

Donna Rich

From: Selectmen Topsfield
Sent: Friday, May 03, 2019 9:37 AM
To: Donna Rich
Subject: FW: Perkins Landing project revision

From: Joel Hariton [<mailto:jhariton@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2019 5:13 PM
To: Selectmen Topsfield
Subject: Perkins Landing project revision

Dear Board of Selectmen,

I have reviewed the revised plan for 57 Perkins Row, called Perkins Landing. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

While the project economics have changed through increasing the number of residences to drive down the prices, the concerns I have with the development have not been addressed at all.

Our family moved to Topsfield in 2002 specifically because of the wealth the town has in protected open spaces and a beautiful natural river flowing through some of those areas. Perkins Landing is situated directly by that confluence of river and open space. Every person in town drinks from the watershed tied to that river, so the safety of the entire community is entwined with the health of the Ipswich River. Thousands of paddlers pass through that section of the river, because of the existing wildlife currently there, and the stunning beauty of the undeveloped stretch of the banks.

The Perkins Landing does not just abut the Ipswich River, but also the Audubon Sanctuary, just across on the other bank. A treasure in itself, the Ipswich River Audubon Sanctuary will be degraded by the Perkins Landing project, that is for sure. The only question is how much. The simple site of all those structures where there is now mostly a wooded lot would be an eyesore enough, but the danger of something spilling into the river from the site is too high considering that the wildlife will be immediately impacted. What plan do the developers of Perkins Landing have to educate each of the new residents about the fragile and critical nature of the place they occupy?

Basically the challenge is easily defined, how can 44 homes occupy the place where one home previously did, and not affect the river and the sanctuary? I cannot locate any explanation of how septic systems could be made to work safely for the next century in such a critical environment.

It is critical that the State of Massachusetts and the Town of Topsfield secure iron clad guarantees that the Perkins Landing project does not degrade either the Ipswich River, or the Ipswich River Audubon Sanctuary to a noticeable degree. Thousands of visitors to the sanctuary, and the 350,000 who use the water from the river could notice an error in construction methods, or ongoing operation of the residential systems, that hurt our lifeline river and our green retreat.

Should a large sum of money be put in escrow by the developers to insure remediation from any mistakes can be funded and acted upon quickly? That seems logical to me. How would that affect the finances of the project? Such an escrow account needs to be in place for as long as the buildings are in existence because a disaster along this fragile waterway could happen any time during the lifespan of the buildings and perhaps beyond. The account would need to be managed wisely, as costs for a clean-up will likely increase over the years.

Another concern expressed by many in Topsfield has been largely ignored. I wrote previously how I walk and bicycle along Perkins Row several times a week. Even with the present traffic, there have been two times where a deadly collision with a large vehicle, at significant speed, was narrowly avoided. With 44 new families and all those delivery trucks serving them, it seems obvious that the danger will increase substantially.

Along with the sharp increase in large delivery trucks and vans, there will be a large number of additional cars added to the traffic flow along narrow Perkins Row. Since residents could not easily access work or commercial establishments by walking, numerous trips will need to be made by car from every home. Since each of the 44 residences have a garage and an extra space for either a visitor or a second car, we can be confident that there will be between 44 and 88 vehicles going in and out from Perkins Landing once, twice or more every day. That is not counting the 10 extra parking spaces for visitors in the revised plan.

Perkins Row, and those of us that use it, cannot manage this extra traffic. Promises of a traffic study do not allay any fears of the real danger, because the traffic study will not be completed correctly before a decision on whether Perkins Landing proceeds.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Hariton
12 Willowdale Road
Topsfield, MA 01983

Donna Rich

From: Brian Drozdowicz <brian.drozdowicz@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2019 3:18 PM
To: Planning Department; Brooke Drozdowicz; 40B 01983
Subject: 57 Perkins Modified 40b & Resident Comments

Hi Donna & Planning Board committee members:

As the developers for 57 Perkins have resubmitted their proposal for the development of the land, we felt it was appropriate to share some additional observations and concerns. Please note that all of our comments that were submitted back in October/November still remain relevant, so ask that you include those in the package sent to MA Housing. In addition - as the modified proposal increases the overall number of units, it will further increase overall traffic to the area, which is a major concern for both existing and proposed new residents.

Please note that my family and I reside just west of the proposed development at 46 Perkins row, and we moved to the town in early summer of 2018, so we have just completed our first winter on the street.

Several major unanswered concerns relative to the proposed development:

- * Perkins row is a single lane road in most places, and most certainly, directly in front of our home, and on all areas from the proposed development west to route 97. Even with light construction at a single family home just around the corner this past winter (64 Perkins - directly across from the proposed development) Perkins Row is stressed/overburdened with traffic and on-road parking, which makes the road unsuitable for walking and dangerous to navigate. Please take note of the tire marks off the road with just this light construction ongoing - adding 44 units will make the road un-passable during construction.
- * An increase of units proposed means an increase in car traffic once completed - further making the road more dangerous. This development is on a blind corner and a hill - making navigation already difficult and not safe for pedestrians/bicyclists.
- * The current roadway is limited in width in almost all spots by trees and wetlands - making expansion of the roadway not viable without negatively impacting the current character and composition of Perkins row as a whole.
- * There are no sidewalks and little ability to install them given the topographic nature of the areas. The application notes that there are several walkable features (recreation, downtown, etc.) from the proposed development. This is not a safe or accurate representation of the location, and more traffic further endangers anyone who attempts to walk in either direction (whether toward the wildlife sanctuary or to town).
- * We also have school age children that take the bus to Steward school which requires our child crossing the street every morning to hop aboard the bus at prime commuting hours (approximately 8:10 AM). There have been several instances where we have seen cars come up over the small hill by the proposed development and have to stop short to avoid the bus, which takes up the entirety of the road. Without sidewalks, there is nowhere else for the bus to stop. With increased traffic this is a major accident waiting to happen.

