

September 13, 2021

BY HAND

Board of Selectmen
Town of Southborough
Southborough Town House
17 Common Street
Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
Attn: Lisa Braccio, Chairman

Re: Abandonment of a Portion of Chestnut Hill Road

Dear Chairman Braccio and Members of the Board:

We write this letter to request that the Board of Selectmen (the "Board"), acting in its capacity as the Town's road commissioners, abandon a certain portion of Chestnut Hill Road. We write as neighbors and members of the community who have witnessed firsthand the dangers caused by the existing unsafe roadway conditions, and to share a vision for a simple change that will significantly enhance some of the most important community assets within the Town of Southborough. This letter describes:

- The unsafe conditions affecting Chestnut Hill Road, which is a designated scenic road, and their effects on the roadway's residents and visitors;
- The benefits that abandoning the roadway will provide by enhancing protected and publicly beneficial land on both sides of the road; and
- The proposed path forward to abandon and potentially discontinue a section of the road.

As described in greater detail below, abandoning a section of the road would create a welcoming and safe environment for the public to utilize the Town's natural, cultural, agricultural, and outdoor recreational resources – which are more important now than ever – while at the same time reducing significant costs and potential liabilities for the Town.

1. Unsafe Conditions.

The section of Chestnut Hill Road proposed for abandonment (the "Abandoned Roadway") is a narrow and slightly hilly portion that runs northwesterly from the driveway at 10 Chestnut Hill Road (just northwest beyond the public entrance to the Chestnut Hill Farm trailhead parking area), goes around a slight curve, and then proceeds down a hill to the road's intersection with the newly created Dairy Farm Lane. Unlike the portion of Chestnut Hill Road to the south of Chestnut Hill Farm, which is maintained for two-way travel, the Abandoned Roadway allows vehicular travel in only one direction (away from Main Street, toward Dairy Farm Lane). Like the rest of Chestnut Hill Road, it cuts a path through bucolic scenery of stone walls, heavily wooded areas, and open fields. The beautiful scenery and nearby community resources attract outdoor recreationalists of all types. Chestnut Hill Farm, the Boroughs Loop Trail, and the Beals Preserve are all located along or within a short walking distance of the Abandoned Roadway. Given the lack of paved recreational pathways and sidewalks within the Town of Southborough, it is no surprise that runners, walkers, and cyclists can be found on the road all

year long, enjoying the fresh air, surrounded by nature. However, the quietude of the surrounding properties belies the hazards posed by the roadway itself.

The Abandoned Roadway was designed and originally constructed long before the invention of motor vehicles. In its current condition, the roadway is wholly unsuitable for high-speed vehicular travel. For most of its length, the Abandoned Roadway is hemmed in on each side by embankments and drainage ditches. Wildlife ranging from chipmunks to deer often dart across the roadway. Large, mature (and in some cases dying due to age and pestilence) trees grow almost right up to the edge of the pavement. In other places, visibility is limited due to hill crests and bends in the road. These hazards make the roadway unforgiving in the event of pedestrian-vehicle conflict.

It is hard to overstate the danger. As an apparent “short-cut” between Main Street (Route 30) and Northboro Road (which leads toward the nearest entrance ramp to Interstate 495), vehicles regularly travel down Chestnut Hill Road at distressingly high speeds, likely in an effort to shave time off their morning or evening commute, or the drive to Algonquin Regional High School. Surprisingly, it actually takes longer, at posted speed limits, to travel the 0.8 mile of Chestnut Hill Road from its southern end to Northboro Road than it takes to travel the 1.0 mile between the same points via Northboro Road. Worsening the problem are distracted drivers and the frequency with which nearby residents have witnessed vehicles driving – often at high speeds (!) – in the wrong direction. Large trucks also frequently use the road, ignoring the “No Trucks” signs placed at the road entrance on Main Street. Not surprisingly, these dangerous trends are coming at the same time that outdoor recreational activity on the Abandoned Roadway has increased as result of the current pandemic that affects us all. The growing threat of vehicular/pedestrian conflict has the potential for serious harm. And if no action is taken, it is likely only a matter of time before such potential is realized.

