

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

December 18, 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 Board Members,

My husband Karl and I would like to thank the board(s) for all the time and effort each of you have given to the projects associated with 20 Hancock St. and 1139 West St. We realize you are volunteers, and we cannot imagine the tremendous amount of time to review all the plans, studies and information/letters that are put in front of you for each of these projects. Please know you have our sincere appreciation for your efforts. Karl and I are long-time (he is 56 years in Sheldonville, to my 30) residents of Sheldonville, and we are expressing our continued concern regarding the above referenced developments.

Recently we noticed an email from a Brian Antonioli of Wrentham's DPW found online under the "Projects Under Review" on the Planning Board site. It was sent to Rachel Benson on April 27th, 2022 and it outlined some valid concerns regarding water crossing sewer, electric crossing water, and water quality due to a lack of looping water main in and out of the development. (email inserted here.) He even mentions "lack of water sources" in this email.

RECEIVED
04/27/22
Planning Dept
Exhibit # 10

Rachel Benson

From: Brian Antonioli
Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2022 10:39 AM
To: Rachel Benson
Subject: RE: Request for Comments (PB): 20 Hancock St (aka Sheldon Meadow) SLC

Good morning Rachel,

Here are my comments from the meeting earlier pertaining to 20 Hancock St project. They are the same as for 1139 West St project.

1. Issues with water crossing sewer.
 - 10 Feet separation required
 - 18 inch water above sewer minimum
 - B.O.H. should be consulted by developer
2. In-line water valves should be spaced every 800 feet minimum in non-commercial developments
3. Electrical crossing water also of issue
4. Concerns over water quality due to lack of a looping of water main in and out of the development. Thought the main loops around the development, all it does is basically create a large dead end. Due to the lack of water sources in West Wrentham water quality is a legitimate concern. (Forgot to mention this one in the meeting – sorry, my bad).

Obviously, DPW is more than happy to work with and assist all parties involved.

From: Rachel Benson
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 12:08 PM
To: John Naff; Johnson, Dean; Labonte, George; Lavin, Michael; Luce, Darryl; Maduskuie, Robert; Marino, Antonio; Sweet, Kevin; Wade Saucier; Brian Antonioli; Ann MacCarthy; McGrath, William
Cc: Bugbee, Elizabeth; Connor McCordick; Heather Ledbetter; Mike McKnight
Subject: Request for Comments (PB): 20 Hancock St (aka Sheldon Meadow) SLC

Unless we missed it, we don't believe these concerns have been addressed, have they? I cannot find where the applicant settled the concerns mentioned in that email.

My husband and I have been talking about the water in West Wrentham. We are on a well, as there is no town water at our house at the end of Ellery Street. However, my sister-in-law's house, just before ours, *is* on town water. She has a fire hydrant right outside of her place, but it's the last hydrant on the street therefore, water pressure is minimal. Last July she had a small fire in her basement. Thankfully my brother-in-law was able to put it out himself before it became much worse (*their house was built in the 1750s, speaking to the history in this part of town.*) In the meantime, 911 was called and Wrentham Fire, and SEVERAL other towns responded.. It was then that I realized just how precarious the water situation is in West Wrentham.. Mutual aid was called not only for manpower, but to help truck in water in the event it was needed, as the hydrant here is INSUFFICIENT. I suppose they could lay a line way out on 121 and put a pumper every 1000 feet to boost the pressure. But that is very time consuming in an emergency. I work in a fire department. I know that mutual aid is called all the time. But it's normally used for manpower or equipment - not water. I had no idea West Wrentham would need to rely on mutual aid for water. IF these projects are allowed, will the applicant be updating the main water line to West Wrentham? I realize that since these are single family homes, they are likely not required to be sprinklered, but they are so very close together, and, as I just described with my sister-in-law's house, water had to be brought in by other towns. I'm pretty sure those trucks hold about 750 gallons of water, which is expended in just *minutes*. Has the applicant addressed anything about adequate water and fire suppression?

Also, every year we watch the town go on a water ban to help conserve. Even though we are on a well, we heed the bans. What would happen to the water situation if these projects go through, and the DPW's concerns aren't tended to, and the very old water pipe into West Wrentham isn't replaced, and the town's new well goes on Burnt Swamp, right near this proposed cluster development/senior living? It just seems like a lot - a recipe for disaster - and a disaster that may not even show up until long after the deed is done and the applicant is long gone with their pockets of profit.

We would also like to know what happens if these houses cannot be sold to persons over 55. They are deemed "affordable" yet, I don't know many seniors who can afford +700k, the property taxes that come with that, and HOA fees. There is very little offered in the way of amenities specific to senior living. I mean, what's the "draw" to seniors to live there, especially with so few amenities? There is no pool, or club house, tennis courts, eateries, there are no "destinations" to walk to other than a store that sells mostly cigarettes, lottery tickets and alcohol. So what exactly is the draw for seniors? Who ensures that 55 and over are the only people purchasing there? And what is the plan if they don't sell to seniors? Then what?

We can see many letters addressing the various reasons why these projects should not be approved. Everything from water (high groundwater, flow, aquifer district, new well, old pipes, etc), to shared septic and maintenance, to safety, to traffic, to trucking in over 4200 trucks of fill creating a plateau over the abutting homes, to burden on Boards and the municipality, to leaving the HOA to handle so many big expensive things, to keeping the historic aesthetics of the area, etc. Just in reading the SLC by-laws, we feel this project does not fit and the applicant is just trying to twist the intent or meet the *absolute bare minimum*. In the end, they are offering cluster housing, in an area where water is already an issue, has high ground water, (that will likely leave abutters with terrible issues down the road,) a huge visual detraction in historic Sheldonville, and likely some sort of mess left for the town to deal with in the years to come. Where is the benefit to the Town of Wrentham? We did not find one letter in favor of these projects, nor do we find any benefits.

We ask that you please deny these projects, as they do not meet the requirements of the by-laws as intended. The applicant is looking to build a shared septic in an aquifer protected district. The abutters who have lived in their very old homes for years and years know, first hand, the reality of living where they live with such a high water table. These projects are incredibly ill-conceived. Someone mentioned in one of the letters how the town forefathers never built in that area for a reason. I think that was a very astute observation.

Again, we thank the Board and other reviewing boards/commissions for taking the time to read our letters and for going through these proposals very carefully and with deep forethought for what the town may be left with if these projects go through and the applicant is long gone.

Sincerely,

Wendy & Karl Backlund Jr.