Please let us know if you have questions - thanks for your consideration.

Best,
Brian Drozdowicz
Brooke Drozdowicz
46 Perkins Row

To: Planning Board, c/o Donna Rich
Town Hall
8 West Common Street
Topsfield, MA 01983

From: Bruce Bolnick
135 Perkins Row

Date: May 15, 2019

Subject: Modification to 40B Proposal for 57 Perkins Row

This note updates comments that I submitted to the Planning Board on October 15, 2018 regarding the 40B proposal for 57 Perkins Row, taking into account new information in the project modification dated April 17, 2019.

I must emphasize at the outset that I firmly support the need for affordable housing in Topsfield, and fervently wish that we had far more ethnic diversity in the town. Indeed, the controversy over 57 Perkins Row has me wondering why the Town has not taken active steps in the past to meet state requirements for affordable housing in a more suitable location. I am also sympathetic to the developer, who has invested a great deal of effort and up-front money into this proposal. **Nonetheless I strongly oppose the proposal as failing the basic test of being "appropriate" for development at this site.** My comments follow:

1. By adding 44 households and 108 parking spaces at this location, the project will have an adverse effect on local traffic conditions, diminishing the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists on this narrow, winding road. The cover letter from Perkins Landing LLC states that the traffic consultant expects minimal to no impact. Anyone who has tried turning onto Route 97 from Perkins Row can attest that this is a very questionable assessment!
2. I am very concerned about possible impacts on the Ipswich River watershed, given the astonishingly ambiguous statements in the cover letter from Perkins Landing LLC regarding water management. In particular, the letter states that the "final design of the septic system shall be submitted during the ZBA hearing process for approval," with a similar statement for storm water management. Given the location of the project relative to a fragile river, important wildlife habitat, and bordering wetlands, it should be *imperative* to have more detailed information on design of the facilities for treating sewage and managing storm water run-off.
3. I have heard comments suggesting that the present delineation of the river bank does not reflect high-water conditions. If that is the case, then a reassessment of the 100' buffer is *imperative* prior to any decision on the application.
4. Point 2 above mentions surprising ambiguities in the cover letter from Perkins Landing LLC regarding the septic system and storm water management. The same concern also applies to statements in the letter on the traffic study, and

tree removals. I urge MassHousing to require more detailed plans on all of these aspects of the project before considering the proposal for approval.

5. If I understand this correctly, Perkins Landing LLC proposes to use an affiliated company from the Larkin Group as contractor and construction manager. This close association creates opportunities *and incentives* for padding the project cost to hide excess profits relative to limitations placed by the state on a Limited Dividend Organization as 40B developer. What checks are in place to ensure that the costs reflect arms-length pricing, without padding for the developer?
6. A few questions about the budget:
 - a. Is there a substantive justification for the Developer Overhead at \$126,000? This seems to be a simple 10% on the "hard costs," but it is not obvious why that calculation makes sense.
 - b. Is there a substantive justification for the amounts of \$119,640 and \$710,850 for Commissions/Advertising?
 - c. What interest rate, loan amount, and loan duration have been used to produce the Construction Loan Interest cost of \$880,000?
7. The sustainable development self-assessment continues to claim that the project is "walkable" to town center, school, library and retail shops. This is extremely misleading considering the distance, the lack of sidewalks, and the need to cross two major roads. It's especially far-fetched to think that the route is "walkable" in winter conditions, when the bike path into town is essentially unusable. Even when that path is not covered with snow or ice, the short walk along Route 97 to reach it is quite dangerous due to lack of a sidewalk and an extremely narrow shoulder to the highway. For that reason, I rarely walk to the bike path and when I do so, I have to wait for gaps in the traffic on Route 97 to run from point to point along the roadside.
8. The Self-Assessment indicates that the project will create "jobs near housing, service or transit," with an explanation that there will be permanent jobs for "multiple trades: landscapers; common area maintenance; trash removal; etc." This is also a stretch, in that the number of such permanent jobs is likely to be tiny.

I greatly appreciate the work of the Planning Board, and thank you for consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Bruce Bolnick
135 Perkins Row
571-340-1629 (cell phone)

May 15th, 2019

Planning Board and Board of Selectmen
c/o Donna Rich
Town Hall, 8 West Common Street
Topsfield, MA 01983

Topsfield Planning Board and Board of Selectmen,

We are addressing issues with the Modification of Project Eligibility Application for Perkins Landing LLC.

WETLANDS DISASTER

We are all for affordable housing...but to cram 44 housing units, 16 more than the initial proposal's 28, into an extremely fragile area of the Ipswich River watershed is an egregious assault on the sensibilities of our town, clearly in the name of profit, not affordable housing.

DANGEROUS TRAFFIC

The addition of 50 to 80 cars to a narrow, winding scenic roadway that is barely two cars wide will make it even more treacherous. Add speeding and distracted driving to the mix and the result could be lethal.

PERILOUS WALKING

To assert that this development is "walkable" is misleading and false. "The site is located off a scenic road and is less than 2 miles from most Topsfield amenities" but only if using the rail trail. To walk to the rail trail, they say pedestrians will navigate "only .5 miles from the site [along Perkins Row] and only requires going 2/10 of a mile along Rt. 97". The scenic road is narrow and twisty with no sidewalks; Rt. 97 is a 40 mph well-traveled state route with no sidewalks. Also, the rail trail is not maintained in the winter.

