

Ginny Houston/TC1994.0008
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

JB Jane Beck
GH Ginny Houston
Place North Conway, NH
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GH Okay.

JB Go ahead.

GH My name is Ginny Houston and you can call me Ginny. I grew up in, in Boston just outside of Boston and I was a, a poor city kid. And a, had dreams of trees and horses and farm life and that type of thing. But I was very involved with a, I went to the museum on Saturday and studied drawing and learned to paint, and, and um, and I think as I said to you earlier, I a, I think that opens up your eyes to nature and, and what's around you. And a, I worked very hard in school and a, I started working from the time I was in the 3rd grade after school, running errands and, and a, but I also learned at the same time, that's it's important to give back, because my mother would say, well, can't charge so and so because they can't afford it. [1.11] So, that was a very strong lesson. And

a, however I saved ten thousand dollars by the time I graduated from high school.

JB Wow!

GH And went to work for the president of Marilyn Cup Corporation which was Sweetheart paper, Sweetheart straws, and a, he had 7 to 10 stock brokers calling him every day, cause he was very wealthy man and a, so I started trading, I opened my own account and started trading in the market. And turned the ten thousand dollars into a few million over, over time.

JB A wonderful story!

GH So a, a lot of up and downs in the market and obviously it took a lot of risk.

JB That's terrific.

GH To do that. I don't. I'm now a, financial consultant, stock broker. [2.07] At Smith, Barney, Shearson in Boston and I primarily work with managed money, and I don't like people to take a lot of risk but, I tell them the turtle really wins the race. But I didn't have, you know a family that I had to worry about, and a, you know so now I'm with money managers

myself. Then I went into business for myself, I opened an art gallery. On Newberry Street in Boston.

Because I always loved art and loved to paint and so forth. But I also knew that, galleries don't typically make a lot of money so I opened a paper store. In Danvers at the same time and I was buying imperfects from Sweetheart. Mistrimmed plates and, because every plate has a rim, so that some were, wider at one end, and narrower at the other and they would normally just you know toss those away and they actually regrind them. But it would cost them double to make the same plate cause they'd have to add virgin resin and still every so many plates they'd have a mistrim. So I bought them and would repackage them and sell them to housewives who didn't care, the kids don't care if the plates are a little imperfect.

[3.30] And a, I couldn't get a, loan because I didn't have a business background, so I put my own money in both enterprises and a, it took me three years to get my money out of the art gallery, and it took me one year out of the paper store. Very quick turn around.

And a, I had that for about 15 years, and a

Sweetheart eventually was sold to Fort Howard Paper, and the business was changing, Paperrama went in up the street from me, very large, operation. And I was being pursued by E. F. Hutton at the time. To become a broker, because they were pretty much following my trades, cause I was still trading very actively in the market. So eventually closed the business and I went into my financial business which I've enjoyed. And a, we've been taken over twice, one by Shearson and now by Smith, Barney. And a.

JB There's another. _____.

GH Yeah. Anyway I would continue and as I was making money in the market, I bought my first home which was in Boston, on the waterfront, a condominium, and a, and then my next purchase was a New Hampshire. I bought a bigger, more of a home, bigger house, still a, a townhouse condominium. And a.

JB Around here or?

GH In North Conway.

JB In North Conway.

GH New Hampshire. And a, I really love my home in New Hampshire, and but as the years went on, you know it

became very commercial, in the town of, North Conway, and um, the areas around me, people were, you know they, they'd clear cut the land and a, it was a little heartbreaking to me to see the trees coming down and so on. And a, I thought well if I, you know if I buy some land then at least I have control over that land.

[5.54] I was also dating a guy who had a farm

_____ and I really fell in love with the lifestyle but I didn't quite fall in love with him so.

Ha! Ha! After we broke up I was talking to one of my clients who had moved to New Hampshire, to Vermont and a, when we finish talking about, they called me up about business one day and a, and after we finished talking about business I knew they ride. And I said, well have you been riding lately and, how is that going and how are the horses and, and they said, well, the farm we usually ride through is being sold, and we hope that a developer doesn't buy it. And this was, Waitsfield, Vermont. And I hadn't been to Sugarbush since I was in my early twenties and a, and I said to them well, what are you doing for the weekend? Do you feel like company and I'll, I'll come up and if the

farm is available maybe I'll buy it. So a, they invited me up, and Saturday we saddled up the horses and we went up Palmer Hill road, and around and we came out on the backside of the property, and a, we looked out at this beautiful field, and the mountains behind and that was it for me, I was in, I was in love.

