

Karl & Wendy Backlund, Jr.
145 Ellery Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

December 12, 2022

Conservation Commission
79 South Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

by e-mail to concom@wrentham.gov

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

Dear Chair Immonen, Members of the Commission and Agent Luce,

I am writing on behalf of myself and my husband Karl Backlund, Jr., long-time residents of 145 Ellery Street in Sheldonville. We are acutely aware of all the diligent and time-consuming work you've done regarding these projects. We also realize that the review of these projects is quickly coming to an end and a decision must be made. In light of this, we ask that you please take extra time to consider what the applicant has said in regard to the letter submitted by the abutter Pawtucket Water Supply Board (PWSB), by letter dated July 18, 2022. Though PWSB is saying that the applicant satisfied their concerns, we feel it leaves far too much on the HOA and the Town of Wrentham. We have many additional questions and concerns, especially regarding the hauling in of over 4,200 16-yard trucks of fill. That fill, according to the applicant's agreement with PWSB, would directly affect the Conservation Commission with regard to monitoring and testing said fill. That makes zero sense to us. We feel it should not be on the town at all to ensure that the fill is clean. We cannot imagine the burden that would place on the commission/town. We question - why should the town pay for that? Why should it be on the Conservation Commission to handle? My husband has been in the construction trade all of his life. We know that the builder will go with the lowest cost, and we all know you get what you pay for. Dirt certainly isn't cheap as it is. Also, will *all* of the fill be tested? Will it randomly be tested? Who is to say that truck number 3 and 7 are good, but trucks 15 and 18 are not? It seems too much that the applicant feels fine with placing this burden on the town. Who will be responsible/liable if a truck of fill gets through that is contaminated with ... anything? That's a really big liability to place on the town.

Also, the applicant has stated that there is no need to monitor groundwater/surface water down gradient of the developments. They just seem to have a level of trust that none of us do. Once this is done, it's done. Any and all negative effects after the fact is left on the HOA and the town.

We've sat in on just about every meeting for these projects - be it Conservation, Planning or Board of Health. We find one thing constant - and that is the applicant quickly and frequently eager to place any and all follow up right back on the HOA or the town. They are making it crystal clear that when they have done their part, they will wipe their hands and walk away, never looking back.

We know you've heard it all before, and we appreciate and realize you must work within a set of guidelines and laws. We are just having a very hard time wrapping our heads around forcing a square peg into a round hole here. There is so much at stake. Aside from this project truly not fitting the intent of the SLC by-law, the environment they have chosen to plop these projects in is just not the best fit. It's so close to wetlands, they must bring in a ridiculous amount of fill to even begin, and no matter what, it will forever alter the natural habitat of so much wonderful wildlife from salamanders to birds, birds of prey, fishers, deer, coyote, fox, opossum, skunk, raccoon, and many other animals. How can they promise that the "SLC" will not inadvertently contaminate the water with lawn fertilizers, pesticides, etc? How will that effect the animals drinking from the stream or puddles? Or the people who get their water from that area? There is talk of a new town well being needed in West Wrentham and one of the most optimal places for it is very close to these proposed developments. How can that be a good thing?

Where is the benefit to the Town of Wrentham? What value do these projects bring? Shouldn't the people who have been abutting this property and paying taxes for years and years have their interests protected over interests of a developer?

There are so many questions that all the engineering and preplanning in the world simply cannot guarantee the outcome the applicant predicts. What happens if the shared septic system fails somewhere? What will that do to the environment? How can this be "affordable" to seniors if they must pay dearly to an HOA to monitor everything? They cannot predict how much snow, or rainfall or anything at all actually. They are merely guessing and leaving it to the HOA and the town to handle well after they are long gone.

The applicant is asking for waivers, special permits and "orders of conditions" all around. That, in itself, says that this area is not optimal for their projects. We realize that someday, something will indeed be built on that land. But, we feel that regular housing that meets the two-acre requirement and individual septic systems would safer serve the area, as well as have a far less adverse impact on the surrounding area, wildlife and neighborhood and would be far more in line with the aesthetics of historic Sheldonville.

I can see there are many, many letters submitted to the boards regarding these projects, but I've yet to see one in favor of them. There are even letters that mention how similar situations in other towns were allowed to go through, despite opposition of the residents, only to find that even before the project was completed, the residents' fears were coming true, leaving them in very dire situations. Do we really want to run that risk here?

These projects have been shrunk down and are incredibly dense, leaving very little to actually help me understand how this could even be considered an affordable senior living community. All we understand are the very valid fears of the abutters and Sheldonville residents.

We would like to ensure that all Boards know that we continue to stand with all who are in opposition of these projects. Each letter sheds a different perspective. Some share similar concerns, but no matter what, all thoughts, concerns and fears of what Sheldonville will be left with, and also what precedents will be set, are valid.

We thoroughly respect all of your diligence, time, and thoughtfulness you've put into this. We know it cannot be easy, and we appreciate all of your exhaustive work.

Sincerely,

Wendy and Karl Backlund, Jr.

cc: Planning Board
Board of Health