INAPPROPRIATE / ILLEGAL WATER USE

The plan calls for "use of an irrigation well on site" for lawn irrigation. We are not allowed to drill a well for lawn irrigation because it taps into the Ipswich River Watershed, and we have a mandatory outdoor watering ban all summer long. Why will they be allowed? I recommend installing AstroTurf: low maintenance, no need to water, no chemical/fertilizer runoff into the adjacent Ipswich River, and it makes the perfect topper for the stepped trench leach field they propose as the playground for children.

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE?

Page 9 says there are "0.00" (zero) handicapped accessible units. Page 31 says "Includes housing options for special needs and disabled population". It can't be both, so one of these is wrong.

Perkins Landing LLC concludes "The site is appropriate for this type of development..." Our conclusion and conviction are that this, indeed, could be a wonderful development BUT not immediately adjacent to the fragile ecosystem of the Ipswich River.

Thank you, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, for investing your time to allow Topsfield to grow responsibly. THIS PROJECT IS A BAD IDEA ON NUMEROUS LEVELS.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan and Gary Bergmann
24 Howlett Street
Topsfield, MA 01983
Bergmann.Gary@gmail.com

May 29, 2019

To Topsfield Planning Board

In light of the recent changes that Perkins Landing LLC, has made to the 40B project at 57 Perkins Row, we feel that an addendum to our letter dated 10/11/18, needs to be made. Our concerns noted in the previous letter have been **magnified** by the recent changes in the application.

Adding the additional units to the property only increases the toll on the roads and traffic to the scenic road. It also adds more stress to the property and the natural environment. None of the previous concerns or implications have been resolved or remediated in the revised application. As direct abutters to this property we are extremely distressed with the lack of compassion shown by this development company for the needs of the environment, community and neighborhood. This project should have every "red" flag in which the state should consider in moving forward with the application.

It should also be noted that this property was not approved/compatible with a previous developers' proposal. This project was to put 5 homes on the same area as Perkins Landing LLC. The project was not approved by the town as it would have seriously impacted the wetlands and had devastating implications for the environment/natural topography near the Ipswich river.....why on earth would the property suddenly be ok for a larger development? This section of Perkins Row is known to have a high water table where homes have raised septic systems as well as wells for their water source. These factors alone will be impossible to provide for 40 units, on eight acres. Finally, it should be noted that a buyer has expressed interest in purchasing this property to remodel the single family home and give a majority of the land to conservation, which would retain the beauty and serenity of this scenic road.

Sincerely, Natalie and Bill Whelan
63 Perkins Row
Topsfield, MA.

Donna Rich

From: Gale Biermann <GaleForce55@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 29, 2019 6:54 PM
To: Planning Department
Cc: michael_bierman; Kim Sherwood
Subject: 40B

Hi Folks,

It's difficult to believe that we are still discussing 57 Perkins Row when application after application has been denied because of the FRAGILE environment contained in, along both perimeters, river and scenic road and on the property boundaries. There are laws, mandates, rules, prohibitions from Federal, State, Town and countless Environmental Associations and Wildlife Groups that prevent such destruction on environmentally fragile sites like this very parcel. One just needs to read some of the objection letters so far and some are objecting to the 24 units not even to the outrageous increase to 44!

There appears to be something sinister behind the curtain and it's starting to reek! For this thing to still have legs, the situation doesn't pass the "sniff-test"!

The application and narrative of this development keeps growing in size and destruction of land and water resource. Each time the ownership changes hands, plans get revised and presented to the boards of Topsfield, how long has this property been forced under the noses of the abutters, and countless environmental associations and protection agencies? Each and every time the plans appear in front of our Topsfield boards the scale grows and is now in the nightmare category...

What this developer has presented to the Town is a fabrication, a myth, a narrative fairytale presented as fact. The Town has no responsibility to "make whole" the developer and his financial gamble. The game of life is "you win some you loose some"...no guarantees, period, full stop!

Mr. Larkin has no business building this enormous monster causing our homes to plunge in value, the country road to forever be scared, removing any possibility to remain "a scenic route", to draw a huge amount of water from the already overburdened and fragile Ipswich River. There is not enough water to supply our town as it is...we're reaching "critical mass" now and authorities must connect the dots! The huge septic system will be a future leakage of human waste, pharmaceuticals and toxic chemicals. If our government can't prevent Nuclear Waste from leaking into the environment...can we really believe that Larkin has the secret ingredient?

This project would have far reaching negative consequences not only for the very water we need for life but also all the animals that require land to travel thru, animals such as deer etc. migrate all along the acres of land along the river from The Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary and all along the river and Perkins Row, they will NOT survive with "forest fragmentation". But the Town has to consider the unintended consequences of having to furnish and accommodate all the needs for all the humans clustered on this susceptible, virgin land. We'll have to make FREE? kindergarten space, with smaller classrooms will we have to build more schools, will we need more firefighters and emergency equipment, more police and cars and staff and more staff for town hall, more road equipment and workers more school busses etc. etc. the list goes on and on... These incremental costs go far beyond the damage to the sensitive environment, the depreciation of the entire area.....who would want to buy a pricey piece of real estate overlooking an out of place monstrosity?

