June 21, 2008

Dear Alice,

I want to thank you and Brian for the kindness and the neighborliness that you showed me when I showed up at your doorstep the other day. I really enjoyed my visit with Brian and hope to see you both again soon. I am very grateful to Brian for letting me walk out to the old Aden Tunnel. It was quite a sight!

Your railroad right-of-way is a wonderful piece of property and I’m sure that many, many people would find great enjoyment in it in the years ahead if you do chose to allow us to put a walking trail on it.

I can image some of the things that have gone through your mind in considering opening up your private property to the public. I’m sure that you understand that it would not become a fully developed public trail over-night, or even in a year or two. Such a great undertaking would require money and time that is not readily available, and since it’s largely a volunteer and government funded project, it might take more years than we can now imagine.

Even considering that creating a walking trail like this is will be a very long process, you may have concerns about how it’s developed in the near future, say one to five years. One of your most immediate concerns would be what would be happening on the easement nearest you. I know you now make use of the old right-of-way in the immediate area of your home.

Considering your natural desire to maintain your privacy, I would suggest that the part of the trail near your home be the last part of the right-of-way that the public is given access to. We could specify in our agreement that the portions of the right-of-way near Grahn and near Fultz be fully developed before any use of the right-of-way near your home is made. For example, we could develop the part of the right-of-way west of the tunnel over the next five years. The part of the trail between Fultz and a half mile east of your home could be developed five to ten years from now. With these restrictions in place, you would not see any change at all in the immediate area of your home for many years into the future. Knowing how slowly such things can evolve, it could easily be more than ten years before those trail segments are fully developed.

I know such restrictions would be acceptable because the value of even the foreshortened trails are immense. They would be some of the most awe-inspiring public areas that people have access to in eastern Kentucky.

When the time comes, you will have total control over development of the trail near your home as well. We could even specify that the trail leave the right-of-way and pass farther to the south of your home, so that it would be out of sight altogether. If Brian has any ideas for a business or other development to serve the users of he trail, he could adjust the course of the trail nearer to your home when that time comes.

I want you to understand that if, when and how this trail gets developed is totally in your hands. The easement agreement will be written in such a way that minimizes your loss and maximizes the benefits to you and Brian. If Brian is interested in running a business that directly serves users of the trail, there is great potential in food service, over-night accommodations, souvenirs and that sort of thing.

If it would help, I would be happy to spend some time talking with you and Brian about the future benefits of having the trail on your property. With the development of Stone Mountain at Lawton, I expect there will be local people and people new to Carter County who will be seeking housing sites with amenities that would benefit their quality of life. Walking trails are considered a great asset to home buyers. People are willing to pay much more for a property that has a near-by walking trail.

Lastly, I would suggest that you also consider the intangible benefits of creating a beautiful trail on your property. Your family has deep roots in this area. This trail will be of great benefit to Carter County people for many generations into the future. Your generosity and foresight will be remembered by all those future generations. I can’t imagine anything that can have a greater long-term benefit to our community.

I do hope to visit with you again. Brian tells me that he has old family photos that would be perfect for the Carter County geneologywebsite. I would very much like to make copies of them. Carter County people who live all across the country visit our website on a daily basis. The Photo Album section is the most popular part of our site.

Until we meet again, may I offer my sincere best regards,

John Grace

606-286-1717