

## Talia Jalette

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**From:** Kerry Robinson <krobinson@outdoors.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2021 4:31 PM  
**To:** Jim Lamphere; tjalette@hopkintonri.org  
**Cc:** al@awdrfs.com  
**Subject:** Letter from the AMC Re: Stone Ridge at Hopkinton  
**Attachments:** Narragansett AMC Ltr. to Hopkinton Planning Board 4-23-21.pdf

**Importance:** High

Good Afternoon Mr. Lamphere and Ms. Jalette:

Last week, I sent an email from the AMC (addressed to Mr. DiOrio and Cc-ing Mr. Lamphere), pertaining to our interests in Narragansett Trail as it crosses the subject parcel of the Stone Ridge at Hopkinton solar development, in the hope that it might be included in the packet of information for next month's (May 5th) Town Planning Board meeting. It was brought to my attention, this afternoon, that our letter was not included in what was posted on the town website, for that meeting agenda. After learning of that, I called and spoke with Mr. DiOrio to inquire whether or not the letter had been received, and he was not able to confirm that it had. Therefore, I am re-sending the letter to you (and including Ms. Jalette, as advised by Mr. DiOrio), with the request that, if at all possible, it be included in the packet for next week's meeting. Understanding that some time has lapsed since the recommended deadline for inclusion, I do appreciate any efforts to allow it but realize that you may not. If it is determined to be too late to do so, I would respectfully request that it be included in future meeting packets (relating to that agenda item), so that the AMC's comments may be recorded publicly.

If you would please confirm receipt of this email and its accompanying attachment, I'd very much appreciate it. (While writing this, it has also become apparent that my email app is acting up and doing odd things; perhaps why my earlier one may not have been received by your office.) Lastly, at the suggestion of Mr. DiOrio, I would also respectfully ask that you please forward a copy of this email and its attached PDF to Ms. Margaret Hogan, Esq.

Thank you, kindly,  
Kerry

Kerry Robinson  
*Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club  
Chapter Executive Committee: Trails Chair, Chapter Archivist, &  
Narragansett Trail Restoration Committee Chair*

*AMC Stewardship Society  
AMC Outdoor Leadership Development Committee  
AMC Inter-Chapter Trails Committee & Representative to the O.L.D.C.*







Brunswick, ME

April 23, 2021

Greenville, ME

Northampton, MA

Mr. Al DiOrio, Chairman  
Hopkinton Planning Board  
One Town House Road  
Hopkinton, RI 02833

Alexandria, NH

Bretton Woods, NH

Garham, NH

Re: Stone Ridge Plat 11 Lot 47A Project

Blairstown, NJ

Haverstraw, NY

Dear Mr. DiOrio,

New York, NY

Bethlehem, PA

On behalf of the Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and as Chair of the Narragansett Trail Restoration Committee, I am writing this letter to share with the Hopkinton Planning Board some background on the history of Narragansett Trail and the AMC's ongoing work to restore it, as well as provide information, from our point of view, on efforts by the developers of the proposed Stone Ridge solar farm, in Hopkinton, to preserve Narragansett Trail, where it crosses their property.

The Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of America's Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. The Narragansett Chapter is the volunteer-led branch of the AMC in Rhode Island. Throughout the last 100 years, the Chapter has been involved in trail building and maintenance, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and other local organizations, hosting recreation and conservation events, including numerous and diverse programs designed to engage the local communities in the enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors.

The Narragansett Chapter of the AMC is leading an historic effort to restore Narragansett Trail, a 44-mile-long hiking trail, started about 1933 and completed about 1936, by the Narragansett Chapter of the AMC and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA), respectively. The AMC is partnering with several local agencies, including but not limited to, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Boy Scouts of RI (BSRI), Hopkinton Land Trust (HLT), the National Park Service (NPS), the Audubon Society of RI (ASRI), Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) on the "Narragansett Trail Restoration Project" (NTRP). Support for the NTRP has been enthusiastic from all partners, as well as a number of other organizations, local agencies and elected officials, including the Board of Directors of the AMC, town officials and local land trust groups from all RI towns through which the original trail crosses.

As the AMC's first recreational hiking trail in RI, Narragansett Trail was thoughtfully created to highlight southern RI's natural beauty, unique habitats, and significant historic, cultural and ecological sites, following indigenous paths, other roads and trails, stretching from Worden Pond, in South Kingstown, RI, to Lantern Hill in North Stonington, CT. While only intermittently-



connected, today, several miles of the original Narragansett Trail have been preserved, over the years, thanks to the collective efforts of the numerous, aforementioned local agencies, throughout the towns of Hopkinton, Richmond, Charlestown, and South Kingstown, RI.