Please look at the history of this developer in Medfield....it will Curdle Your Blood! He did a similar project there and before any permits were issued he went in and CLEAR CUT the property, cutting down mature trees and tearing out the roots, he demolished several houses and structures on the property, he went into River perennial stream areas and this havoc occurred without permission! He was being sighted and fined for violation after violation by federal, state and town. He was being issued Cease and Desist orders and

Suspension Orders even his own project engineer kept after the work crew and developer to erect proper erosion buffers etc. The roads and waterways were clogged with soil dust erosion from the clear-cut property. These violations and neglect went on for what looks like years! up to several months ago....I couldn't read any more about this carnage so I don't know any more except that there was a delay and the torn up land was stopped for months waiting for 40B etc. oks. Cart before the horse again?

The project was at least 2 years in the making and finally the neighbors were made to "suck-it-up" further and had to allow the site to be worked on not 5 but 6 days a week.

The project seemed to be aggressively mismanaged right from the start.

When a person shows you who they are....BELIEVE THEM! Can you imagine a predator, as this developer appears to be, let loose on a fragile piece of land, overriding every environmental restriction, interfering with our WATER, disregarding all the objections and the total disrespect for the neighbors and what our rural town is about and being allow to impact the virgin land, wetlands, vernal pools,(you only need to peek at the driveway in the dip and see the wetlands on each side and notice that the drive is under water at times during the year) the access drive is at the top of a partially obscured 90 degree curve in the accident prone area, the light and noise pollution from all those people living in a clot can only be imagined...

My husband and I own property at the bottom of that bad curve and routinely pick car pieces out of our wetlands THAT FILTER MY DRINKING WATER, from cars skidding around the bend and crashing into the large oak tree that finally gave up the ghost after so many blows...but now the cars have hit and destroyed the granite mailbox post . Increasing traffic at this area from 57 is insane

There is not one positive aspect that can be gleaned from this fiasco. Any tax revenue that might be used to obscure the argument for the project will be cost prohibitive, minus negative...

How this developer tore up the land in Medfield without permission was a ploy to propel the project forward...who would allow an open pit so to speak...the developer had to continue...right?...This guy knows how to work the system...ya think? oh and lets sweeten the deal by adding 40Bs to the mix...game over

Our property next door has more land, is not on the River like 57 Perkins Row is, yet we are not allowed to put up a dog house. To have allowed this fragile, riverfront, wetland, vernal pool, mature tree, wildlife filled land to even be considered for development BOGGLES THE MIND....someone offered to buy the property from the first developer and return a portion of land back to the town but their offer was denied and sold to Larkins...predator-at-large

I would like to watch the "chain of possession" on this application and see where or if this project holocaust goes from "no" to "yes"...that's where the corruption will be.

Put this thing in a different area that is not so critical and fragile....NO ONE has the right to fowl and further restrict our very WATER supply. No one has the right to diminish our most valuable asset, our homes, no one has a right to diminish the wildlife and the peaceful, scenery of the area.. the increase in services, school classrooms, teachers on and on.....is budget busting. The Larkins are not going to live there and they have no skin in the game except a payday but it's at a cost too high...I'm not against a profit but to destroy a vulnerable,fragile land is askinf too much....

This is a project that is based in lies and dishonesty with a person/persons that have clearly shown a wholesale disregard for our precious environment....once it's lost it's lost for ever...

NO DEAL! ... NO PERIOD, NO!

Thank you for your consideration, Mike and gale Biermann

Jean-Marc Berteaux
64 Perkins Row
Topsfield, Massachusetts
01983

May 30, 2019

Topsfield Planning Board
8W Common St
Topsfield, Massachusetts
01983

Re: 40B application for 57 Perkins Row

Dear Planning Board members:

Following your meeting yesterday, please find herein my comments concerning the modified proposed 40B site for 57 Perkins row.

Objective observations:

Water – I have four drains on the front of my property that according to the previous owners go under Perkins Row and empty into wetter areas on the 57 PR property. Additionally, this house's water was originally sourced from a spring across the road, also located on 57 PR's property. According to the previous owners, Springs are still there and account for part of why the soil here is always so wet.

As for the aquifer, I am wary that adding a large, concentrated number of additional homes here will impact well depths and access for existing residents. My well is currently at 400ft and while adequate, is certainly no gusher. I would expect the state to study this closely to avoid impacting existing residents.

Traffic – Car traffic is generally sparse, with the exception of school and rush hour traffic in the early mornings and mid to later afternoon. There can be a queue and delays to get onto 97 Southbound, but drivers on PR are generally aware of the road, and on watch for pedestrians, bicycles, and children. Early in the morning and towards later in the afternoons, there is generally a fair number of sport cyclists, often in small groups. On weekends, cyclist groups seem to outnumber car traffic if the weather is suitable. There are often people walking their dogs or just walking on the street at any time of day. As you know, there is no sidewalk or even shoulder to walk on, though existing traffic in my observations has not been speeding and is careful around the numerous blind or restricted view turns. The road is also quite narrow in certain spots heading to 97 from 57 PR, given old growth trees that I hope will be allowed to grow in peace.

Subjective Observations:

Density – I am a big proponent of sensible urban and affordable development in areas where it makes sense. I am also against suburban sprawl. The proposed development of "mixed affordability" for 57 Perkins row makes no sense from a housing perspective. It is far from any services that would make it affordable, while increasing density in an area clearly not able to support it.

According to walkability sites, 57 Perkins row scores very badly (4 or less, meaning a car is needed for everything). While it is "only" 1.3 miles from town, you must cross two very busy roads, with no crosswalks or

sidewalks. The narrowness of PR precludes adding a shoulder or sidewalks, meaning that there is no way to improve the walkability score. In my experience, especially in cold, snowy or rainy weather, walking would be out of the question entirely.

