



Town of Charlotte DRB
P.O. Box 119
Charlotte, Vermont, 05445

Re: Preliminary Plan Application
Krasnow Property, 88 acres
One Mile Road/Mount Philo Road
McCain Project # 98027

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

In response to discussions at the Sketch Plan meeting on April 16, 2015, and recommendations in the May 14, 2015 letter from the Planning Commission, we are presenting the following information.

1. The Krasnow family has been discussing the plan for this highly-valued land for many years, and they have involved McCain Consulting, Inc. in those discussions since 1998. The Krasnows have approached the Charlotte Land Trust and the State of Vermont to solicit interest in purchasing the property in fee simple, or purchasing a conservation easement. To date, while the State of Vermont has not expressed serious interest in buying or conserving this parcel, the Charlotte Land Trust has renewed interest and is still considering a modest conservation proposal for a portion of the property.

2. Areas of High Public Value are detailed below:

A. Agricultural Land- The parcel includes over 30 acres of active hayfields on the corner of Mt. Philo Road and One Mile Road, containing prime and statewide agricultural soils.

B. Statewide soils of Vergennes clay 2-6% slopes cover most of the existing hayfield on both sides of Kimball Brook. Smaller areas of prime agricultural soils mapped as Stockbridge- Nellis stony loam 3-6% slopes and Adams-Windsor loamy sand 5-12% slopes are mapped at the height of the hay field. With the exception of the building envelope area the existing hayfield will be conserved as open space and will remain in active agricultural use. (see Map 2. Agricultural Soils).

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C. There are small areas of slopes greater than 25% on Lots 3-7 (refer to Map 9. Steep Slopes). To the extent practical these areas will be avoided during project design and construction.

D. Kimball Brook runs through the northwest corner of the parcel, through the hayfield. Small seasonal tributaries of Kimball Brook are located on the southwest end of the property. A manmade pond associated with one of these tributaries is adjacent to a small Class 2 wetland. Other small wetland patches created by past logging activity were observed on the property, but would be considered Class 3. On the southeast side of the property, a seasonal drainage flows north towards a tributary of Bingham Brook (see **Map 6**). The project design protects streams and seasonal drainages.

E. The Town of Charlotte has mapped all wetlands and all upland forests as critical wildlife habitat in the 2013 Town Plan (see **Map 3**). As described in the town plan, all forests and wetlands were included simply because there are not many left, due to historic and present land use development. The Charlotte Forest Habitat Report #6 of the Mt. Philo State Park is attached for reference. The Krasnow property is adjacent to the state park, and contains an upland forest that is not considered significant enough to support a commercial forestry operation. Portions of the forest most recently cut for firewood or pasture contain early successional shrubs and trees; and other portions of the forest are hemlock or mixed hardwoods stands (see **Map 4**). Confirmed wildlife reported on the Mt. Philo Forest Habitat Report #6 includes bobcat, deer, coyote, grouse, Carolina wren and winter wren. The uncommon DeKay's brownsnake, found on Mt. Philo, uses woodland streams and wetland habitat. The Krasnow property contains habitat that could be used by these above-listed species, however no signs were observed other than deer. Please see the attached Habitat Assessment Report, completed according to the "Protocol for Assessment of Impacts of Proposed Development on Significant Wildlife Habitat in Charlotte, Vermont". An "Open Space Management Plan" will be developed to restrict the timing of hay activities to protect grassland birds.

F. The Champlain Water District's Source Protection Area (SPA) extends onto this property and up to Mt. Philo (see **Map 7**). The Champlain Water District SPA is a surface water source, and covers half of the Town of Charlotte. The portion of the SPA on this parcel is considered Zone 3, Secondary Recharge Area. The proposed development will be designed to protect surface and ground water according to state standards for treating stormwater runoff during and after construction; and designing/installing proper water and sewer systems. The scale of this project is similar to the existing development and land uses within this town zoning district and the water district SPA boundaries.

G. Mt. Philo Road is designated as a scenic route. The proposed project will not be out of character with surrounding land use and development, therefore it will not impact the scenic nature of this area.

H. Conserved land includes an open field located north of One Mile Road, and Mt. Philo State Park located south of the parcel.

3. The current project design accommodates the many Areas of High Public Value located on the property. About half of the property (43± acres) will be conserved as open space as defined in the Charlotte land use regulations. Of this 43 acres, 8± acres will be identified as “Natural Open Space” to maintain a “nature corridor” between Mt. Philo and the adjacent lands. This open space will contain the following AHPV features: wetlands, streams, agricultural land, linkage habitat, core forest, deer wintering areas, and large trees/snags. Building envelopes have been further reduced to limit the footprint of each lot. Curbcuts have been reduced from four to two, and driveways have been shortened. The curbcut on One Mile Road to access Lots 1 and 2 has been retained in order to provide an enhanced wildlife corridor from Mount Philo to Bingham Brook following mapped linkage and forest habitat.

4. The attached Habitat Assessment was completed by Kristen Howell of McCain Consulting, Inc. using the “Protocol for Assessment of Impacts of Proposed Development on Significant Wildlife Habitat in Charlotte, Vermont.” Ms. Howell visited the property on the following dates: May 30, 2013, April 11, 2015, June 1, 2015 and June 30, 2015. An extensive site-level survey was conducted for DeKay’s brownsnake, small-scale habitat features, rare plants, birds, and signs of deer, bobcat and coyote. Wildlife observations included salamanders, toads, common birds and deer. Observations of rare plants or animals were not made during the inventory, despite a thorough search.

5. A-F. The preliminary plan application will include detailed information on the items listed in the original sketch plan response. At this time the applicant is moving forward with a revised sketch plan, and as such these more detailed items have not been addressed as the overall project configuration has not been finalized. The applicant notes that item 5.F., a three dimensional rendering, may not be feasible to provide during a preliminary plan application, as any potential buyer of this lot would likely want to have an architect design a home that meets their goals as well as the Town’s requirements. The applicant suggests that this is more appropriate during the building permit phase, and would accept a condition that a rendering be provided prior to development on the lot.

I believe this covers all the relevant items. We look forward to meeting with the Planning Commission to continue the review.

Sincerely,
McCain Consulting, Inc.



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