REQUEST TO ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION

Thank you for allowing me to present my situation, in hopes that you can help resolve a Conservation / Subdivision issue for me and my husband. I'm sorry that John, due to poor health, could not be here to underscore what we have accomplished as stewards of our land in the remotest part of Essex.

Here's how we got to this point: After UVM hired John as a professor in 1977, he and I moved to Essex with our five children. We purchased a home and land at 91 Sawmill Rd. and enrolled all in the Current Use Program. We blazed several trails, erected a new barn and installed a beautiful pond.

When John's employment took him to West Virginia and New Zealand, we chose to remain residents of Essex, even though we weren't using the excellent services the Town provides. Every summer for ten years, we would travel from afar to spend our month-long vacation back in Essex, bringing hay in from the pastures and maintaining the house, trails and woods.

Keeping up all of that property long-distance eventually became too much. Consequently, in 1993 we sold our house at 91 Sawmill Rd., along with 27 acres in Current Use. We chose to keep and maintain the rest (more than 135+ acres) as we had done before. Like most residents, we weren't savvy about subdivisions. We just did what made sense to us at the time.

When John retired in 1999, we built a home at 87 Sawmill Road. It was important to us to keep the land undeveloped, for the numerous wildlife that lived in the woods, and to preserve the sweeping vistas of Camel's Hump for future generations.

In order to leave this beautiful piece of rural Essex intact, we invested $10,000 to conserve 108 acres with the Vermont Land Trust in 2012. (That parcel is now conserved from future development, has limited uses based on the Land Trust deed, and is accessed by a right of way.)

We figured we could eventually divide our property, selling this conserved parcel separately from our house-plus-27-acres. When making these plans, we were unaware that 87 Sawmill Rd. didn't have the frontage necessary to complete this action without a waiver from the Planning Commission.

My husband and I are ready to pass the land and house on to a new generation of stewards.
I stand before you tonight to request help and guidance as to **how might we transfer these timeless assets, including scenic ridges, wildlife corridors, and networks of trails in a way that would be prudent, expedient, and acceptable to both staff and commission members**.

Mailing address: 87 Sawmill Rd., Jericho, VT 05465
iPHONE # 802-793-3735
AZ PHONE # 480-459-2298 (after 6/5/2016)

Thank you in advance for your time, care and concern.

Donna (and John) Kunkel
April 28, 2016

PS – When purchasing a second home in the southwest back in 2006, it didn't seem right for us to change our residency to AZ when our heart was in VT. Some people would call that crazy, given the amount of time we have spent away. All-in-all, we paid property taxes to Essex for more than 39 years – a sum total of $209,000+ as of March 15th.