JB So that's where the land is, up there, cause I drove up there one day.

GH Yes.

JB And three deer came out of the meadow up there.

GH Yes. There's a lot of wildlife, there's bear up there, deer and a, you know just. My dog Rigzy has gotten a mouth full of, of raccoon. Porcupine, yes and, anyway a, I just felt that I, I felt like I came home. That's exactly how I felt. And so we, we rode up to the old farmhouse and I introduced myself to the farmer.

JB Where was, who was that?

GH And his name is Ken Austin. He's been back since he visited last summer, he stayed at the farmhouse, and, so I keep in touch with him, and he moved to I think,

was is North Carolina or South Carolina, that area,
[8.05] and but he had, he had the farm for I think a
couple of generations, his mother had the, had the
farm before him, and a, anyway I introduced myself
and, he said, "the farm was under contract though to a
developer." So I gave him my card. And I said, "well
if it fall through, give me a call and I'll buy the
farm from you." And I never expected to hear from him
again. So, I went back to Boston, and a, just sort of
put it out of my mind and, and a couple of weeks later
I got a call. And it was Ken Austin, and evidently
the, the developer had been perking along the pine
brook, river, stream and it didn't perk for the number
of houses that he wanted to put down there, it perked
for about half the amount and a, so he withdrew his
offer. [9.14] And, so I sent Ken a check. And that
was it.

JB How many acres is it?

GH Originally I bought 250 acres. That was the original
property. And a, so it was very easy transaction and,
no problems and I told Ken he could continue to live
there if he wanted to, and he did stay for a few

months until a, you know, it got cool and then he wanted to, to complete his move so he left. And a, in, in August, or September, I was trying out a horse on the property, with my friends who I originally seen the property with, and a, and I fell and I broke my back. And because I was very nervous, it was, it was two days before the market crashed in 87. And I knew it was gill come down, unless the feddy, and so I probably shouldn't of been riding, you don't ski when you're tired, well you shouldn't ride when you're very, very uptight. [10.25] And a, it was just a flock accident thought, and I knew I broke it, because I heard the, I heard the snap. And my friends didn't think I broke it because I didn't loose, movement in my leg and I, you know I could feel everything. And I actually had to get back on the horse to get out of the woods.

JB Oh my gosh!

GH And a, we went up to a, we went to the, originally, first we went to, oh I forget her name now, Christina, Christina from the Icelandic horse farm. [11.02] She was a doctor in Sweden, and she just, I'll never

forget she was ran her thumb down my back and she said, "yes, you broke this vertebrae." And go to the hospital and they'll x-ray you, they don't brace you anymore or anything like that." So, I did I went to the hospital and originally, at first they couldn't find the brake under the x-ray. And I said to the doctor, "don't you want to a, you know, feel my back."

And he looked at me like, I was crazy! Ha! But anyway they sent me through again and, they said, oh yes, you did brake this vertebrae and a, just go home and stay on your back. So I got a, my friends to drive me to Boston, they put a mattress in the back of my Jeep, and drove me to Boston cause I wanted to be at work the next day cause I knew the market was gill crash. And so, mind you I couldn't lift my pocketbook. But I shuffled to work.

JB Oh!

GH And it was pretty bad, for quite a long time, but I couldn't really leave during the day, to go out and get re-xrayed because people were just panicking.
[12.11] So finally 2 and 1/2 weeks later, I saw my,

my doctor and he said, "yes you did break your back and I would tell you not to go to work but since you're already doing that. Just be careful." And I guess God protects fools and stockbrokers. Ha! Ha! Ha! Anyway, but I would work all day and I'd go home at night and lay on my back, and, and I really can't tell you whether it was a dream, or a wish, because my, my real dreams about, making money, were really I wanted to get out of poverty myself which I managed to do, but I also really, you know, remember my mother's words about giving back. And I parti, I'm particularly interested in poor children and you know whatever their dreams might be, whether it to be, whether to go to a camp of their choice or if they need a computer, or horse back riding lessons, or whatever it is, I think it's a, you know we've got so much work to do with, with our child, you know our children, and I'm a single lady I don't have children of my own but I do have four nephews and, but I mean our children in general. In this country. [13.38] So, you know my bigger wish was to make enough money, to set up a foundation. And, and I've since, you know