Traffic – Using smaller developments already existing around town (Hickory Lane off of Rte 97, for example) one can see a noticeable impact in volume and congestion where those developments connect with the existing roadways. Given the size and scope of this development, and the lack of improvements that could be made on what is a scenic, narrow, twisting country lane, it makes no sense from an urban planning perspective to site such a development here. The additional density of this revised plan only makes this issue worse, as the number of cars under this proposal would be even higher.

Philosophy – Let's be frank. This is not an attempt by a developer to improve affordability in a community by working with them to build well integrated housing. This is a blatant attempt to skirt town rules by a developer only interested in making a quick buck. They are building the strict minimum number of units, and there application is peppered with incorrect answers to the questions asked by the state. They show no interest in partnering with the town to understand what Topsfield's housing needs and opportunities are, they just want to skip town approval entirely by appealing to the state under the 40B process.

Thank you for your time,

Jean-Marc Berteaux

Donna Rich

From: Jane Fraher <riverviewfarms77@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2019 1:19 PM
To: Planning Department
Subject: Perkins Landing

The developer of Perkins Landing did not address the increase in traffic forty-four condos will have on Perkins Row. These condos will impact traffic more than the original plan of twenty-eight cluster homes. Perkins Row is a narrow scenic country road. Two cars going in opposite directions at that location have difficulty passing each other safely. School buses and large trucks are the same width as the road. The developer also did not address water and septic issues. How are forty-four condos going to impact this? The Ipswich River is endangered. We have a water ban from summer to fall due to low flow levels. No plans for the impacts to the environment were given. This plan for building forty-four condos on approximately eight acres of very marginal land is more than troubling. Jane Fraher 77 Perkins Row

31 Wildes Road
Topsfield, MA 01983

May 30, 2019

Planning Board and Board of Selectmen
c/o Donna Rich
Town Hall
8 West Common Street
Topsfield, MA 01983
Sent via email: planning@topsfield-ma.gov

Re: Modified Housing Application for 57
Perkins Row

To the Members of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen:

As a resident of Topsfield for 20 years, I have witnessed residential development permissible by right, by approval of Elderly Housing Districts, and through changes in perc standards and stormwater management regulations. I participated in debates about the approval of EHD's that were not accompanied by affordable housing components, questioning the wisdom of dense development, permitted by EHDs, on the outskirts of Topsfield. I live across the street from an EHD built on a scenic road, for which trees were cut and the monotony of the building forms have changed the character of the road.

I grew up in Bellerose, Queens, New York, on a street where "semi-attached" homes were the norm. My community was extremely walkable. City bus transportation was less than five minutes down the street, affording access to shopping, recreation, and Manhattan. Topsfield is not Bellerose, nor should it aspire to be. The cost of a two-bedroom home like I grew up in has skyrocketed due to its accessibility.

I am acutely aware of the sky-rocketing cost of housing, and the lack of affordability in Topsfield and Massachusetts in general. I recall our housing search 20 years ago when moving from suburban Pennsylvania, complaining that the same housing here cost twice as much as our home in PA.

In expressing my concern about the Comprehensive Permit Application for Perkins Landing, at 57 Perkins Row, I am not objecting to residential housing of more moderate size and cost. I object to the developer's self-assessment of the criteria for approval: The applicant's explanation that "the Town of Topsfield as a whole lacks real walk ability" is correct as far as the proposed location of this development. Businesses along Route One do not have sidewalks. Town Center, including access to the one of our elementary schools, library, and local retail/offices, may be accessible by the Rail-Trail, but the Rail-Trail can only be accessed by a walk along Route 97 to get to a cross walk. The development does not mitigate this lack of accessibility.

Modified Housing Application for 57 Perkins Row 2

I have concerns about the explanations accompanying the categories of Sustainable Development Principles:

1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses
 - a. I do not object to the "new use" in an existing neighborhood, i.e. non-age-restricted condominium duplex use in a single-family zone, since we have approved this style of home for 55+. However, dense development does not make sense without the infrastructure needed to create a pedestrian friendly district. This is a purely residential neighborhood, development of which will only add congestion and increased vehicle use.
 - b. There is no mixed use.
2. Advance Equity & Make Efficient Decisions
 - a. The streamlined permitting process does not protect the environmental and stringent health codes designed to protect the natural resources of Topsfield. It serves to benefit the developer. (I will leave it to the Planning Board and others to identify the inconsistency in calculations, and environmental concerns.)
 - b. While it is possible that the moderate size and accompanying lower cost, both market and affordable, may attract a more diverse population, it is also possible that Topsfield cannot attract residents who do not have access to local jobs or transportation to jobs in Topsfield or surrounding communities.
3. Protect Land and Ecosystems and 4. Use Natural Resources Wisely
 - a. Others have more direct knowledge of the environmentally sensitive nature of this parcel. Perhaps modification of the number of units would mitigate some of the concerns.
5. Expand Housing Opportunities
 - a. Housing costs include Property Taxes and Water Bills account for over 90% of funding for Topsfield's services. The number of units proposed for this development may require the need for additional services not currently forecast, making the cost of home ownership unsustainable. Many current residents are concerned about the rising cost of property taxes and water bills.
6. Provide Transportation Choice
 - a. The development does nothing to increase bike and ped access. The explanation merely states that the development has access to the existing rail-trail. Would the developer be willing to create sidewalks? Are sidewalks even feasible along the narrow roadway Perkins Row or Route 97?
7. Increase Job and Business Opportunities
 - a. It is true that a development of this size may create jobs for landscapers and common area maintenance. I do not know whether trash, snow removal would ultimately become part of the town's contract.
8. Promote Clean Energy
 - a. Glad to read that the development will meet the Energy Star standard
9. Plan Regionally
 - a. I have not read the Analysis. I am aware that affordability limits access to Topsfield. However, without the associated public transportation to neighboring

communities with a larger commercial base, this development will only minimally contribute to regional development. For example, as recently as April 2019, Topsfield was in danger of losing its Coach Company service to Boston. In my daily commute to Endicott College, I experience congestion along Route 97 during peak hours, due to the lack of public transportation to Beverly.