2. Benefits of Abandonment.

The most obvious and important benefit of abandonment is alleviating the grave potential for harm outlined above. Adjacent residents – including young children – pedestrians, cyclists, runners, and motorists would all be much safer by eliminating the enticement of a high-speed short-cut via Chestnut Hill Road. People visiting Chestnut Hill Farm would be safe as they enter and exit the two parking areas. It is our collective conviction that abandoning and/or discontinuing the Abandoned Roadway will save lives.

The benefits are not limited to increased safety. For the Town, abandonment will make managing and maintaining the Town’s roadways easier and less costly. Many of the trees surrounding the Abandoned Roadway are in poor condition. Fallen limbs and even trees are a regular result from inclement weather. The Town will not be obligated to prioritize tree removal and plowing. Without vehicular travel, the Abandoned Roadway can be paved and repaired less frequently. In addition, policing the speeding and unsafe travel on Chestnut Hill Road will be less of a burden.

The broader benefits to the community as a whole are innumerable. As shown on the plan attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, the Abandoned Roadway lies in the heart of approximately 270 acres of land, formerly owned by Philip and Elaine Beals, protected by publicly beneficial ownership and/or conservation restrictions (collectively, the “**Community Land**”). Abandonment would allow for safer and better enjoyment of the Community Land, increased opportunities for programming special events at Chestnut Hill Farm, and safer crossings for the numerous animals that live in and travel through the

Community Land. In addition, the Trustees of Reservations, owners of Chestnut Hill Farm, would be interested in allowing continued public recreational use of the Abandoned Roadway. It can provide many benefits, including an ADA-compliant nature trail and a paved surface for safely engaging in recreational activities through beautiful scenery. Parents can teach their children to ride bikes without fear of a driver speeding up the road. Runners, for a short stretch, can safely take in the Town's beauty without worrying about distracted drivers. Pedestrians can walk comfortably side-by-side or while pushing strollers. These are just a few examples of how the Abandoned Roadway can be transformed from a community hazard into yet another public asset for the Town to be proud of. Finally, abandoning this section of Chestnut Hill Road would complete the remarkable vision of Philip and Elaine Beals, whose extraordinary commitment to permanently protecting more than 270 acres of Community Land created a legacy that is enjoyed by many hundreds of visitors every year.

3. Next Steps.

Given the urgency of the issue, we would like to arrange a time to meet with the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting to present our vision for a better and safer experience along the Abandoned Roadway. Following such presentation, we would encourage the Board to arrange a duly noticed public hearing so it can hear from the public and consider exercising its authority under Section 32A of M.G.L. Ch. 82 to abandon the Abandoned Roadway. Further discussion of a potential permanent discontinuance by the Town and the reservation or granting of rights to the public would take place at a later date. Accompanying this letter are the signatures of more than 60 Southborough residents who support this proposal.

We thank you for your consideration and we look forward to discussing our vision for a better and safer Chestnut Hill Road for the benefit of the entire Town of Southborough.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Krasner & Frank Tipton
1 Chestnut Hill Road