there are friends of mine, and people that I've met along the way, they're programs in place, that can effect children's lives in a positive way and we really have a lot of work to do in that direction. So, how do I go from where I am today, and I certainly was hurt at the time of the crash, but you know I have rebuilt since then. And, and I kept thinking, you know what is the next, what is the future, and the future is I think water. The next gold is water. And, and I kept thinking I had, a major source of spring water on my property. Now my lawyers will tell you don't ever say, they'll tell me never tell this story because, ha, you know, they say, "who will believe it." But it's true. So I can't say something that isn't true. So I don't know whether it was, you know that I really, how it all came but, but anyway I, I kept thinking and I called my friends in Vermont and I said, "I really think I have a lot of water on my property."

JB And this was only just, in your.

GH Call it intuition. Or call it, I don't, you know I can't tell you how it started but it somehow started

in that, recovery period, of laying on my back and fantasizing. Cause I've always had dreams and, and a.

[15.26] So they said, "oh, sure, Ginny, right." Ha! Ha! Ha! You know it's another, it's a dream of yours.

And but and then when I finally, my back healed, luckily it healed in place and I have, I'm now totally out of back pain and a, I'm horseback riding again. I'm skiing again, and doing it all. And a, but I, when I went back to Vermont, the, the feeling just kept really bothering me, and getting bigger, rather than going away, now I'm healthy and I'm moving around again and, it, we should forget about these things.

[16.08] And a, now it's really bothering me. So they said, "well why don't you call a dowser?" So I did. And I made an appointment to meet, meet me in the, postoffice.

JB How did you call?

GH I don't know, I don't know the guy's, he never showed up anyways. And, the person that I called. And a, so he made a couple of appointments, and I'd drive up, and you know, no one would be there. So finally they said, "well let us call somebody because maybe you

know, they don't know you, you're calling from Boston, we'll, we'll try it." But we never got a dowser over there. [16.52] So finally I said, "well, you know, this has reached a point where I can't, it is bothering me so much, I guess we need to hire a hydrogeologist." And so I did some research with _____ and I hired _____. And I said to them, [17.13] you know they gave me an estimate what it would cost and it was very costly and I said, "well, could you", and it seemed to be, you know, their, their studies seemed to be, you know in stages and increments, and I said, "could you work with me, because I'm really, just going on woman's intuition and if you think I'm crazy, I'm perfectly capable of handling that and, can we just stop the project." And they said, "yes, we will be happy to work with you and we'll know fairly quickly whether, you know, you're, you're dreaming about something or not." [17.51] So they got over to the property, and they got really excited about the property and they called me up and they said, "we want you to know we're very, we're very conservative." And we don't like to get excited about

anything, because you never know until you actually drill, whether, whether you'll hit water or not. But we've never seen anything quite like this. So I said, "well, does that mean I have water?" And they said, "not necessarily." Ha! Ha! So I said, "well okay, go ahead and proceed with what you're doing." And I guess they do ground tests and they do.

JB What made them think that.

GH I really, I don't know. There is a fracture on the property, and I guess they.

JB What do you mean by a fracture? [18.50]

GH Actual movement of the land, where the land you know we think the water goes back to the last glacier age.

[18.55] So that it, there is a, a fracture, you know where the land is different height, and a, so they proceeded and, and a, and little, in a few weeks or a month or two later whatever it was, they called me up and they said, "well we've located where we think the primary location is." So I, now he's in Vermont and I'm in Boston. And I said, to him, "well, do you go the old logging road, you go through the gate, you

continue up the logging road, you go over the pine brook and continue up the, the hill, which is the logging road, and there's like a ravine there." And I said, " and there's an old car down there. Is that what you're talking about?" And he nearly fell over.

I mean after months and months of testing, I told them exactly where the spot was. [19.55] So he just, you know, he just totally freaked out. And he said, "yes." And a, so they, they a, had Mehosh come up and put a couple of bore holes in, and the first bore hole them broke, they broke every thing, we still haven't been able to, cap it properly. And the second bore, you know they put, up by the primary area, and it's the largest bedrock aquafir in the northeast. It's the largest source of spring water. And there are actually are, which you can see in the wintertime, there are springs all over the property and you see it in the wintertime easier because it melts the snow around. Where the water is coming out. You open up, there's a picture here, on my refrigerator you open up the bore hole and it's, it's like opening up a fire hydrant.