I thank the Planning Board, the Board of Selectmen, and Town Departments for their due diligence in analyzing the application. I defer to that analysis of the application's representation of data related to cost, adherence to zoning and other critical regulations. I am sensitive to the needs for Topsfield to share in the burden of development but also to the needs to protect the environment.

Sincerely,

Heidi Fox
31 Wildes Road, Topsfield

cc: Senator Joan Lovely via Joan.Lovely@masenate.gov
Representative Brad Hill via Brad.Hill@mahouse.gov

June 2, 2019

Planning Board and Board of Selectmen
c/o Donna Rich
Town Hall, 8 West Common Street
Topsfield, MA 01983 [via email at planning@topsfield-ma.gov.]

Re: 40B Modification of Initial Application for 57 Perkins Row

My wife, Nora and my daughter, Grace and I live at 31 Perkins Row, close to 57 Perkins Row. We would like to add our comments expressing our concern for the modified proposal. Most of our concerns are the same as they were for the original proposal.

Our primary concern is the proximity of the development to the Ipswich River. The pristine river and the open space around it are what attracted us to buying our house on Perkins Row. Forty-four duplexes right on the edge of the river will almost certainly have some negative impact on this valuable resource, even if all the regulations are met by the developer. We enjoy kayaking and canoeing on the stretch of river near our house. Today, if you are kayaking on the river, you cannot see our house or the other houses close to 57 Perkins Row, but 44 new homes abutting the Audubon Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary will certainly be quite visible from the river.

Our water comes from our well that relies on the Ipswich River watershed aquifer water levels, so anything that threatens our already at-risk aquifer is not a good idea. We are already restricted from watering our vegetable garden during several months a year. The additional strain of 44 duplexes on both the quantity and quality of the water is something to be avoided if possible.

The Ipswich River is also sometimes flooded with too much water, sometimes even flooding route 1. The field at the Topsfield Fairgrounds which is used for parking when it is dry enough held more than one foot of water most of the last two springs and summers. Egrets could frequently be seen wading in the flooded area. The trees along much of the river absorb and hold significant amounts of rain water and slowly release it into the watershed minimizing flooding. Building forty-four duplexes and the associated driveways and road will require eliminating many trees which will increase the impact of heavy rains that sometimes flood the low areas surrounding the river.

The Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary is home to many forms of wildlife. If you look closely at a map of the area around 57 Perkins Row, you can see that 57 abuts the Ipswich River Sanctuary. On the other side of Perkins Row are at least forty or fifty acres of undeveloped wooded and swamp land extending all the way from Perkins Row to route 1. I suspect that the wooded area on 57 Perkins Row which adjoins three partially wooded, undeveloped lots with frontage on Perkins Row directly across from a wooded section on the other side of Perkins Row forms a wildlife corridor for mammals, reptiles and amphibians. We have seen whitetail deer, mink, coyote, and fishers pass through the edge of our property to cross Perkins Row into the woods beyond. The proposed development will sever this wildlife corridor completely.

There are vernal pools on both sides of Perkins Row in the vicinity of 57. I believe the small vernal pool between our property and 57 Perkins Row will actually be certified as a vernal pool based on discussion at the May Topsfield Conservation Commission meeting. This spring the Conservation Commission found several species of amphibians breeding in that vernal pool. Last spring, there was standing water about six inches deep for at least seven weeks in the lot that abuts both our property and 57 Perkins Row.

We also object to the claim of walkability in the application. Walking along route 97 into Topsfield center is not really safe. There is no sidewalk and hardly any shoulder on a road with heavy traffic. The road becomes even narrower with snowbanks during the winter.

The winding, scenic nature of Perkins Row is what makes it attractive to bicyclists, runners and walkers. Perkins Row also almost connects to the nearby bike path. On a nice spring or summer Saturday or Sunday, I often count more than fifty cyclists passing our house. The traffic from the proposed duplexes with one, two or three cars each and the usual delivery vehicles for forty-four more homes will negatively change the nature of pedestrian and cycling travel on Perkins Row.

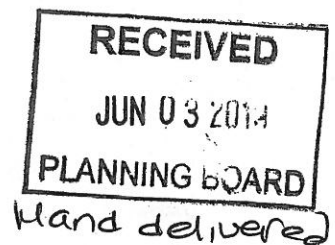
Residents of Perkins Row and frequent travelers down Perkins Row know how slowly drivers need to go in certain very narrow places. The giant oak trees opposite each other a hundred yards from our driveway make the road narrow enough so two cars cannot pass. The added traffic from forty-four duplexes will increase the chance of accidents on such a narrow road.

We are completely in favor of affordable housing in Topsfield and preventing Topsfield from becoming a town that only some can afford, but the location of this development is just not the right place for forty-four duplexes.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey, Nora and Grace Neale

31 Perkins Row



Gregory Watson
Manager of Comprehensive Permit Program
MassHousing
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

RE: Perkins Landing Development—Topsfield, MA

Dear Mr. Watson:

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed Perkins Landing Development in Topsfield. As an introduction, I am the owner and general manager of Montana Development, LLC and have developed numerous building projects in the Town of Topsfield. My projects range from single family homes to a large condominium project in the Town. In fact, I recently constructed a single family home a few doors down from this site and can personally attest to the construction conditions in this area.

In my dealings with the boards of the Town, I have also found them to be firm but fair. They are diligent in protecting the vital interests of the Town but cognize of the rights of landowners to develop their property. I will not repeat the thoughtful objections that the Town has submitted concerning this Project, but will say that I agree with their conclusion that this proposal is wrong for this site. Nor will I repeat the objections of the neighbors concerning the adequacy of Perkins Row. Their worries are not overstated. A development of this size and scope is simply inappropriate on that roadway.

An additional problem that needs, and I believe has failed, to be addressed is the extreme difficulty in constructing in this area. As you have been informed by the Ipswich River Watershed Association and the Mass Audubon Society, this is an area of critical environmental concern. My project was only a single family house on over four acres and it was both difficult and expensive to maintain the erosion control and other necessary protective measures during construction. Here they are proposing numerous structures, utilities and driveways over multiple seasons. This parcel has significant slope issues which increase the construction challenges. A significant weather event (which will occur) could wreak havoc with the construction site. The damage on this ecosystem would be immense. I do not know how you could properly prepare, especially when you consider that this project, like all projects this size, will be phased in. This means you will have homeowners intermingling with construction crews and the chance of something going very wrong is multiplied. All the protective measures during construction will

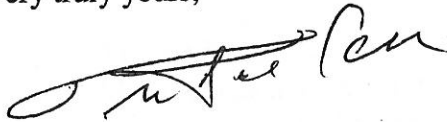
be temporary by design and may prove inadequate the protect the river and the surrounding areas.

On the property that I developed nearly^{by}, there was a venal pool and I would not be surprised if the same were true for this parcel.

This proposal is located in a remote portion of the Town, far from the Town center. The Town has approved other condominium projects in the past, but they are located with easy access to Route One and Town facilities. There are no advantages in positioning a project in this area.

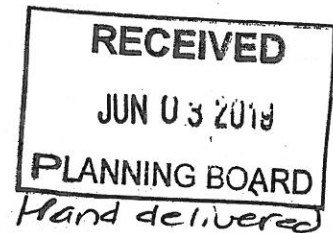
I would reiterate that in dealing with the boards of the Town, the projects that should get approval, do, but this proposal has some many negatives that the Town is correct in its insistence on denial.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Iovanella", written in a cursive style.

Frank Iovanella, General Manager
Montana Development, LLC

June 1, 2019



To whom it may concern,


I am writing this letter in regard to the 40 B Proposal that is under review on Perkins Row in Topsfield, MA. My husband and I live on Juniper Lane which is in very close proximity to this proposed project. We have been Topsfield residents for the last 27 years. We truly love our community, and have always supported what is best for our town and its residents.

In regards to this 40 B project we are very concerned about the issues that will arise from the location proposed for this project. We have other 40 B housing in our town and we do not oppose any of the existing locations. The location proposed is an issue in our eyes for two reasons. One is the safety issue that will arise from the extra vehicle traffic that will come as a result of the residents in this new community. Perkins Row from beginning to end is a very narrow country road. It does not allow for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles in both directions to be on it at the same time. There have been a number of reported accidents reported between cyclists and cars as well as runners and cars. There are also a number of unreported incidents that take place. Perkins Row does not need more traffic added to it. The project will put its residents in harms way when they look to have walking access to the town's services and retail locations. There is no public transportation that will alleviate this. To get to the downtown they have to walk on the dangerous Perkins Row and also have to cross a rural highway.

The second concern we have is the environmental issues that will occur from the project and its proximity to the Ipswich River. The area is known to be a flood zone and to contain many forms of small wildlife. There is a big risk that this project will cause a lot issues for the wildlife that lives in this area. Our backyard is the Audobon and we have always respected the wildlife, and the land that is there. This project we fear will not.

Thank you in advance for reading this letter and allowing us to voice our concerns. We also appreciate any support that can be provided for stopping the approval of this 40 B project.

Kind Regards,


Craig and Lisa Franklin

7 Turner Lane
Topsfield, Ma.

Perkins Landing, Topsfield – Comments on Modified Proposal for 44 duplex units

June 2019

All of my previous written comments in October 2018 regarding discrepancies in the proposal, such as likely lower profit margins, higher construction costs and slower absorption apply to this modified 40B proposal, and then some. Additionally, it is unrealistic to think that the market in Topsfield is now screaming for tiny 1250-1500 sf mostly 2 bedroom units at a price of \$400,000 each. It defies logic to think the addition of 44 new families will have "minimal to no impact" on traffic on Perkins Row and surrounding roads, while exhibiting no effect on local abutter's property rights, drainage, safety or the Ipswich River Watershed.

The applicant erroneously states that there are no vernal pools on the property. To the contrary, two vernal pools are now in evidence. The first is located in the driveway area. A second vernal pool has recently been confirmed by knowledgeable third parties at the southwest property line, most definitely covering neighboring parcels as well as the subject. Our personal residence lies just south of this vernal pool, and our private well is very close to the south property line. There is no question that our well would be adversely affected by this intense development in such close proximity. Town water hook up would be prohibitive, given that our house is located over 800 feet from Perkins Row.

