

February 7, 2022

To: Burlington Conservation Board
From: Marla R. Emery
169 Killarney Drive
Burlington, VT 05408

Submitted for the record by: Walter Poleman

Concern: Loss of ecological and educational values of natural shoreline

Killarney Drive, Inc (KDI) proposes to purchase the portion of Lake Champlain natural shoreline located between Rock Point and the parcel it currently owns. This natural shoreline is currently owned by the Elks Lodge and is the site of geologically and ecologically rare features including an exposed face of the Champlain Thrust Fault, a Class II wetland, and three rare obligate-wetland plant species, one of which is globally rare. Because of its unique characteristics, field visits to the shoreline are part of curricula in several UVM departments including Geology, Plant and Soil Science, and the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources.

As a member of KDI, researcher with the US Forest Service, Professor (Adjunct) in UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, and Co-Chair of an international scientific assessment of biodiversity, I believe KDI ownership would place the ecological and educational values of this significant natural shoreline at risk. I have participated in several internal KDI discussions about the proposed purchase and management of the shoreline currently owned by the Elks Lodge. While there are dissenting voices within the organization, the clear intent is to limit access to the 40 member households and groom it to more closely resemble a beach resort than a natural shoreline.

Should it acquire the natural shoreline currently owned by the Elks Lodge, KDI's actions in the summer of 2021 provide evidence of its likely future management. In July 2021, KDI hired a bobcat operator to mechanically grade the Class II wetlands on its current parcel. It did so despite information provided by two members that the wetlands were located in the zone of public domain and doing so would almost certainly violate Vermont law. KDI did not seek or obtain a permit for this grading. Further, following notification from Vermont DEC that it had violated wetland regulations, the KDI Board supported ongoing heavy hand raking and movement of sand to eliminate re-emerging vegetation and pooling of water.

Actions to consider:

1. Preserve the ecological and educational values of this stretch of natural shoreline by placing it under a conservation easement or other status that will ensure it remains intact and accessible for scientific and educational purposes.
2. Inform KDI of the City regulations relevant to Lake Champlain shoreline, including the boundaries of the public domain, permitting requirements, and penalties for their violation.

Thank you for your consideration and dedicated service to the City and its environment. My appreciation to Walter Poleman for reading this statement into the record while I am abroad and unable to attend the meeting.