

Bristol Town Administrator

From: Porter Knight <knight@gmavt.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2022 9:04 PM
To: Bristol Town Administrator; 'Kevin Hanson'; Carolyn Dash; Kris Perlee
Subject: Bristol Trail Network Plank Road trail extension
Attachments: SLIDES BTN Plank Road proposed trail questions.pdf

To members of the Town of Bristol Selectboard, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Conservation Commission

I am writing to provide you with an update on the proposed Plank Road Bristol Trail Network (BTN) extension.

The trail extension toward Plank Road was planned on property of a willing landowner, who has been waiting since November for a survey to be completed before we can fully map a route in order to apply for a zoning permit, which requires that map. Meanwhile, an abutting landowner objected to the idea of the trail, concerned that the trail would result in a loss of privacy as hikers used the trail near her home. A letter was submitted to the Recreation Club Board in February citing the privacy concern and a list of other issues, signed by several neighbors.

The Bristol Recreation Club has met twice with these neighbors, but they remain focused on the privacy concern and declined to hear answers to any of the issues, view images, or walk the property together to discuss the proposed trail, which - again - is not on their property according to town tax maps.

The attached document addresses each concern expressed by the abutting landowners, and the Agency of Natural Resources has conducted several site visits and approved the proposed trail in terms of placement and design. All the facts continue to support BTN trail extension on this property. However, due to the vehemence of the abutting landowner's objections, we will be putting our volunteer trail efforts elsewhere at this time.

Respectfully,

Porter Knight (volunteer)
Bristol Recreation Club vice president
Bristol Trail Network coordinator

CC by email:
Bristol Recreation Club, Inc.,
Town Administrator
Town Zoning Administrator
Agency of Natural Resources
David C. Venman, Esq.
Jennifer & Brian Dukehart

CC by mail:
Christine Lathrop
Amos Martin
Stanley Livingston

James Lineau
Brenda Myrick
Richard Malzac
Jodi James
Linda Conley
Linda Shiller
William Cormany