As a long time resident and native of Massachusetts, it saddens me to think that such a fool hardy and dangerous proposal could become a reality in Topsfield. Massachusetts leads the country in environmental awareness, ingenuity, education, and many other areas. Massachusetts can do better.

I urge Mass Housing to decline this proposal.

Sincerely,

Kim Sherwood
29 Perkins Row

Hello,

My wife Anisha and son (Vivaan) live at 67 Perkins Row, which is 2 houses down from the proposed development ("Perkins Landing"). I've circled us on the map as we are one of the most directly impacted families/houses by the new development. We recently moved to 67 Perkins Row a month ago, we moved to Perkins Row after being in market for more than 18 months as we were looking for an ideal place which is peaceful, close to the nature and provided privacy for our young family. This project in essence threatens the spirit of what Perkins row has to offer and the reason why we selected this property over hundreds of other properties that we considered. This project will not only impact residents at Perkins row but it will also impact lot of people from Neighboring towns (Wenham, Middleton, Beverly) who occasionally enjoy this serene place.

We feel strongly that this proposal should not be approved on a number of grounds, any one of which would be cause to not approve in our opinion:

1) The road and related utilities are not suitable for such a development

- i. The road is narrow, has a few pinch points with no shoulder, and there is no sidewalk—all of which would make increased traffic unsafe for motorists & pedestrians
- ii. Widening the road would require removal of numerous trees and be impactful to the local ecosystem, disruptive for residents, and change the character of the area; it may also increase through-traffic
- iii. The increased pedestrian traffic (walkers, runners, bikers, strollers) from the development would be dangerous given the street already requires significant caution
- iv. The installation of public water main would create significant impact; the proposal indicates to do that they require an 850' extension of a water main; while this could be done in conjunction with widening the road, it means even more impact
- v. The electrical utilities are somewhat fragile given the above-ground power lines and proximity to trees, exposing the development to power outages (particular in the winter); these could be particularly concerning for elderly residents

2) Significant Negative impact on Ipswich River and Mass Audubon Sanctuary

- i. The traffic using Ipswich river for recreational purposes will increase significantly not only by additional residents but by their visitors as well, this would have significant impact on the wildlife associated with the river (multiple geese families use the river as their home, they would be impacted and would make the area uninhabitable for them)

- ii. There is a lot of wildlife that uses the current site as both home and as a pass through; for example, we have 10 — 15 deer that live on this side of the river and travel routinely across the properties. A development of this size would certainly drastically limit their habitat (potentially making the area uninhabitable for them)
- iii. There are lot of birds at Mass Audubon Sanctuary that use these properties as pass through and feed on the properties, the development of this size will not only impact the food chain for the birds but it will make the entire neighborhood uninhabitable for these birds forcing them to move out of Mass Audubon Sanctuary

3) The site is not suitable for such large development

- i. The roadway into the development would have significant impact
 - A 20' roadway would need to pass through some sensitive parts of the ecosystem (the existing one already bifurcates a wetlands area)
 - My understanding is that a subdivision road was already a reason for not approving a previous application (per conservation commission), so why should this be different? What rights would that give the previous application to file a claim? What precedent does that set for any future proposals?
- ii. The private septic proposal seems unrealistic
 - Many of the houses in the area (ours included) required building an above ground septic. I can't imagine how 44 duplex septic systems can be properly designed and built on the property without any risk to the sensitive local ecosystem.
- iii. The buildable area seems unrealistic
 - The application suggests that 83% of the site is buildable, but given the terrain this would-mean significant filling and grading that would destroy all the local habitat and have direct impact on the river ecosystem at the base of the hill
 - The site layout plan shows the majority of the houses are down along the edge of the property closest to the river, which means they are right up against or within the buffer zone for the river habitat; this seems to violate the conservation commissions requirements and certainly the spirit of preserving the river and the important habitats around it

4) The local amenities are not suitable for such a development

- i. There are basically no walkable or public transport amenities, so it seems like an unsuitable place to build such a high density development
- ii. Transportation can be expensive and so it seems a strange thing to impose on the low income units
- iii. The developer self-assessment on the sustainability scorecard incorrectly identifies the site as being walkable to downtown, library, retail, etc — we don't think it is realistic (or safe!) to expect people to walk that
- iv. The self-assessment also incorrectly identifies it as including multi-family housing and utilizing existing water/sewer infrastructure

5) This development will likely harm property values (and potentially the Mass Audubon site) over a broad area in Topsfield and in Neighboring towns

- i. As a recent new home owner we scouted close to 125 properties over past 18 months before deciding on 67 Perkins row; if this project were in place it would have weighed in heavily on our decision and we would have not gone ahead with the decision to buy this house; the same would be true for a lot of future qualified buyers who would not be interested in buying in this area if the projects were to go ahead
- ii. If the current plan was in place we would have offered 25% less price on 67 Perkins Row as it would be more comparable to other high traffic areas in similar neighborhood
- iii. We would be very concerned that many units will not be sold and would linger on the market, driving down home values for the town d.
- iv. Existence of a large development on the street will change the character of the street, which may impact property values and potentially visitors to the Mass Audubon Sanctuary
- v. It seems evident that the applicant is taking undue advantage for 40B to circumvent the intent of decision to reject project plan for 5 houses and 28 houses (in 2018)

Please feel free to contact us if there is any additional information or clarification we can provide. We sincerely hope that the owners will decide to stop attempting to develop this property into something more than what it has been, as it is deeply important that we preserve the environment around the river for generations to come.

Thank you,

Abhi Nyatee

67 Perkins Row

Topsfield, MA 01983

585-755-2518