Brian Dugdale & Lana Dugdale
2 Chestnut Hill Road



Whitney Beals & Pamela Esty
10 Chestnut Hill Road



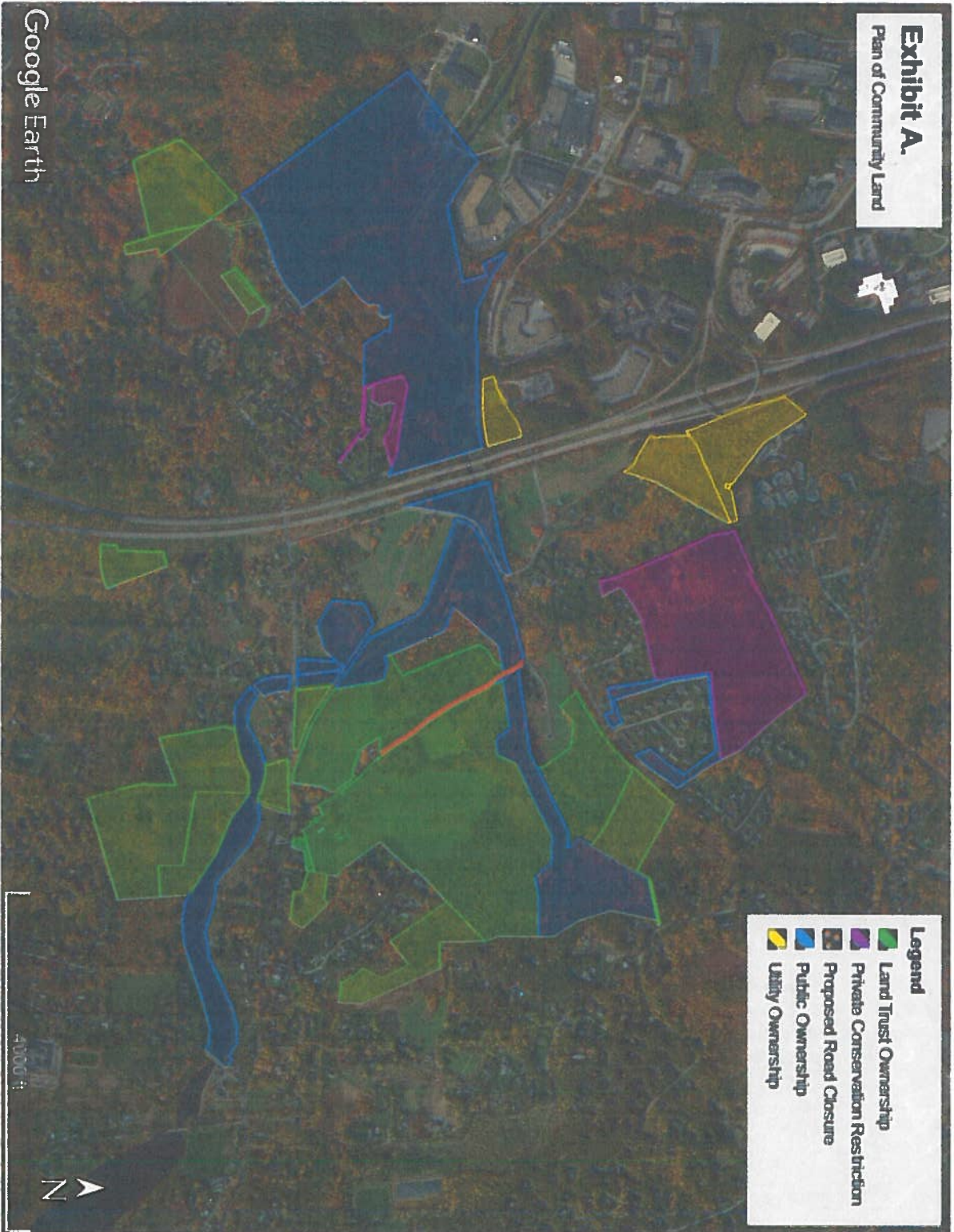
Desiree Robertson-Dubois
9 Chestnut Hill Road



Jeff Hoodlet and Jenna Haller
5 Chestnut Hill Road

cc: Southborough Department of Public Works
Southborough Planning Board
Southborough Open Space Preservation Commission
Southborough Conservation Commission

Exhibit A.
Plan of Community Land






Google Earth

4000 ft









CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Name	Address	Signature	Date
Lynne Morrison	4 Kicker Ln	Lynne Morrison	5/26/21
Annette Regan	80 Constitution Dr		5/26/21
Howard Nye	20 Constitution Drive		5/26/21
Bryguin Kizer	43 Lovers Lane	Bryguin Kizer	5/27/21
Stephen Roy	3 Dairy Farm		9/11/21
Ann Roy	3 Dairy Farm	Ann Roy	9/11/21






CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Name	Address	Signature	Date
Kamali O'Meally	8 Maplecrest Dr Southborough, MA 01772		2/7/21
Tafari O'Meally	8 Maplecrest Dr. Southborough, MA 01772		2/8/2021
Julie W. Connelly	24 Granville Rd Southborough MA 01772		2/8/2021
Sara Carr	15 Pinecone Ln Southboro, MA 01772		2/22/20
Kerry Wall	6 Maplecrest Drive Southborough		2/28/2021
Kimberly Regan	21 Pinecone Ln Southborough, MA		2/28/2021


CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Name	Address	Signature	Date
JESSICA N. LEVENSON	13 STRAUBERY HILL ROAD		2/5/2021
MARK D. WARDEN	13 STRAUBERY HILL ROAD		2/5/2021
WALTER B. HORNER	144 MAIN ST.		3/23/2021
Hedley Horner	144 MAIN ST.		3/23/2021
Judith S. Seaborn	144 Main St		3/25/2021

CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Name	Address	Signature	Date
Whitney Beck	10 Chestnut Hill Rd		5-22-21
Pamela Gray	10 Chestnut Hill Rd		"
Kathryn Rose	2 Country Rd.		5-22-21
Marguerite Rowland	134 Deerfoot		5-22-21
Steve Wright	205 Concord Ave		5-22-21
Dyane McKay	10 Leedge Hill Rd		5-22-21
Sally B. Walters	17 Wood St		5-22-21

CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Name	Address	Signature	Date
Eileen Sintes	7 Granville Rd	Eileen Sintes	5/23/2021
George Harris	67 Mt. Vickers	George Harris	5/23/21
Kathryn McKee	18 Walnut St	Kathryn McKee	5/23/21
David Rueger	81 Pine Hill R.	David Rueger	5/24/21
Karen Karen	22 Fairview 22 Fairview	Karen Capodanno	5-25-21
Judy Dodd	9 Bryden Rd	Judy Dodd	5-25-21
Erinny Mox	18 Hillside	Erinny Mox	5/26/21

CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Deborah Coshie M Adams	6 Wood St	Deborah C. M Adams	5/22/21
Anne C. Sore	7 Wood St	Anne Sore	5/22/21
Bertoi Hays	28 Main St	BERTOI. Hays	5/22/21
Elizabeth Minucci	6 Birchwood Dr	E. Minucci	5/22/21
Mary Ann Corbett	3 Pine Hill Dr	Mary Ann Corbett	5/22/21
Marilyn Dague	3 MacKeebler	Marilyn M. Dague	5/22/21
William Sines	12 Hickory	William M Sines	5/22/21
George W. Devereaux	11 Strawbery Hill Dr	George W. Devereaux	5/25/21

CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

Etherne Water	50 Lyford Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>	5-22-21
Jennifer Hanson	8 Lyndbrook Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>	5-22-21
FRANK SANTIAGU	3 MERRILL WAY	FRANK	5/22/21
Peggy Santiago	" "	FRANK	5/22/21
Andrea Gully	78 Southville Southville Rd	ANDREA GULLY	5/22/21
Deshi Hedra	7 Harn's Drive	<i>[Signature]</i>	5/22/21
Jody Cook	" " GAYSTOWN RD	Jody Cook	5/22/21
Benjamin Smith	14 Ledge Hill Rd	<i>[Signature]</i>	5/22/21
Rebecca Hedgcock	11 Wildwood St	Rebecca Hedgcock	5/22/21

CHESTNUT HILL ROAD PETITION

We, the undersigned residents of Southborough, support the abandonment of a portion of Chestnut Hill Road.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Date</u>
Wendy Lythell	19 Oregon	[Signature]	5/22/21
Joyce Greenleaf	4 North	Joyce M. Green	5/22/21
Steve Nelson	61 Parkville	[Signature]	5/22/21
Restons at 42 Parkville		Lozay Chen	5/22/21
DEAN CAMS	2 WINTER	Dean Camma	5/22/21
Ben Wilson	27 Edgewood	[Signature]	5/22/21
Kristin LaVault	12 Southwood Dr.	[Signature]	5/22/21
Kathryn Konstant	10 Hickory Rd	[Signature]	5/22/21