With support from its growing coalition of partners, the AMC aims to restore and close gaps over approximately 18 miles of the original, 22-mile- long trail, connecting it with the existing four (4) miles, in RI, providing a regional destination for outdoor recreation and history, marked by a shared interstate trail network, and connecting CT and southern RI's unique trail communities, across 44 miles. With stunning views of lakes, ponds, beautiful forest and rolling hills, the storied trail fosters healthy Rhode Islanders, creates a respite from technology, and preserves the state's habitat and open space. As a gateway to RI's rich indigenous history, the trail provides opportunities to learn about RI's culture, ecology, geology, and trail history and celebrate the lives of those who walked the trail throughout time. Through the success of multifaceted, interconnected partnerships, the trail is a portal back in time, allowing users of all ages, abilities, and experiences to walk in the paths of the indigenous peoples and hikers of the 1930s. With unique opportunities for long- and short-distance travel, users may enjoy the outdoors for days on end, and relax in the natural world.

Just some of the numerous points of interest along the original trail include: The US National Park Service's National Natural Landmark and TNC's Ell Pond Preserve, HLT's Manitou Hassannash Preserve, TNC's Canonchet Preserve & Hoxsie Preserve, countless cultural, historical, and archaeological sites, indigenous ceremonial stone landscapes and native footpaths, from Hopkinton to South Kingstown; the historic Wood River Branch Railroad, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, TNC's Carter Preserve and Pasquiset Pond Preserve, in Charlestown; South Kingstown Land Trust's Browning Woods Farm Preserve, and Worden Pond, RI's largest natural lake, in South Kingstown.

Having been made aware of the significance of Narragansett Trail and the efforts to restore it, representatives from the Stone Ridge LLC solar development project have met with members of the AMC, over the past several months, to walk the subject parcel, covering much of it, by foot, in great detail, and sharing information between the two groups, as to our goals and possible avenues to achieve them. The AMC has identified the various trails on the site, including Narragansett Trail, and feel that the series of site walks have been comprehensive and that all discernable trails have been located and recorded.

Through these series of site visits, a section of well-established Narragansett Trail, flanked on both sides by stone walls and other significant features, such as large rock piles and stone foundations, and including a surrounding 20-acre area, has been identified by both groups as a primary target for preservation, as it included both the still well-established portion of Narragansett Trail, and a significant sampling of historic, cultural features. Recognizing the place for compromise, it was agreed by both groups that a relocation of other areas of Narragansett Trail would be needed, as well as make sense for both groups' project goals. Therefore, continuity of Narragansett Trail has been proposed by means of a relocation, from one section of original trail to another, via



a re-route around the perimeter of the solar array, on the generally-south-western borders. The re-route in this area was chosen for two major reasons: 1.) there is an established trail that already runs the southern portion of the property, near the property line, which we can utilize to bridge a gap and 2.) we sought to avoid having portions of the trail flanked on both sides by solar arrays, preferring to maintain at least one side of the trail facing undisturbed woodland, at a minimum. Given that Narragansett Trail is recreational in nature, we felt it best to relocate it such that is longer and maintains its natural character, as much as possible. Throughout these series of site walks, both groups further affirmed our commitment to keep any re-routed portions of Narragansett Trail out of any wetlands or wetland buffers. In an effort to support that mutual commitment, representatives from Stone Ridge LLC have indicated a willingness to move the array, in order to accommodate the trail in such an area.

At such time as the AMC is permitted to resume maintenance of Narragansett Trail on this property, we hope to have an established agreement with the landowner, wherein the AMC will be the lead organization in not only carrying out basic trail maintenance on it but also re-establishing the relocated portions, including brushing, blazing, clearing blowdowns and other basic trail maintenance. Details of such agreement are still pending further discussions between the two parties.

In summary, the AMC and its Narragansett Trail Restoration Project Committee are satisfied with the clear and sincere efforts by Stone Ridge LLC to work together to protect, preserve and promote the historic Narragansett Trail, and we look forward to working with them, to continue developing a trail plan that will satisfy not only their interests and ours, but the local community and general public's as well. We invite any input and feedback from your Planning Board members, local consultants and the general public, as we work to return connectivity of this great trail to your community.

Sincerely,  
Kerry Robinson

Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club  
Chair, Narragansett Trails Committee  
Chair, Narragansett Trail Restoration Project  
Chapter Archivist

