

December 2, 2019

Dear Seth and East Montpelier Select Board members,

We are writing on behalf of the East Montpelier Trails, Inc. (EMTI) board to request that the Town of East Montpelier consider incorporating the East Montpelier trail system into the town administrative structure. We are interested in pursuing this change regardless of whether the town moves forward to create a conservation commission or not.

Over its more than 25 years of operation, EMTI has, as you know, with funding and assistance from the Town and many other organizations and individuals, built and maintained approximately 16 miles of signed trails with related parking areas, viewpoints, and historic markers in the town. To achieve this, we have worked closely with the town, U-32, Cross Vermont Trail, the Vermont Land Trust, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and, critically, many landowners. The trail system has become a significant asset of the Town, used by many residents of East Montpelier and visitors from surrounding areas.

The 2018 Town Plan recognizes East Montpelier as a trail-friendly town and a statewide model for cooperation between the town, landowners and user groups. (Page 35) The plan also includes as goals: maintaining existing trails, supporting completion of planned trail segments, considering new trail links to connect villages and schools with the trail system, and providing safe parking for trails. Goals 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7. (Page 36)

As the trail system matures, it has become clear to the EMTI board that the trails would benefit from becoming part of the Town. EMTI already relies on the town road crew for assistance with establishing and plowing trail parking areas. We regularly call upon Administrator Bruce Johnson to locate and clarify pertinent land documents, and for assistance with landowner/trail user issues that arise. East Montpelier Trails' all-volunteer board, with the help of the partners above, will continue to build, maintain, and manage the trail system. Of primary concern is the need to have liability insurance in place for the growing trail system. As a result, the EMTI board voted earlier this year to approach the Town about incorporating the trail system into its administration.

EMTI would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how to move the trail system under town administration. There are some details to be resolved such as how to handle the Carlton Smith fund and how to preserve an EMTI endowment for its intended purpose of trail expansion. We are confident that these details can be worked out with the Town.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need further information. You can contact Mary at marythomasstone@gmail.com or (802) 223-2319, or (802) 249-2589 (mobile).

Best wishes, and thank you for your time and attention,

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Mary Stone
President, EMTI

cc Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator