

Town of Hartland
PO Box 349 Hartland
VT 05048-0349

October 17, 2016

Patricia Rosson
298Jenneville Road
Windsor, VT 05089

Re: Reconsideration petition

Dear Pat,

The Selectboard thanks you for your interest in Hartland town affairs as represented by filing of the petition for reconsideration of a vote at the March 4, 2014, Town Meeting. The Selectboard has researched this petition extensively, consulting the Secretary of State, the Town Attorney, and Vermont League of Cities and Towns. We conclude that the board cannot accept the petition. As our Town Attorney states: "The provisions of 17 V.S.A. 2661(b) require that a petition requesting reconsideration or recession of a question considered or voted on at a previous annual or special meeting be filed with the Clerk of the municipality within 30 days following the date of that meeting. In this case, the vote on the Article in question occurred at a regular annual town meeting on March 4, 2014. Thus, any petition requesting reconsideration of that vote had to be presented within 30 days of the date of that vote. The deadline for timely filing of such a petition passed on April 3, 2014."

The Selectboard understands the concerns about changes and cost that likely prompted this petition, but we are required to follow state law. The Selectboard is also solely responsible for road layout, as well as bound by the results of public balloting.

The Three Corners intersection has prompted discussion for at least 25 years. Development of the VHB Consulting Engineers realignment, the current plan, was the subject of many meetings. We continue to support this realignment because it addresses many issues. The primary reason to make a change is to allow for safer crossing through the intersection for pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrians currently cannot know the safest route across the intersection, and many choose the longest path across it, just because it seems the most logical route. With die improved design, crosswalks will be very clearly marked as is normal in a standard four-way intersection, and pedestrians will know the safest route.

At the same time, the realignment makes for a much safer intersection for motorists. Local drivers may be aware of the intricacies of negotiating the seven STOP signs they encounter at the intersection, but newcomers are often quite confused. A true four-way STOP intersection is one that all drivers recognize and know how to negotiate—it's probably the simplest design for an intersection. It addresses a variety of issues, as follows: (1) A sign stating "Oncoming Traffic Does Not Stop" is rare and confusing, and clearly some drivers do not understand it. That section of the intersection disappears with the new alignment. (2) Every vehicle that enters Three Corners will now stop, eliminating the current Route 5 north route, where large trucks can barrel through right next to the sidewalk and toward cars exiting blindly at Station Road. The new design forces those trucks to

stop. That's a huge improvement for safety in the intersection, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists nearby. (3) With the relocation of Quechee Road away from Damon Hall, drivers who park in front of Damon Hall will no longer have to back out blindly but will have much improved sightlines to the north. (4) The soldier statue will still stand prominently near the intersection, but approximately twenty feet to the northeast.

The cost of construction is not insignificant, although the original estimate of \$450,000 has been reduced to be in the \$400,000 range. The funds for this project come from a Capital Reserve Fund that we created using funds received through a class-action suit in which the Town received \$600,00 from oil companies responsible for a gasoline spill on the Quechee Road. After more than an hour-long discussion, the voters at Town Meeting on March 4, 2014, voted to borrow from this fund for the realignment and repay the fund through future budgets over five years. The final vote on Article 10 via a standing head-count was 91 to 39.

We will convey this response to the signers of the petition and the residents of Hartland via the Hartland Listserve, the *Vermont Standard*, and the *Valley News*.

Sincerely,

Gordon Richardson, Chair

Mary O'Brien, Vice-Chair

Martha McGlinn

Matthew Peeler

Joseph Olmstead

