

To: Trevor Lashua, Hinesburg Town Administrator and Hinesburg Select Board
From: Hinesburg Conservation Commission
Subject: Geprags Park
Date: February 18, 2016

The Hinesburg Conservation Commission has reviewed the proposed Agreement between VT Gas and the Town of Hinesburg, made available on the Town Website February 17, 2016. Our concerns reside in the potential impact upon the recreational, habitat, and water quality values of the park.

1. The easement plan depicts a 50 ft permanent easement and a 25 ft temporary easement, following a stream channel and encompassing a Class 2 wetland and a Natural Heritage rare plant community. 50 ft of disturbance unto itself is significant, the zone of impact will likely be much greater (see attached maps). The easement parallels land that is regularly mowed, bypasses the natural heritage community and much of the wetland. It would be helpful to understand the rationale for the proposed location.
2. The agreement is extremely short on detail; the corridor plans have no contours, there is no discussion of length of time for construction, construction methods, wetland restoration, soil compaction mitigation or protection of the rare plant community.
3. There are no performance measures in place, there is no condition of compensation for failing to meet performance measures.

Stream corridors, wetlands, and significant natural communities are recognized as key community assets by the 2013 Hinesburg Town Plan. We ask that the Select Board acknowledge the likely impacts to these assets and consider means to preferably avoid, or at least minimize impacts by undertaking the following:

- a. require more details in all areas of the proposal, and include performance measures
- b. request specific information about the length of time for construction, plans for public notification of construction, and a revised construction plan if it is unable to be completed in advance of the April 15th deadline originally established to protect the Golden Winged warbler breeding and nesting season.
- b. consider relocating the easement to avoid the wetland, river corridor, and plant community
- c. impose conditions in the event that performance measures are not fulfilled
- d. seek qualified 3rd party civil/environmental consultant to ensure optimal practices are specified and employed, and performance measures met.

We also request that the Conservation Commission is consulted regarding any changes to the proposed Agreement and/or is involved in the drafting and approval of any new language or agreement prior to execution by the Select Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Hinesburg Conservation Commission