JB Oh my gosh!

GH And, it's only a six inch pipe but it comes out, full speed, and in the springtime it breaks the caps and, comes out at six hundred gallons a minute, but they estimate a conservatively, fifteen hundred gallons a minute. [21.22] But they really think, it's hard to know without putting bigger pipes in, which aren't necessary, that it, the flow is more like three thousand gallons a minute of water. And we did some preliminary time dating, from the University of Waterloo, and the old component in the water goes back beyond the, 1930s. So the water isn't moving down the road any place, it's caught in bedrock. And this spring we're going to do the final test, which will tell us the exact age of the water, so we'll know that if it did go back to the last glacier age. And, the old component is really, very important element, the other important is the recharge rate, and I'll explain that a little bit, but the old component, the older the water, the purer it is because they didn't have the pollution that we have today. So that's one of

the reasons why this water is so incredibly pure.

Poland Spring analyzed the source and they just couldn't, they were just blown away by the purity.

[22.36] They said, we're trying to figure out why your water is so pure, and I said, "because there's nothing on the land, you know, there's no golf course, there's no, hotel and, this land is just, virgin land." And, and the other component of course is the recharge, and the land was available behind the original farm, I owned sort of three quarters the way up the mountain and Ward Lumber owned from, from my property line up and over, the Northfield side and the top of scragg mountain, up and over the top of scragg mountain, so, that land was for sale and a, so I bought that from them. Which was the protection area, for the water. For instance if there was a development and a, the Northfield side has, has been subdividing to the top of the mountain, on their side, if the development continued over, we'd have pollution. So, I bought the, the whole protection area so now I own almost two thousand acres of land. And I change for instance from clear cutting on the

forest to selective cutting, in order to preserve the purity of the water and the, you know the, the land.

So that we didn't have erosion and so forth. [24.14]

The recharge which you know the, it's real important the type of vegetation you have on the land, on the property.

JB What dose recharge mean? Is that the, water?

GH The new water, you know, whether it be rain, or snow, or just moisture in the clouds, for instance there's a cloud cover every morning that goes across that range, and this is one of the reasons why the hydrogeologist feels the recharge is so high. He's estimating it also to be in the range of, if you want to be very conservative, he's saying fifteen hundred gallons a minute, but he really thinks more closer to three thousand. Cause those trees, the trees actually pull the moisture from the clouds. And, you know the moisture gets down into the land and goes through, to the aquafir. Also the component of the land, there's clay, there's a good, good thickness of clay on the property, and clay is a natural filter. So another reason why the water is so pure. So I, I, you want

the history about going into the town and a, trying to.

JB Yeah. Yeah.

GH I would like to put a bottling plant in the town and so forth.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha!

GH And a, originally I went to, the town.

JB So you discovered this in 1987.

GH 87. Yes. [25.50] Was it 87 or 88? Um. It must of been, you know I bought the property in 87, so it was the next year. Because I didn't go back.

JB Let me ask? Have you ever had these feelings before that you knew something or is this the first time, that ever happened?

GH Oh I, I have these feelings, yes, a lot. But I, and they're always right. But I never can direct it, I never know what it's gill be about, and a, so it's just intuition. You know but, most people have intuition if they'll listen to it. You know, you meet someone and you either like them or you, not too

comfortable or, whatever it is. But I've had intuition about a lot of things, and they probably would of burnt we at the stake in Salem, you know. Ha! If I was born in another time. [26.46] Ha! Ha! Ha! So it, it has happened a lot, in my lifetime, and a, and I've been right, and some, and even dreams, some of my dreams even, come true. And, I could give you a lot of stories even something that happened with my brother and he was, in the service and I was in Switzerland skiing, and and all week it was bothering me, something was happening to him, and, and you know and I kept praying, please let it happen to me. And not let it happen to my brother. And, cause I really thought my brother was gill die or something horrible. And a, and I ended up going off a cliff in Switzerland, and I, and when I finally landed, I landed on the lip of this, of the mountain, Clousters, and I was stuck in the snow, you know I couldn't move, my skis were buried and everything, I'm looking over the lip and the trees were like, looked like, ants below and they had to come down and dig me out. And, and then years later, and I never talked to my brother

about it. [28.00] But a, so I, you know they dug me out, and I got back up, and it was, I really could of lost my life. Ha! Ha! And, and then we pieced it together, and it was like, ten years later and it was actually my brother was in, Saudi Arabia, and in the service and they were out, they were doing, building roads or something and they were out in the desert. And, they ran out of gas. Coming back or something. And, or something happened to the car, whether it was a flat tire or something, and there were three guys, in the truck, and they didn't know which way was the nearest, you know everything is flat, they couldn't see anything and it was getting dark. So my brother went off with the canteen of water, and they weren't sure, he just guessed the direction and went in the direction and found people and they came back and helped them out and, he was fine but, it was the exact week, that I was in Clousters. And you know, so, I mean, we were just totally blown away by that. But, so things like that have happened all my life. But, you know, I can't direct it. Well people say, well what's gill happen here and I, I wouldn't have a clue.

But a, anyway so I went to the town fathers, and a, told them that I'd like to, start a water company and a, my, and my dreams of having a foundation, a percentage would go, go into a foundation, which was still my dreams. And a, and I plan to do that if we can, if we can ever get in business. You know for children, and also for, seniors, for, to improve their quality of life. Cause everything we have has come down from them, and it's so important that we learn from our history, and a, and we don't acknowledge that enough. And a, we don't take care of our senior people enough. So I think it's important to acknowledge them and recognize them, and help them preserve their quality of life in, in their later years. And also we need to pay attention to our children as I, as I said, because that's our future. [30.40] I'm also concerned about wildlife. And a, preserving, preserving the family farm, and I think, water is, is something that is natural, and comes from, from nature, and it, the only, you don't, you can't plan on where it is. And it's not gill be, if you find it in the city, it's not gill be pure.

[31.10] So there has to be a reason to, for people to preserve property as the farmers and land start, you know the farmer starts selling property and the land starts getting subdivided, I mean everybody all around me is subdividing now. So I, I went to them, with, with my plan and looking for approval for, a truck, because I have to have trucks in order to get the water off the property. And they gave me a permit for, six trucks a day.

JB Now is this up the Palmer hill road? That you go.

GH No, this is on Common Road.

JB Ah ha.

GH Palmer Hill goes around and back.

JB Um hum.

GH But it really becomes a trail.

JB Yes.

GH So the, the frontage on my property is Common Road, which becomes Long Road, I believe.

JB Um hum.

GH [32.15] Because my farm is the old Long farm. And a, and the bore hole is, is fairly close, to, to the road, there's fairly easy access from, from the old

logging road. Which would have, it would be the only road that would have to be improved. And they had me do road impact studies, and so forth, and, and the road, the main road, is a dirt road but it's a very well built dirt road because there were, you know milk farms there, and the farm in back of me was a milk farm. And so the history has been trucking milk, which is the same type of truck that, that I need to use for water. [33.09] So they did, you know we, we suggested the a, the people that did the road impact study suggested a few minor improvements, which have.

[33.22]

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

GH Anyway so we did get a, approval for some trucking, and I proceeded. Riggsy, come on over here. Come on.

[.19] We proceeded to the board of adjustment and the board of adjustment hired an attorney to look at the ordinance to see if this really was a use in the town. Whether it was a use by right or a conditional use, because there was nothing according to the, the

board of adjustment there was nothing in the ordinance, saying that this was a use. So.

JB What do you mean, that this was a use, that a private use or a? That you had rights to the water on your own property? Kind of thing?

GH Rights to, [1.02] with, rights to withdraw water for bottling purposes. So they hired John Hanson, in Rutland who I have you tell you, I have the, the highest respect for because he really, he wouldn't talk to me, he wouldn't talk to anyone in the town. He just took the ordinance and studied it, and studied it for several months, and he, his office would receive in any information and written information. But wouldn't talk directly to anyone so he didn't want to be, influenced in any way. And he came back with his opinion, which, was, you know he, he said the way the ordinance is written, the ordinance actually encourages, encourages the farmer to be creative in their agricultural products and endeavors. [2.20] So it, it sort of, it didn't have the narrow view of agriculture, it had a broad view. And, he said, "therefore it's a use by right, under agriculture."

And, the board of adjustment decided not to accept that opinion, and refused me any use of the property.

JB Now who's the board of adjustment, is that a state board or is that a?

