

February 20, 2023

Halls Road Improvement Committee
Memorial Town Hall
52 Lyme Street
Old Lyme, CT 06371

Good morning:

Having participated in various efforts to build a sustainable future for Old Lyme, I greatly appreciate the need for an improved pedestrian experience in our business district along Halls Road. As part of that improved experience, I enthusiastically support the development of a pedestrian bridge over the Lieutenant River at the old bridge abutments as proposed in the Halls Road Master Plan.

As a member of the Sustainable Old Lyme team which strives to meet the Sustainable CT standards of excellence, it is clear that improved pedestrian opportunities positively affect the health and wellness of residents and increase opportunities to connect with neighbors and the community at large.

As a member of the Economic Development Commission (which voted in November 2022 to support the Halls Road Overlay Zone), I take to heart the 2021 economic recommendations provided to us by CERC/Advance CT, including:

- Highlight Old Lyme's Natural Amenities
- Support Outdoor Recreation
- Build on Old Lyme's Arts and Culture Tradition to Create a Unique Destination
- Encourage Support of Local Business

I believe a pedestrian bridge across the Lieutenant River at the old "Bow Bridge" abutments will help the Town of Old Lyme further meet the recommendations set forth by both Sustainable CT and Advance CT.

Old Lyme is uniquely lucky in having a historic location for the planned pedestrian bridge that will not only engage art lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, but also connect these friends to our local business community. Once a modest footbridge, the old Bow Bridge was so appealing to the painters of the Lyme Art Colony that it was often the subject of paintings around the beginning of the 20th century. The Florence Griswold Museum shares with visitors in its outdoor "Artists Trail" guide where the old Bow Bridge once stood within easy sight of the Museum's southern-most riverbank.

The old Bow Bridge was not only a beloved subject of paintings, but also provided a remarkable view up the tidal Lieutenant River. Surrounded by marsh, the position of the former bridge provides a perfect perch to watch osprey (and now bald eagles!). I can envision this future walkway becoming a favored spot for those enjoying recreation as well as artists and nature lovers stopping to enjoy the inspiring surroundings.

The bridge will provide visitors of Old Lyme's arts district a walkable connection to our restaurants and shops. I can also envision the flip side to this: Having a meal at one of our family-owned restaurants on Halls Road and then taking a walk across the bridge to enjoy the architecture of historic Lyme Street. What a pleasure it will be to have a safe and attractive way to appreciate our village center.

With the planned trails, lighting, and other amenities, the envisioned pedestrian bridge and walkway will be an important element in connecting people to our commercial area. In creating a sense of place that will draw people to the outdoors, the pedestrian bridge and walkway will encapsulate what makes Old Lyme special: the arts, our estuary's beauty, and small-town business.

I look forward to your ongoing work,

Cheryl A. Poirier
4 Holly Lane
Old Lyme, CT 06371