

Backlund, Jr.
145 Ellery Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

Conservation Commission
79 South Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

RE: 1139 West Street / 20 Hancock Street

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

I am writing regarding the above-mentioned projects. My husband, Karl, and I have lived here many years (he, all of his nearly 57 years, and I have lived here 30 years now.) Sheldonville has always been a lovely, rural and "quaint" area and we are proud to be a part of it. My husband's family has lived here many, many years.

We've sat in on almost every meeting. So much has been said, so many letters (all opposing) have been written, and yet the applicant still hasn't truly addressed our concerns in any tangible way. All we hear at the meetings from the applicant is "it can be in the order of conditions" (so many times), or "the people of Sheldonville just don't want anything ever built there, but rest assured, there *will* be something built there." (*No one has ever said that nothing should be built there, in fact, the Joneses planted a hedge many years ago anticipating something going there someday - though they never anticipated a project that would tower OVER their hedge/backyard.*) The applicant is very comfortable leaving testing, monitoring, and other costly things to the Town - and when the projects are done - they'll wipe their hands and move on. If they were being truly honest, I doubt they would be entirely comfortable with all this if they lived in Sheldonville, especially as an abutter to the projects.

At the last couple of meetings, there was a lot of talk about the amount of fill being brought it, where that fill will come from, who will ensure that it's clean and HOW will they ensure that it's clean (I was told at the last meeting that it's not possible to test every truck load.) Nothing they said left us feeling good about their plans.

On January 19th, 2023, there was an article in The Providence Journal discussing how a company illegally used 5000 tons of contaminated soil and stone on a project, and they lied about it after the fact. I'm not saying anyone here is or even would lie - I'm just saying, it happens, as shown by the article. This area where the applicant wants to completely fill in - is in an aquifer protection district. It's near water that wildlife drinks from - in fact, the wildlife *relies* on that water. It is also right beside the Town's best spot for a badly needed new well. Attorney Buckley mentioned maybe we (people concerned about the fill) should all turn in soil samples to ensure our own yards are clean and safe. While I felt that was a rather childish thing to say, I'll gladly do it.

Also, we are curious about, and are admittedly unenlightened, the Town's Master Plan – specifically Open Space Preservation Development. When reading the "purpose" of the article, we cannot help but think that these projects do the exact *opposite* of the intent regarding Open Space Preservation Development. I won't reiterate the whole article, but we are left wondering why the town isn't looking at this area through the eyes of the Master Plan and the desire of the residents (as shown in the polling and meetings done for the Master Plan regarding open space). The applicant here is solely about profit. That's it. There is zero benefit to the Town if these projects go in as they are. Why wouldn't the town be looking toward that land for preservation, especially since the it's right beside the best place for a badly needed new town well? What precedent will be set if these go through? What then happens to the Open Space Preservation in the Town of Wrentham? Again and again, this all just feels like the applicant is doing their utmost best to jam a square peg in to a round hole. A project that is truly meant to be there should not require so much fill, and certainly should not require so many "conditions".

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At this point, I guess we've said all we can. In the end, we believe this project does have the potential for long term adverse impacts that likely won't manifest for some time to come. (Look what is happening on Cape Cod regarding septic systems and nitrogen.) Be it contaminated water, water/flooding issues in the surrounding homes, lack of water up stream due to changing how water flows (as mentioned by someone in another letter), septic system issues, puddling, snow removal issues, etc. We want to go on record stating we vehemently oppose these projects as they are (also that this is just cluster housing, hardly a SLC.) We feel the applicant is putting in the bare minimum to build/sell as many homes as they can to make the most dollars, at the expense of the people who have been living here, paying taxes and taking good care of their historic homes. Our concerns *are* valid.

Thank you all so very much for your time, hard work, and attention that you have had to put into these projects. We are very grateful for the opportunity to express our thoughts and concerns and appreciate all you are doing to best protect the Town of Wrentham.

Sincerely,

Karl and Wendy Backlund