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145 Ellery Street  
Wrentham, MA 02093

July 11, 2022

Town of Wrentham Planning Board  
Town of Wrentham Conservation Commission  
Town of Wrentham Board of Health

RE: Sheldon Meadow & Sheldon West (1139 West Street & 20 Hancock Street)

Dear Members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Board of Health,

We are writing this letter to voice our opposition to the Sheldon Meadow & Sheldon West project slated to be built in historic Sheldonville.

I am resubmitting, essentially the same letter, as our thoughts have not changed with the new proposal, so please pardon my repetition. My husband has lived here in Sheldonville for all of his 56 years, and his parents and grandparents before him. Part of what keeps him, and me for the last 29 years, here is the quaint quiet country life we've all grown to love and wish to preserve. We love the country setting, tree lined streets, farms and loads of wildlife that we are so fortunate to share space with.

Twenty-five + years ago, my father-in-law sold 100 acres to the City of Pawtucket watershed. He likely could have sold it to a developer for so much more money, who would do just what is being proposed. But instead, he chose to sell to the City of Pawtucket to protect the land and water, just as it is. We cannot see how this project would not threaten the many wetlands and watershed. Water is a major concern for all involved here, be it how the builders will guarantee their proposals won't ruin the basements of these historic old homes that abut the proposals due to the high water table, or even having enough water from town wells to feed the additional homes. There is clearly much more thought needed going into this about water lines, wells, effective fire hydrants, etc.

We are also very concerned with traffic. I know one "study" was done early on in the pandemic - while school and work was remote. That simply cannot count as a true study. Some mornings, I sit at the end of Ellery Street at 6:30 a.m. and wait while 40+ cars pass (majority of RI plates) before I can even think about daring to pull out. To my left is just enough of a hill (in front of Manchester Street) that requires me to look carefully 3 full times before pulling out. Once I pull out, I must get moving very quickly or I'll be rear ended for sure. I'll pick up just enough speed to be safe, and then have to quickly brake again as many cars take a left onto Arnold Street. I'm sure there are times in the day when the traffic isn't so bad, but the fact is, West Street IS a major thoroughfare from RI to Franklin, 495 (which is where I go) and toward town. The intersection by Birchwald is tough, the end of my street is tough, Arnold Street is tough (and boy do I hate to have to be a sitting duck behind someone waiting to turn left onto Arnold as people fly past Ellery and come around the bend in the road to a dead stop of traffic), and now it'll be tough by the fire station and the little store. It's insane. And this is SUPPOSED to be for senior citizens - dealing with high volume traffic in the "sleepy end" of town.

Another concern is the amount of fill. It seems to us that having to bring in that much fill and have these houses set up high, looking down into the backyards, especially of those on Hancock, is not at all environmentally sound. What happens to the high ground water under all of that fill? The builders have not at all convinced us that isn't a recipe for disaster, that likely won't show it's face until they are done and long

gone. And along with all that fill - the trucks – day after day, load after load, adding to the traffic on an already busy road, not to mention the actual wear and tear on West Street, but also Hancock and Burnt Swamp roads. What kind of quality of life will the residents have while this constant parade of fill trucks goes on?

Also, shouldn't the fire department be involved in these plans? The proposal has been revamped, made smaller in an attempt to gain abutter backing, but in doing so, will the town's largest pieces of emergency apparatus be able to fit, turn around and stage properly? The plans we have been shown do not make it look so. No one has heard if they have even been reviewed by Fire.

How can putting a septic system for these proposals in place not hinder the Pawtucket Watershed? I'm just thinking out loud now. But you can tell there are a lot of serious and valid questions by many people who love West Wrentham. What is the benefit of these projects?

Many of our friends and neighbors, who will be directly impacted, and even those who will not, have raised numerous valid concerns regarding this project. We would like you to know that we concur with all of them. Everything from serious water issues, to traffic issues, to detrimental and irreversible environmental impact issues, massive loss of wildlife, light pollution, loads and loads of fill that would need to be brought in, aesthetics, financial impacts to surrounding homeowners, AND the town as a whole, long after the construction company is gone, etc. Not to mention this is being touted as a 55 plus community, yet only 1 person needs to be 55, and these homes are not being built for 'senior' living, as in one floor. We cannot think of a single benefit to Wrentham, especially West Wrentham, if this project is allowed to go through.

What we *can* think of though, are each of the previously mentioned issues, as well as the destruction of the character of our historic community. We cannot help but think that there are other more suitable places to build such a project, here in town with so much less negative impact. Why isn't anyone looking at building a community like this down town at the old Crosby Valve site? Why doesn't the town do something to make that area more appealing to developers, where residents would be able to walk to town, get their coffee, a bite to eat, sit in the park or common. It makes no sense to entirely disrupt a beautiful rural and historic area far from town, to put such a community in place. This parcel of land in West Wrentham is just not at all suitable for what they want to put there. When Rhodes Sheldon put down roots, this is not what he envisioned. Calling it Sheldon Meadow and Sheldon West implies that it is in keeping with the spirit of historic Sheldonville, which it is not. We feel putting a project like this in Sheldonville will destroy it, and we feel very strongly that this project should not move forward.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings.

Sincerely,  
Wendy & Karl Backlund, Jr.