

# Kathleen Groll Connolly

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Mr. Robert McIntyre  
Old Saybrook Planning Commission  
Town Hall  
302 Main Street  
Old Saybrook, CT 06475

January 5, 2011

Dear Mr. McIntyre and Planning Commission Members,

My name is Kathy Connolly, I live at 60 North Cove Road, and I am chair of the Old Saybrook Bikeways Committee. My training and professional practice are in land use planning and landscape design. I am speaking tonight on my own behalf, but would also like to make it clear that my suggestions are entirely consistent with proposals that have come out of the Bikeways Committee in the past.

The concept I'd like to discuss may seem unusual at first, but I hope you'll consider it.

The discussion must start with the fact that neighborhoods on Schoolhouse Road and Ingham Hill Road are inaccessible to one another except via the Post Road. This forces anyone who wishes to walk or ride a bike to and from those neighborhoods to use the Post Road. For example, families in the Ingham Hill area may be only one-half mile from the Schoolhouse Road ball fields at Town Park as the crow flies, but they are forced to drive several miles to take children back and forth to games at Town Park via the long route along the Post Road. For another example, a high school or middle school student who wishes to bicycle to school from Schoolhouse Road faces the rigors of the Post Road. In yet another example, people who might be willing to do their errands by bicycle from Schoolhouse Road face the dangers of our Post Road. According to extensive input received by the Bikeways Committee, this is a discouragement to bicycling and walking and encourages driving.

As a planning commission, you are charged with anticipating future conditions as well as considering the present. You already know that we will never see 25 cent per gallon gasoline again, and that many experts are forecasting \$4 per gallon by this summer and \$5 per gallon gasoline by 2012. As the price of gasoline rises, demand for safe alternative transportation increases.

Ironically, one answer to this problem might lie in the Preserve development. If I have understood correctly, there is a ball park proposed along with the Ingham Hill cluster. A bike and pedestrian path going west from the ball park area could reach Schoolhouse Road in as little as 750'—about one-seventh of a mile--across Preserve property.

Attached to this letter are two GIS depictions of three possible access points and three alternative paths. Any of these could allow schoolchildren and adults to bypass the Post Road as they move back and forth from Schoolhouse to Ingham Hill.

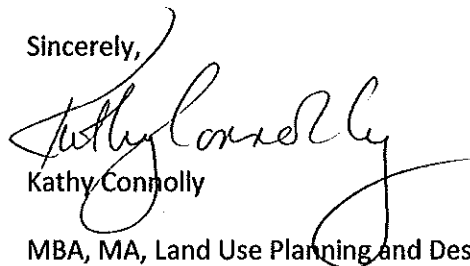
Yes, this concept raises many, many issues. But please consider this: For more than a decade, Old Saybrook boards and commissions have listened to environmental arguments against development of the Preserve parcels. Now, you may conclude as a commission that the current proposal is acceptable and the development will be one step closer to reality. If this occurs, I hope you will also consider working with the developer around the concept of a path that enables safe east-west bike and pedestrian travel. It would be one positive offset to an environmental scorecard that has been troubling to many during the many hearings that have occurred.

Indeed, there are compelling reasons that any new development or road repair in Old Saybrook, not only the Preserve, should accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. Cyclists and pedestrians are legitimate road users with rights whose needs have long been overshadowed by accommodations for the automobile. In our town planning, we should not create any more "island" neighborhoods that can only be reached by motor.

Finally, on behalf of the Bikeways Committee, we hope that as a commission you will consider using Connecticut's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Toolbox, which became a design standard for the DOT in January, 2010, as you consider any road development proposals in the Preserve and everywhere else in our town. The standards were developed over several years through a consortium of DOT staff, road design professionals, and a series of public input meetings. Two copies of those standards are attached.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kathy Connolly". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kathy Connolly

MBA, MA, Land Use Planning and Design