GH The town.

JB The town.

GH The town board of adjustment. [2.56] On the state level, there are regulations, you know, that you have to abide by, for instance we had to, test all the wells in the surrounding area within and depending on the size of the, of the aquifer, or flow, you have to test within a certain radius so we had to test within a half mile radius of all the properties you know abutting, abutting my property. And we did that, and, and the flow, our, the flow is so high on my property that, I mean you don't even come close to, I mean there's no way you can effect anyone. Rigsy, Rigs. Rigs. It's okay.

JB And how many people are on this ordinance board?

GH Oh I can't remember exactly but there are, you know there were six or eight, something like that.

JB Is Ed Eurich on it?

GH Ed Eurich is not. Ed, Ed Eurich at one time I believe was the head of the select board.

JB Yes.

GH Not at the time that I've, that I went through this process. He was also the head of the commissioner of the department of agriculture. So he's been very much for this project and he certainly carries a lot of weigh in the community because a, he's been very active in the community, he's a very knowledgeable person, I have gotten a lot of support in fact, you know initially when I first went, there were, a lot of people opposed to this project, and it's, as they've gotten to know me, and as, as certain people like Ed Eurich, Sterling Livingston, and the original person that was the first person that came forward was Edgar Tromley. [4.59] And, these are people that have been there forever, they've been leaders in the community.

And you know they certainly believe in, property rights, and as Sterling said, this is what we fought

for. In the various wars, I mean this is exactly, you know freedom of, freedom of religion, freedom to speak your mind, freedom, property rights. Not that you, you know you have to have some regulation and but the state already has it in place so that, you can't effect other people's wells, you have to prove certain things, and so on and so forth. And we've done that.

Anyway the planning, the select board, I mean the board of adjustment turned me down, and my only course of action which I, I really don't like hiring attorneys and going through the court process, I've never, it's never happened to me before. But that was my only, my only way to, to appeal this. [6.12] So we appealed and a, we've been in court and a, unfortunately lost in the lower court, and we've now, with the Vermont Supreme Court, and a, we really felt we were coming from, being in a, deficit position, loosing in the lower court, but the attorney general wrote an amicus brief, which is a, a letter to the court, as a friend to the court, not taking one side of the other side. But, wrote a really brilliant, brilliant letter, something like 12 pages, saying that

the court should look at the broad picture, of agriculture. And this is really the key. Cause not only is it a property rights issue, it really, is an agricultural issue because in the, in the family farm, in, out there in nature is where we're going to find pure water. And what we do to the property, is going to effect that water. And how we, take care of the property is going to effect that water. So this really is a fiduciary obligation. And, and what the brief said was, if, cause it isn't even a question of, you know my situation, but if we don't look at the broad picture, that this is going to effect, the face of Vermont forever. [8.00] And doesn't give the property owner a reason to preserve that property and again, we'll get more subdivison. Because if you can't make a living from your land and farming certainly is changing and evolving and, it's a harder and harder for people to, to support themselves, and to make money with their property, and to keep it open and natural, if there isn't a reason to do that, again, you know the face of Vermont is gill change. And Vermont is so unique and pristine and, you know

even with the, with the changes that have happened,
the old history is still there. And we've, we've got
to, we've got to work to continue to preserve that
and, and working with change somewhat, because you
know, nothing stays still. There's nothing, ever
stays still, but how we create that change, and what
we do with, with the opportunities and, and taking
again from the history and building towards the
future. We can have a wonderful environment, or we
can not have a wonderful environment. [9.36] And a,
you know this is, this is a way to preserve property,
and also have a clean industry. You know the bottled
water industry is, is, I mean, you're not creating
pollution, it's all natural, I could employ probably
50, 60 people in the, in the town. Full time
employment, and right now the primary industry is
skiing, which is, I enjoy it myself it's a wonderful,
wonderful sport, wonderful industry, but it's not full
time employment. It's full time employment for a very
few people, and the bulk of the employment is part
time. And a, the, the people who aren't employed in
the summer, are you know sort of taking different jobs

or they're unemployed or, you know their, their
painters or, or a, you know, working in a part time
environment whether, whether they can get jobs or
can't get jobs. (dog barking) And a, I think I have
to let my dog out again. [10.58] So it's, I think
it's very rare that you get an industry that you can,
you can have an industry, you can create jobs, and you
also preserve property. [11.13] So, you know this is
what I'm hoping to do and hopefully, when you really
need to win, in court, and but it isn't even a
question of just, I need to win, I think Vermont needs
to win. And I, I really believe it's a win, win
situation for everyone.

