



RANDY GEORGE
MAYOR

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April 1, 2022

Keith Arnold, Chief of Staff
The Nature Conservancy
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 2203-5300

Dear Mr. Arnold,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter that I sent to Dr. Barbara Brummer, New Jersey's Director of The Nature Conservancy, which was in response to a phone call I received from her representative, Scott Sherwood.

The letter explains the Borough of North Haledon's position and my hope is that when you read it, you will have someone from your organization contact me so that we can have a dialogue regarding the placement of the star. It is unfortunate that the Director hasn't reached out to me so that we can discuss this issue, but has relied on the ramblings of one person, who believes that they, and they alone, should decide what happens on High Mountain. In the paperwork I have enclosed, New Jersey State Green Acres does not have a problem with the placement of the star and neither does the township of Wayne. I am enclosing a copy of a letter from the Mayor of Wayne; it is only TNC, with Dr. Brummer's one-sided decision.

In my opinion, it is extremely disappointing that I can't get a response regarding my letter; I don't believe that it is the way your organization runs, and that certainly isn't the way I have performed my duties as the mayor of North Haledon for the past twenty-four years. One must respond to any letter, email, or phone call, whether you agree or do not agree with the substance.

The Borough of North Haledon, as explained in my letter, donated 95 acres to The Nature Conservancy under my watch, which were worth millions of dollars, and although that does not entitle us to do whatever we want on the mountain, I believe it entitles me to a conversation on behalf of the Borough of North Haledon regarding the star's future.

A petition is being circulated to convince The Nature Conservancy to reverse its decision, and to allow the star to remain at certain times of the year; it is a symbol of hope during the pandemic, and its importance has only increased since Russia's war in the Ukraine and its president's comments of, perhaps, using nuclear weapons. I know first-hand that many of my residents, and of course, people all over the world, are very concerned with this issue.

You will see from the enclosed newspaper articles that the star was first installed on High Mountain in 1956 by the Boy Scout Explorer Post 71, and was maintained by the members for many years. After the star was vandalized, the public asked me to restore the star, which I did to give people hope during the pandemic. When the star was re-installed, TNC received a complaint that it was a religious symbol, and I assured them that it was not, and, that as far as I am concerned, it is a star of hope, just like the 15 foot letters with the word, HOPE, spelled out, adjacent to the municipal building.

The star has generated so much good will and publicity for the High Mountain Preserve; there is more foot traffic up there than ever before. The Borough of North Haledon has film footage of people praying by the star. What a PR boost for TNC! I believe the star only enhances TNC's mission to preserve property around the world.

In my letter to Dr. Brummer, you will see how much the Borough does, to not only protect the preserve, but also to supply emergency services to the many people who enjoy it. I do not believe that the way this issue is being handled helps to maintain the relationship that the Borough of North Haledon has with The Nature Conservancy. I know that I will think twice before I suggest to donate more property to The Nature Conservancy, and I certainly wouldn't mind if TNC would consider giving North Haledon back its 95 acres.

I AM NOT TAKING THE STAR DOWN UNTIL SOMEONE FROM THE NATURE CONSERVANCY CONTACTS ME AND WE HAVE A DIALOGUE.

I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at the above address and phone number.

Very truly yours,

Borough of North Haledon

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy George".

Randy George, Mayor