

October 20, 2022

Mr. Michael McKnight, Chairman, Wrentham Planning Board

RE: Sheldon Meadow Senior Living Community (SLC at 20 Hancock Street)

Sheldon West Senior Living Community (SLC at 1139 West Street)

CC: Wrentham Board of Health

Wrentham Conservation Commission

Dear Chairman McKnight and Members of the Board,

We are William and Joudrie Jones, living at 32 Hancock Street, a direct abutter to the proposed Sheldon Meadow Senior Living Community (SLC) and would like to address the often mentioned fact that this development, as well as the proposed Sheldon West Senior Living Community, are “cluster developments disguised as senior living communities.”

A Senior Living Community is a residential community designed for older adults, who are generally able to care for themselves and enjoy activities and socialization opportunities that are offered when living in an SLC. Often these SLC’s have some age restrictions or age-qualified residents, homes that are affordable to people generally on a fixed income, an area without perceived problems of having children around, and almost always include some type of clubhouse or lifestyle center with a good many activities, sometimes indoor and outdoor swimming pools, exercise facilities, kitchens, bathrooms and decks or patios for gatherings.

The spirit of Wrentham’s bylaw, 13.5 was to provide the above mentioned housing for seniors, not tightly clustered as being proposed and certainly in compliance with the design of such being in line with the community’s vision of what we believe is a true SLC. By-law 13.5.A.2 states; “To provide a mechanism for development of a range of housing types and facilities that are responsive to the socio-cultural, health care, and recreational needs of senior residents”. Also under by-law 13.5.D.11. which states “An SLC **shall have** an amenity structure designed to allow for a variety of passive and active recreational activities that support the resident of the SLC. Such uses that may be considered are community program spaces, fitness/therapeutic space, educational, recreational and accessory space; areas for neighborhood meetings and event space; and any other amenities and opportunities that are intended to create and promote an integrated neighborhood type environment.”

Let's begin with the simple expression that seniors would in all likelihood, decide one day that the home they are living in was perfect in size for their raising their family and now after they became empty nesters, are looking at options to obtain a smaller residence to meet their current needs. Those needs being; the reduction in size, lower cost of maintenance, having the closeness of friends and local services. Ah, sounds like a Senior Living Community (SLC), where it is in all probability: age restricted, often referred to as retirement communities (although you don't actually have to be retired). The age restriction can often be totally independent living in a community with people of similar age. You typically find a range of housing options, generally affordable single homes in a development with housing services including social events in some type of amenities facility, on-site, year round to keep residents active and engaged with others.

Looking at the several SLC's in our area, there seems to be quite a few offering what we would be looking at as seniors. To begin our search, we looked at places in surrounding towns, but decided that we really want to stay in the Wrentham. The specific sites being considered were Pond Village and Weber Farms. Pond village being the oldest of the two and very much what we envisioned to be a true SLC is perhaps our first choice. Our other choice, being Weber Farms, is totally different and from what we would consider UP-SIZING, not downsizing. Our home is less than 1,800 square feet of living space, where the homes being offered at the Weber farms and the proposed Sheldon Meadows and Sheldon West homes are all over 2,000 square feet of living space.

Just an added fact, we looked at the Assessors lists for the size of some 13 homes of abutters to the Sheldon Projects and found they were an average of 1,713 square feet of living space. The proposed project sized homes labeled A1 and A1.1 are over 2,000 square feet of living space.

Another deviation from what most would consider "affordable" is the fact that of the thirteen homes of the abutters mentioned above, the average assessment of their homes is \$392,650. Homes at Weber Farms begin at over \$700,000 and it can be expected to go up as well as time passes. Perhaps the same can be determined by the offering at the Sheldon projects, starting in the \$700,000 to \$800,000 price ranges. Affordable?????

An important element of the spirit of 13.5 was always an expectation the seniors would like their homes smaller, affordable and all living space to be on one floor. We seniors hate steps! The homes being approved and proposed for Wrentham are not even close to providing what seniors really want or need. Sure, the designs of the homes proposed are showing everything that the senior needs are on the first floors, but a second floor, with a large bedroom, large bath, a walk-in-closet and a 13' by 14' loft and a large 11' by 28' unfinished area for weekend guests? If the weekend guests need a walk-in-closet, then they don't need to be called "week-enders".

Let's consider the point we made about the "amenities or clubhouse" offerings. A recent letter from an abutter (We recommend you re-read the letter dated August 20, 2022 from Abutter Katherine Duggan) who described the differences of what is being proposed versus the offerings from other SLC's in our area. The project offering of an open aired shared pavilion is a joke, to put it bluntly. No more need being said!

In all the SLC's we have seen and heard about, it has never ever been the case that there were no driveways in front of the garages. To actually put the proposed design before anyone with any common sense implies that it would be okay to have seniors backing out of their garages, directly on to the road surface, getting perhaps three to four feet out before being able to see if any traffic is coming in either direction. Roadways that will have moving traffic involving neighbors coming and going, delivery trucks, maintenance trucks and visiting folks and more. This should not be acceptable to the Board.

There are so many other concerns about these ill conceived projects, all of which have been and continue to be expressed by the abutters and other residents of this town. The true bottom line is: what is good for our residents and overall for the Town of Wrentham? These projects do not and should not be considered for any approvals relative to being what a true SLC is and what was envisioned when the by-laws were written. Enough said.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter.

William and Joudrie Jones