JB When are you, when does this happen, when is the?

GH March 17th is our tentative, court date.

JB And who's your judge?

GH I don't know. I can't tell you. I don't know. What
have been the objections? [11.53] The a, it's
interesting because the objections publicly, have been
trucking. But trucking is a way of life, on a farm.
And, but that really isn't the issue, the issue is
power and control. And, originally the, the opponents

were lead by a woman who lived on the, on the farm next to me. But she was not the property owner, the property owner has never objected. None of the property owners have objected. And she basically, I asked both she and her husband to dinner one night and I said, "well you know, if the issue is trucking, we certainly can negotiate trucking." And she looked me right in the eye and she said, Ginny, you and I both know, this is not over trucking, and I said, I know that, Robin, it's Robin _____ner, I said, "what is the issue?" [13.04] And she said, "I really fundamentally believe that water cannot be sold. That it belongs to everyone." So I said, "well Robin, you know, this is America. And I have not created the wheel." I mean this has been, you know, Poland Springs has been in business for a hundred and twenty-five years. And, if the water belongs to everyone how do you propose to get it, I mean it's been sitting on my property, you know, the old age dating goes back beyond the thirties. And if we don't do something with it, you know, you're gill get subdivision here. And, and so this was her issue, and you can't, you

can't fight that, I mean it, that's what her belief is, she has since bought property in Northern Vermont, she moved and she's gone. But she, she had joined the, the court battle, she had joined a, the town, in the appeal, and a, but.

JB Who in the town is against it? [14.14] And why?

GH Well I, I think, you know what's happened originally everybody was opposed cause they didn't, it was new to them, it hadn't happened before, I was new, who is Ginny Houston? Since that time, they've gotten to know me and the last meeting that I went to and I've been to every one of the meetings. The first meeting was you know, 50 people opposed and, and me. The last meeting there were easily you know 30 people for this project, and no one opposed. So I think the town has sort of got themselves in a box, they, they could of gotten themselves out of the box along the way, at different times but they managed to just get themselves deeper in the whole. So that now they can't get out of the whole, without either, a court ruling, in favor of this project. And of, of water being a use by right. Or, by a town vote. Now there

is, they had, they put before the town a conditional use, last year. And it lost by simple majority. And, I really think it lost because people don't want to, relinquish their property rights, what they feel is a property right.

JB What was the conditional use?

GH It was just a straight conditional use, saying that water extraction is a conditional use. [16.05] They were partitioned, the select board was partitioned by Edgar Tromley, for water, water extraction, commercial water extraction to be used by right. And five percent of the voting signatures are required, he got ten percent in like a day, or a day and a half. The select board chose to throw that in the waste paper basket. The select board has been petitioned again, for a use by right, it went to the planning board, it has moved on to the select board, but in the meantime they had, they are putting another straight conditional use, before the voters, next Tuesday. Um. Which, and we'll see what happens with that.

JB What does Ed think might be, does Ed have any hope that it might a pass? [17.05]

GH Ed wrote a brilliant letter, it's in the, in the Valley Reporter this week, and he hopes that, he believes in use by right. So he came out in favor of use by right. Edgar Tromley took out a full page ad and I haven't seen the paper yet, but, but a, Father Rooney called me and read me the information, Ed Eurich read me his letter. And Edgar Tromley read me his ad. His ad said, something to the effect of a, vote no on conditional use, Waitsfield residents vote No. And preserve, keep your property rights. [17.52]

And a, don't give, I guess don't give the politicians more power. Or something to that effect, I don't know. I haven't seen it yet but, um, I, you know I'll have it within a week, I get it in the mail. So we'll see what happens on Tuesday, if it goes through, I'll apply. And we'll continue in court, cause I don't know what those conditions will be. I mean the state already regulates conditions which I've got all my approvals for. So, um, I do have all my state, state permits and approvals. And a, I'm just waiting for the town. Yeah.

