

Ledbetter, Heather

From: Michael Johns <michael.johns001@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 26, 2022 4:42 PM
To: Planning
Cc: ConCom; Bugbee, Elizabeth; Benson, Rachel
Subject: Abutter Letter - Special Permit Application - Senior Living Community 1139 West Street & 20 Hancock Street

To: Chairman McKnight and Honorable Members of the Wrentham Planning Board

Cc: Chairman Immonen and Honorable Members of the Wrentham Conservation Commission

Chairman Smith and Honorable Members of the Wrentham Board of Health

From: Michael & Janis Johns 1211 West Street Wrentham, MA 02093

Subj: Abutter Letter - Special Permit Application - Senior Living Community 1139 West Street & 20 Hancock Street

We are writing today to officially document our opposition to the applicants proposals for two Senior Living Communities in West Wrentham. We oppose this development for many reasons expressed by other residents, and will detail a few of our most fundamental concerns. Primarily our concern is for the quality of life for existing and future residents of Town. Size, scope, and impact of the proposed senior living community developments are inappropriate, and incongruent with the character of the rural landscape, and historic neighborhood primarily bordered with antique homes. At some point, the land parcels in question will be developed, and appropriately sized and scoped residential development would be acceptable to us, and I think most of the neighborhood; but these particular applications for developments, as proposed are not by any means acceptable. The proposed lowlands for development are the collection area for the excessive surface water runoff, which begs the question, where will all the water go? As far as drinking water, West Wrentham already has too fragile a water infrastructure and an aquifer protection district right underneath the proposed area of disruption, which also begs the question of water pressure concerns, in the area west of Route 495 that already has limited supply. With structures in close proximity, and an undersized water main coming in from Hancock Street, is water pressure and volume sufficient to suppress a multi-unit fire?

At every turn, the developer has demonstrated the absolute minimum benefit to the needs of the senior population, for which the Senior Living Community is intended; and instead has aimed to deliver maximum density and maximum economic advantage; to the overwhelming disadvantage of existing abutters, future residents, and the senior population. Wrentham's Senior Living Community bylaw specifically states that the project "shall not adversely affect the character of the immediate neighborhood". The obvious adverse effects these projects will have on the neighborhood is the reason for such overwhelming opposition by residents over the last two years. Thus far, the only highlights for senior residents in this proposed community have been enclosed community center buildings, and pickle ball courts; which have now been reduced to open air, seasonal pavilions. That's it; as far as other amenities, zilch. There is no access to the town center, market places, church, dining, or any of the other necessities, or niceties that a senior population may need or wish to enjoy.

The complex and expensive to maintain/repair community septic systems over the Aquifer protection district, certainly seem counter to both taking care of our senior population, and protecting our water resources. The two massive trucked-in plateaus constructed of impervious fill, just to be able to separate the construction from the water table is a catastrophe in the making. Common sense should dictate, and eyebrows should be raised just at the thought of over 72,000 cubic yards of fill, equating to approximately 4200 truckloads across the roadways, to raise the grade 5 feet; to enable construction of the proposed SLC's. And what of all the displaced water? Where does it go? Who deals with it? At what cost? And what is the detriment to the quality of life for those of us who call Sheldonville home?

Boston is a city built on fill, and has forever had to pay for, and maintain this engineering feat. Bostonians, deal with rats, drainage issues, sinkholes, and stormwater problems; but economics drove the need for the port city, and seemingly unlimited financial resources tend to its upkeep. Wrentham, on the other hand, does not have unlimited resources, and neither will the residents, whose goal it would seem, is to age in place comfortably, on fixed incomes, with commonplace amenities for a senior population. The common sense test shows this is not an ideal, or even adequate location for a senior living community; not in any way, shape, or form, especially as currently proposed by the applicant.

It is understood that a '100 year storm' can and does occur more than once every hundred years. In fact, during the two years of the applicants multiple attempts and varied designs; there have been nearly a half dozen extraordinary rain events that have caused flooding of the fields and swampland on both parcels proposed for development, as well as flooded basements, driveways and yards of we, the abbutters. All this is without the addition of 72,000 cubic yards of impervious fill and retaining walls, changing the already challenging, natural water pathways and drainage. The proposed hydrologic changes to the landscape of these proposed developments will most certainly change our water problems for the worse; negatively and permanently affecting the quality of life in Wrentham.

Builders of old, such as Colonel Rhodes Sheldon and his boat builder sons and others in the building trades at the time, knew well enough to construct homes on the high ground, use the force of water running downhill to power their machines, and let the water continue on its natural pathway to the lowlands. Now, however, we are at a crossroad where decisions must be made, in the best interest of the Town, to allow or not allow inappropriately placed and designed construction in the lowlands?

We trust, despite the applicants best engineering, workaround, business and legal attempts; that resident members of the Planning Board, Board of Health, and Conservation Commission will apply good old common sense, and say no thank you to these inappropriate attempts to fit their sort of development into the Senior Living Community zoning. It's not the right place and it's not the right design, period! Thank you for reading this letter and for your time and effort spent researching and studying to best understand the consequences of these applications and listening to the many concerns expressed by Wrentham residents.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael & Janis Johns
1211 West Street

Wrentham, MA 02093