

Town of Wrentham Conservation Committee
South Street
Wrentham, MA

December 14, 2022

Dear Board Members,

My name is Alex Lyon and my wife is Diane Lyon. We have been residents of Sheldonville since 1992. We would like to thank the board for all the hard work put into the deliberations thus far. We have raised a family here and started a business. We have our whole lives invested in Sheldonville. We are direct abutters to both developments. We have been following the proceedings very closely since we have the potential to be impacted the most as it pertains to water and flooding.

Here are our concerns:

1. Thankfully, the original proposal of 8' of fill over 20+/- acres resonated loud and clear and was a contributing factor to the projects demise, it was absurd. Currently, the project is requesting 5' of fill, somewhere in the neighborhood of 72,000 yards of material. Where is all this fill coming from? All it would take is for a few loads of the thousands to pollute the aquifer. Then what? How can 5' of fill not cause flooding and water flow patterns to change? The impact is tremendous and you don't need to be an engineer to know this.
2. A large percentage of this fill is going to be structural compacted fill to support the homes, garages, roads and driveways. My experience with this fill is that it is not permeable. Will the impermeability of the above ground improvements and the structural fill prevent the slow release of water into the water table? The elimination of the farmers drainage structures may improve drainage, but who knows for sure? The land in question is called Burnt Swamp! It is an aquifer. The developments are in a protected aquifer district. This land was never developed because of the high-water table that the old Yankee farmers knew about. They knew it was suitable for farming and not homes. In the 1970's, when statewide zoning was implemented, the town fathers knew the land was good for farming, recreation, and open space preservation, they deemed that Sheldonville would be 2-acre zoning. We have an applicant seeking approval of a Special Permit to build too many units, with too much fill, and a community septic system. The impact is too detrimental to Sheldonville and the natural habitat.
3. Aside from our concerns of flooding, What is the impact of all this fill on the habitat since we will be transitioning from a natural landscape to a paved landscape. A 5' grade change is significant on any project. How will the environment be protected from road chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides? A Senior Living Community is supposed to be for residents on a fixed income, how will these concerns be monitored and by who? The

Home Owners Association? Elderly people looking to relax and enjoy the last half of their lives? Do they have the experience? The desire?

4. Both of these developments will have community septic treatment facilities, meaning all septic waste will be pumped to a main system used by all residents. These systems have not proven to be easy systems to operate and expensive to maintain. Recently, WPBS in Boston did a story on the Cape Cod Aquifer. It was determined that too much nitrogen has been polluting the ground water from too many septic systems on too small parcels of land. There are just too many systems dumping into the ground. There are (2) solutions for the cape residents. Build huge regional waste water treatment plants or be required by law to upgrade their systems to "Innovative/Alternate solutions to reduce the amount of nitrogen reaching wetlands and water table at costs between 10-15k. Chairman Immonen brought up the specter of climate change and the future severity of storms. We ask the Conservation Committee to consider this very valid concern. The applicant is proposing to build a high density development in an environmentally sensitive area, on 5' of fill. This location may be susceptible to climatic changes beyond the Applicant's over-reliance on engineering data. Is the 4' ground water separation for the septic system adequate if the storms we get are much larger? Will the septic system back up? Is the aquifer protected? Will the natural habitat be affected by excess nitrogen if the septic system is not adequate? This project is too impactful and too dense with responsibility for potential problems falling on the Home Owners Association and Town.

In closing, I would ask the board to consider the consequences for future Sheldonville and West Wrentham developments. The community at large has voiced its opposition to this "out of character" development. Also, consider the wisdom and planning of the town fore fathers who laid the ground work necessary for the preservation of open space for future generations. Consider the nature and character of Sheldonville and how these projects will affect the community and abutters. Thank you again for your efforts and guidance throughout this proposed project.