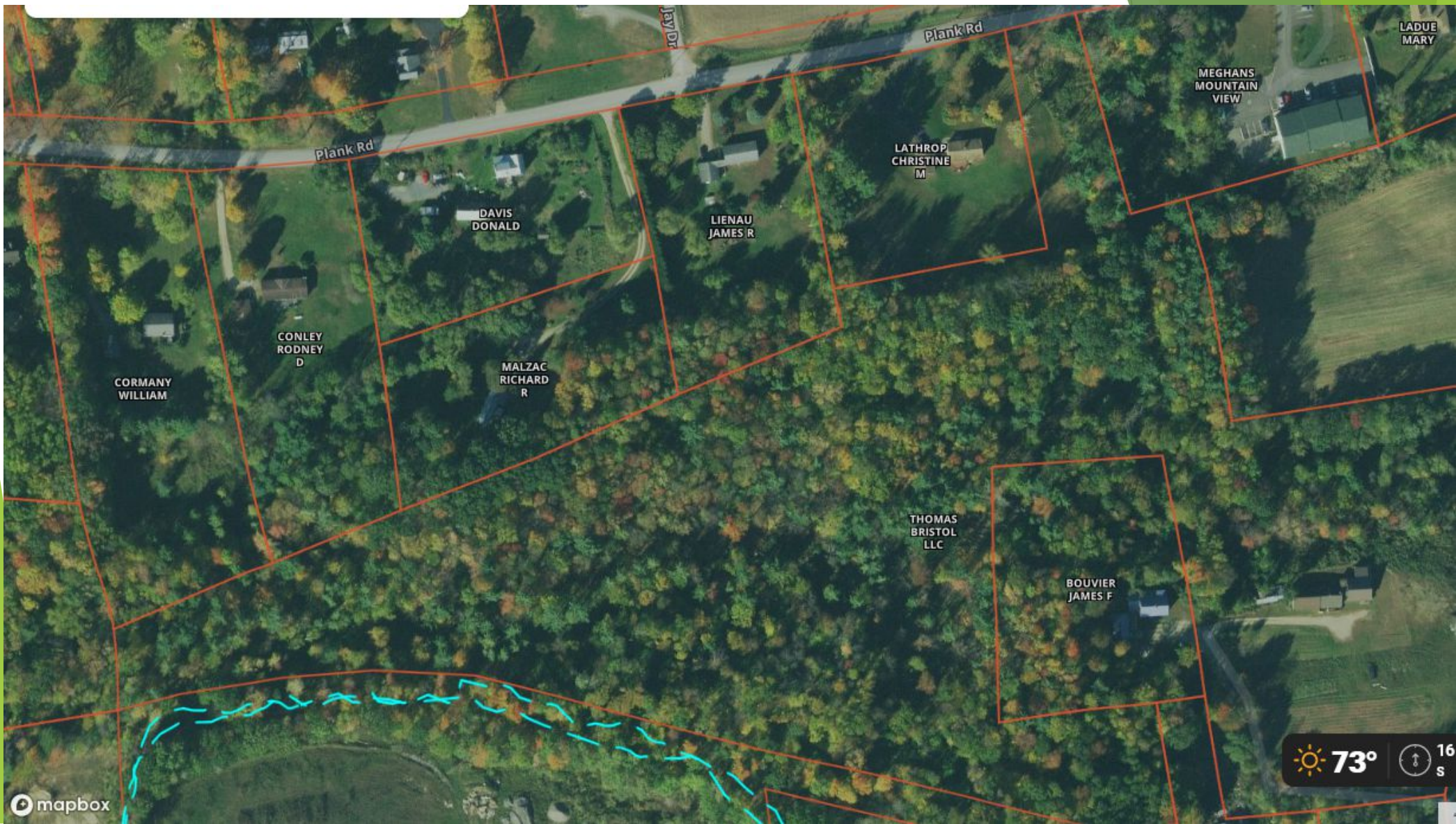


Bristol Trail Network

a project of the Bristol Recreation Club, Inc.

Issues

- ▶ Proximity to property boundaries & Privacy
- ▶ Property values
- ▶ Wetland
- ▶ Impact on denning and nesting
- ▶ Safety of road access to Plank Road
- ▶ Zoning and process



LADUE
MARY

MEGHANS
MOUNTAIN
VIEW

LATHROP
CHRISTINE
M

LIENAU
JAMES R

DAVIS
DONALD

CONLEY
RODNEY
D

MALZAC
RICHARD
R

CORMANY
WILLIAM

THOMAS
BRISTOL
LLC

BOUVIER
JAMES F

☀️ 73°

↑ 16
S

View from property



Middlebury





Vergennes



Castleton



Property Values

- ▶ “living near trails and greenways increases property value an **average of 3-5% and sometimes even as high as 15%**” ... and the closer you are to the trail, the greater the increase (<https://www.nar.realtor/trails-and-greenways>)
- ▶ Also, “**crime rates are lower on trail networks than the overall crime rate** for the region in which they are located” (<https://linkingtheloop.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/studies-of-existing-trails-crime-and-properties-value.pdf>)

Wetland map



as per Agency of Natural Resources:

- ▶ NOT a mapped wetland
 - ▶ NOT a floodplain
 - ▶ NOT a jurisdictional river
-
- ▶ ...even though it is not a mapped wetland, we always plan trail in accordance with VT Wetlands Program Public Guidance document for Recreational Trail Building and Wetlands – it's just good practice
 - ▶ ANR staff assessment at the site has repeatedly reinforced that trail there is appropriate; A recent visit this spring provided confirmation of wetland presence despite it not being classified, but the ANR representative indicated again that trail activity outside the buffer zone is fully appropriate and not requiring a permit.

Impact on wildlife

- ▶ There can be impacts on wildlife (<https://tinyurl.com/4e5t999s>, source: 2021 Salon.com)
- ▶ Factors to consider include:
 - Type of species and their activity in area (feeding, nesting, roosting, migrating)
 - Type of trail use
 - Predictability of trail use
- ANR staff assessment has been that trail on this parcel would have minimal impact on wildlife

Safety of road access to Plank Road

- ▶ Yes!
- ▶ Excited to give walkers/bikers on Plank a safer route to village
- ▶ Already discussed signage with landowner for trail users approaching road, particularly as it relates to dogs, which would be required to be leashed in this section for safety (of the dog and passing motorists), courtesy (to nearby neighbors) and protection of the plant and animal life along wet areas of the property.
- ▶ Happy to hear your thoughts and suggestions as well!



Zoning & process

When trail is considered, we proceed:

- ▶ Following invitation from a landowner
- ▶ With a walk of the property (usually several times)
- ▶ Using an ANR checklist (wetland, floodplain, river jurisdiction)
- ▶ Walk again
- ▶ Flag and map full intended route

Proposed trail on this parcel is not fully mapped because we are waiting for a survey to be completed confirming property lines near Plank Road where an adjoining neighbor has cleared beyond the property boundaries shown on the Town of Bristol parcel maps.

- ▶ Apply for zoning

Mission

The mission of the Bristol Trail Network is to create and maintain trails around Bristol...

- ▶ *to promote access to and appreciation for natural, historical, and cultural resources in the vicinity & to support the recreation and education of residents and visitors alike*
- ▶ *to foster human connections within our community, tie us all more closely to our landscape, and enhance Bristol's potential as an all-seasons destination for recreation and tourism*