at least one of the Planning Board members said it was not the business of the Planning Board to show concern as to whether future residents of the proposed development (i.e., their Homeowners Association or HOA) would be able or willing to pay for expensive repairs or upkeep (or eventually replacement) of the proposed and technically complicated (according to our Town Public Works Director and our Town Engineer) town owned Gerrish Access. This would be, under the plan as proposed, the residents' only access to their homes. If they couldn't pay, the town would be essentially forced to pay (just as it is required to provide emergency services). And in that scenario of deterioration the town would lose all the benefits of any tax return. This is part of the risk of dependency on a technically complicated road and culvert design, made even riskier by storms brought on by climate change.

The serious caution issued by our Director of Public Works, co-signed by our Town Engineer, re: the great expense of the Gerrish Access, the very reason the town does not want to take it on, is a great reminder of who the hard-working members of the Planning Board, its two elected members, Councilors Tobias and Hotchkiss, and all its Town Council-appointed members, represent: the people of Durham, and not the applicant. Both the short-term and the longer-term interests of Durham are at stake, regardless of whether that access road is public or private. The long-term consequences of each choice are very much the town's business, and therefore the business of the Planning Board. As a 47-year resident of Durham, I know that attention to our town and its residents always comes before attention to the applicant.

John

John E. Carroll

cc.: Rich Reine, April Talon, Todd Selig, Town Council