

## Ledbetter, Heather

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**From:** James Miller <jrmiller59@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2022 10:04 AM  
**To:** Planning; ConCom  
**Subject:** Sheldon Meadow/Sheldon West Senior Living Communities

December 12, 2022

Mr. Michael McKnight, Chairman  
Wrentham Planning Board

via email to [planning@wrentham.gov](mailto:planning@wrentham.gov)

&

Mr. Darryl Luce, Conservation Agent  
Wrentham Conservation Commission  
Town Hall, 79 South Street  
Wrentham, MA 02093

via email to [concom@wrentham.gov](mailto:concom@wrentham.gov)

RE: Sheldon Meadow Senior Living Community (20 Hancock Street)  
Sheldon West Senior Living Community (1139 West Street)

Dear Board and Commission Members:

Over the past several months, I have distantly followed the correspondence trail for this proposed project. To be sure, I have not read all supporting documents and reports in detail. I am not an abutter but reside in the general vicinity of the project and speak with a cursory knowledge of project conditions and history.

Both the proponent and interested opposition parties have put forth engineering and subjective arguments concerning the project. As a registered civil engineer with nearly 50 years' experience, I can appreciate the pro and con viewpoints expressed. I presume that the ultimate goal of the proponent is to conform to development requirements sufficiently to construct and sell as many dwellings as possible for the least cost and make a profit. The goals of the opponents appear to include seeking protection of the local environment and minimizing adverse impacts to groundwater, their property, quality of life and watershed integrity. As one might expect, I don't recall seeing a letter in the record supporting the development. Many letters cite concerns that, on their face, appear reasonable and not just of the typical "not in my back yard" variety.

It appears that the developer has attempted to force as many units as possible into an marginal area that exhibits high groundwater conditions by dramatically filling the site, utilizing compressed unit spacing with community wastewater disposal and stormwater retention/detention techniques. The volume of fill to be brought to the site is quite substantial, over 38,000 cy of material according to the correspondence. That volume represents about 2,100 triaxle-loads. Fewer with trailer dumps but still a significant traffic volume. The site is tributary to the Pawtucket water supply and potentially a future Wrentham public water supply well. One of the local residents observed that the site would likely have already been developed to some degree if it exhibited suitable characteristics. In the past, people used practical historical experience and observations to guide their activities, not so much in today's society. In this situation, I think the water supply issues have standing and outweigh the profit motive.

Older residents familiar with the area likely were quite aware of the groundwater conditions and recognized the associated development limitations. Also worthy of consideration are the issues of site maintenance, water quality monitoring and perimeter impacts. Once a project is constructed having subsurface treatment and management components, how often are these systems monitored and maintained? Heed the old saying "Out of sight, out of mind". Having worked in the municipal utility sector I can tell you issues are only addressed when an emergency problem exhibits itself. Then it may be too late to ward off an expensive repair or mitigation of long-term adverse impacts.

I happen to reside in an area that is not served by the municipal water system. Each year I note the seasonal water restrictions imposed by the Water Department and am concerned with the impact of additional system demands imposed by this and other developments. Certainly additional supply would be welcome but that makes potential development impacts on supply resources a key consideration.

Overall, it appears to me that this development proposal has the potential of adverse longer-term impacts to area residents and/or the Wrentham and Pawtucket Water Supply agencies. Those impacts may not manifest themselves immediately or in the near future. Unfortunately, present society is overly focused on the immediate situation rather than considering longer-term implications. Once constructed, the die is cast and it's too late. In addition, its' present proposed cluster format is not in keeping with the relatively rural character of this portion of Town. Once permitted, the precedent is established for further similar development whether impacted by site constraints or not. The question seems to be short-term developer profit vs possible long-term adverse Town impacts. The choice is clear to me.

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