

Michael Lewis, Director
RI Department of Transportation

Dear Director Lewis:

The residents of Almy Point and the Hummocks in Portsmouth RI want to make an unusual request of you and the Department of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation recently identified the “The Cove Bridge” (#049501) on Hummocks Point Rd in Portsmouth as being in dire need of repair and imposed a 4-ton weight limit on the bridge until repairs are made. The bridge was put on a priority list for repair. We have another idea for you.

This bridge was built in 1961 as a flood escape route for the residents of Island Park which would become flooded during hurricanes. It was and is known locally as the “Escape Bridge”. Unfortunately it has become a major thoroughfare for traffic from Island Park to the Route 24 on ramp which has been a detriment to a predominantly residential area on both sides of the bridge. The Island Park traffic has an equally easy access to Route 24 by way of Boyd’s Lane which has much less residential development, a much wider road, with much of the roadside vacant wetlands.

Our suggestion which is supported by most of the local residents is to block off the Cove bridge to all but pedestrian traffic except in the case of an evacuation, making it truly an escape bridge. The neighborhood would be safer and quieter. The motorcycle traffic in the summer months is unbearable and the speed of through traffic is dangerous for the children and pedestrians.

In this time of budget shortfalls and with RI needing a lot of work on its infrastructure and roads, this is a case where the repairs could be delayed and the funds used for more pressing projects. The neighborhood would be improved and the impact on commerce would be minimal.

Sincerely,

Grafton H. Willey, IV
105 Point Rd
Portsmouth, RI 02871

We the residents of Point Road and Hummocks Point Rd in Portsmouth RI support the closing off of the Cove Bridge to all but pedestrian traffic with the provisions that it be available for crossing by vehicle traffic in an emergency evacuation of the Island Park Area.

Name

Address

Cap Willey & Lois Clement
105 Point Road
Portsmouth, RI 02871
401-683-9023

Dear Point Road and Hummocks Neighbors:

We have been long time residents of Point Road. In fact when Lois and the Kidd family moved into their home at 105 Point Road, it was a dead-end road with four houses on it. After the hurricane of 1954 which wiped out the old Stone Bridge the State built the Sakonnet River Bridge which it is now replacing. With the closing of the Stone Bridge the residents of Island Park and Almy/O'Neill Point had no escape from the rising waters of a major storm. If you have been here in a storm you realize that the first areas to flood are around Flo's Clam Shack which cuts off access to Boyd's lane and higher ground.

In 1961 the Cove Escape Bridge was built to connect Almy/O'Neill Point to the Hummocks to ensure an escape route for the residents of Island Park. The original intention was that this would only be an escape route not a major thoroughfare. With the entrance ramp onto route 24 Point Road has become the major exit road out of Island Park and has transformed our quiet neighborhood into a heavy traffic noisy roadway. The Portsmouth Police Department cannot or will not enforce speed and noise regulations which have made this road a very dangerous road for our walkers, children and pets. The Cove Escape Bridge that was built to carry emergency exit traffic only now carries over 2000 vehicles a day. The State is now faced with a deteriorating bridge in need of expensive repairs.

We believe that now is the time to address the real purpose of the Cove Escape Bridge which is to provide an emergency escape route for the residents of Island Park. We have sent this letter to Michael Lewis, the Director of the RI DOT suggesting to him that the State should not spend monies that are needed elsewhere on this bridge project and are in short supply with our State Budget problems. They should turn this bridge into a pedestrian traffic only bridge which can be opened in cases of emergency to vehicle traffic. Wouldn't it be nice to sit outside on a nice summer afternoon or evening without having to listen to the constant roar of illegally loud motorcycles blast down the road. We are asking all of the Point Road and Hummocks area neighbors to sign on to this letter in support so that we can show the RI DOT and the Portsmouth Town Council that this suggestion should be implemented. It is a solution that saves the State needed revenues, improves the neighborhood and property values, improves safety, and is not a major inconvenience to the business customers of Island Park who would have easy access to Route 24 by way of Boyd's Lane a wider, straight, less populated road that is approximately the same distance to the highway.

If you agree and would like to sign the letter please contact us at 683-9023 or stop by our house.

Lois Clement & Cap Willey