

Friends of Hanover Crew
PO Box 855
Hanover, NH 03770

To the Hanover Board of Selectmen:

On October 26, following a request by the Select Board at their last meeting, the Friends of Hanover Crew (FOHC) formally met with Jody Roberts and his daughter Jennifer Barton to discuss the feasibility of use by the Hanover High crew team of the Chieftain property. That meeting included Julia Griffin and Jonathan Edwards from the Town of Hanover and three coaches from the HHS program. We understand the Town's and public's desire to make sure that all potential options have been fully explored. While the Chieftain is well suited for Mr. Roberts use as a rowing facility, primarily for small boats, from May through October, it does not meet the current or future needs of the HHS crew team, whose season in 8 person boats, begins on the river in early April and ends in the first week of June.

We appreciate Mr. Roberts willingness to discuss improvements to his property that would make it possible for HHS crew to row from that site. We understand that the necessary improvements although possible would be difficult and costly. In addition, Mr. Roberts has indicated in his letter that he is not willing at present to invest both time and money solely for the purpose of meeting HHS Crew needs. Finally, FOHC would not be able to raise sufficient funds to improve the Chieftain venue, a site it does not own and future access cannot be guaranteed.

The conditions of access to a portion of the river where major current flow guarantees entry soon after ice out, land and existing buildings for covered boat storage, foot paths flat enough to ensure safe footing in early Spring and adequate area for safe drop-off and pick-up of rowers already exists at Fullington Farm and Wilson's Landing. Most important, however is that by owning the land upon which all of these conditions can exist, FOHC is ensuring a permanent home for the Hanover crew. As Mr. Roberts mentions his is an existing private dock from which he hopes to expand a private enterprise. In contrast, FOHC proposes to use private funds to improve a public boat launch to enhance public enjoyment of the river.

At your meeting on October 19 FOHC outlined many of the conditions of use proposed by the Board and Town Staff with which the FOHC agreed. We ask that one major condition remain as we had stated in our proposed operational plan, that of times of practices and number of boats. We know that you have received requests to change this major feature of our program, however we hope that you will allow us to remain in existence as we are.

Crew at Hanover High has been a sport where girls and boys, athletes from Novice to Advanced, practice at the same time, the early morning, and in the same location. By remaining as a full team with seven coaches, we can share rowers between boats, (crucial when eight rowers are needed for a boat to launch), equipment and coaching assignments. The sharing of rowers means all students get a chance to row during a practice. The teams are fluid, with seat racing giving coaches a chance to switch rowers throughout the season, similar to a tennis ladder. Our young athletes learn from one another, in the words of the girls' Novice coach, "I have our boats stop and watch the Varsity boats each morning to reinforce my coaching with the real example of our more experienced crews." Safety is very important to our coaches and parents. The coaching staff, in six fully equipped launches with 15 horsepower engines, looks out for one another on the river. A safety launch is manned, often by parent volunteers, to keep track of all boats and make use they are on and off the river safely. Because of daytime work conflicts, we would lose the services of at least four of our seven volunteer coaches, if they could not coach in the morning before work. In addition, most of our parent volunteers, on whom we rely for safety and launch maintenance, would also not be able to be present if we were forced to move our program out of the early morning hours. For all of these reasons, we ask that you agree to allow the team to continue as a whole, in a single location, with practice at the same time.

We trust that this letter, along with a review of documents presented to you at your meeting on October 19, are sufficient to answer your questions about the FOHC proposal for Wilson's Landing and Fullington Farm. We hope that on November 2, 2009, you vote to become a co-applicant with the Friends of Hanover Crew for a new, handicapped accessible, dock at the public boat launch.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Carter
Secretary, Friends of Hanover Crew
October 30, 2009