JB What do you think your chances are in court? [18.41]

GH Well, ah! I, I really believe we have to win. I just from my soul, I think, what goes around comes around, eventually. I think we, I think we have to win. So I believe we will win. In the end. But a, I can't imagine anything other than that. [19.15] Okay. The, the a, you asked me who's against it? And, um, they don't like to say that they're against this project, they say they're for this project except it's been four years and, and we're not there. They're, what they're interested in, is control, and so it's the, it's the select board, primarily Elwin Neil who is the head of the select board, and the planning board, the head of the planning board is Russ Bennett. So, the issue is, control, the problem is, you know how do they control and, and if they control, if they control you, you know they've been asking for a pipeline, to do a pipeline for a bottled water operation, first of all, it's, it's a, not feasible for a start-up company, financially. I also don't own the land between my property and the town. You put a pipeline in and for instance, Vermont Pure has a flow of, and this is information that I got from the

previous owner, Jeff Gosminski who, who owned, Hidden Springs and it was sold to Vermont Pure. They've.

JB Where's that?

GH They're in Randolph.

JB Randolph.

GH And if you got into Randolph, there are no traffic jams in Randolph, and they've been in business now six years, they're in 26 states for instance. I believe. 26 or 36 something like that. They have a flow of a hundred gallons a minute.

JB Is that also an aquafir?

GH I don't, I don't know. I don't know how big this was, so it's a, it's obviously a small source, cause it's a hundred gallons a minute. But, Jeff, Jeff actually did the numbers, as to what they are actually bottling. The amount of water they're actually bottling a minute. To put in bottles and it equates to, what did he say, I think it was something like ten gallons a minute. But to be in business you need a greater flow than that so they're, they're in 36 or 26 states with ten gallons a minute. Now, if you were gill pipe that for instance, three miles into

Waitsfield, that water is gill be sitting in the pipe.

Which does not, it's not good for the water. And, you know it has a problem.

JB Make it, no longer pure, right?

GH No longer pure. I mean piped water is okay for municipal systems but the best thing for the bottled water is to have the plant right on the site. That's another issue which you know I haven't gotten into with the town but the more I've gotten to know about the water industry, you really need purity is the number one factor, the more you move the water, the more you could have problems with it, I mean I could put a plant, down in back of the property and have it look like an old barn, and no one would ever know it was there. [23.02] And a, that would be the best, that would be the number one situation. To be able to do that which, which could be done if the, the, you know it's one thing to withdraw the water that's, if we get use by right, and then we could bottle it but, to a nearby plant. If the town really would work with me, the ideal situation would be put it on the property, which would require a little, you know, re-

zoning for that area. You know, spot, spot zoning for that area. [23.36] And a, and the rest of the land the two thousand acres would be kept pure and, no, nothing else would be, put on the property other than, I need to rebuild my old farm house.

JB So you got a name?

GH Yes. Virgin Vermont.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha! [23.55]

GH I actually, I didn't come up with that name but a, the gentleman that I worked for, you know, years and years ago, who is now a client of mine, suggested it and at first I thought, well I'm not sure about that, cause I don't know if women will, women would appreciate that name. But I, I had some labels made up and had names put on the bottles and when you actually see it on the bottle and I don't have one here to show you but, it, people would pick that bottle because they said, you know that name says it all, you don't have to read the other information. And the more I've lived with that name, I mean the property is virgin property, and a, and the water is truly the purest out there. So and it actually has a body to it, if you taste the water,

it has a body, almost I can only equate it to wine, so there's a fullness in the taste and it's just wonderful water, so, we played around with a lot of names and that's the name we, we came up with, Virgin Vermont. That's the way we'd like to leave the property too so. [25.18]

JB _____.

GH We want to start the company, originally we're gill do a private placement with, with a, bringing in some, high end individuals to finance the start up, and then, and then we plan to do a Vermont offering because I really think it's real important that, other people in the community if they choose to, invest, that, if it turns out to be a good investment, you know they'll reap the rewards. For instance, Ben and Jerry's, if you put a thousand dollars, on the original offer, Vermont offering, and bought Ben and Jerry's stuff, today it would be worth I think forty-five thousand dollars. So I'd like to open that up to Vermonters, and then eventually we'll do a regular public, public offering. And some people have said to me well why don't you just keep it private and then

you don't have to answer to, you know people and so forth, to shareholders but I, I absolutely believe that, this is, this was really a gift and I want every one to, to a, who's interested in being part of it, to be part of it. And a, it's something that the community can be proud of. [26.50]