

KENNETH C. CRATER & MARGARET A. FERRARO

116 BRIGHAM HILL ROAD
NORTH GRAFTON, MA 01536

RECEIVED

July 6, 2016

Board of Selectmen

Planning Board

Town of Grafton

30 Providence Rd.

Grafton, MA 01519

JUL - 6 2016

PLANNING BOARD
GRAFTON, MA

Re: Elmrock Estates Comprehensive Permit Site Eligibility Application

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to express opposition to the proposed Comprehensive Permit Site Approval application, to which I am an abutter both personally and through Crater-Ferraro Realty LLC, the owner of the Brigham Hill Community Farm.

Apart from my personal interests in that area of our town, I believe this site as a locale for high-density development may be among the most damaging to the public interest in Grafton. From Lake Ripple, up over Brigham Hill and extending well into Millbury, there has been a multi-generational public and private expenditure of millions of dollars to secure protected open space for public recreation, wildlife habitat and watershed. This expenditure has benefited, and will continue for generations to come continue to benefit the general public.

The proposed development, cutting across the slope leading down to Lake Ripple, is in a position to substantially impair the conservation and recreational values otherwise secured by this massive investment of time and money, and in return offers only a minor incremental benefit to our affordable housing stock.

Specific concerns with the proposal include:

- **By-Right Plan based on fallacious assumptions.** The By-Right Site Plan submitted as part of the application is wholly unrealistic, as it assumes the granting of waivers having no recent precedent. It is based on a 1600 foot cul-de-sac, versus the town bylaw limit of 500 feet, and the Planning Board has rejected even incremental waivers to this limit. Instead of the 17 lots shown, a maximum of 5 or 6 lots would be allowable under current regulations.
- **Impairment of surrounding open space values.** The Grafton Land Trust maintains an extensive network of trails in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site, open to all residents for recreation in a natural setting and widely used for that purpose. Strict adherence to local subdivision regulations would protect this use by preventing the intrusion of a high-density subdivision into these otherwise protected backland areas.
- **Watershed and wildlife habitat impairment.** Nearly the entire western shore of Lake Ripple is protected by hundreds of acres of open space watershed and habitat. Wildlife range over Brigham Hill from conservation and DFW properties in Millbury down through the slopes leading to Lake Ripple, which this development would bisect.
- **Public safety concerns relating to Community Harvest Project programs.** The nonprofit volunteer farm run by Community Harvest Project at the top of Wheeler

Road brings thousands of schoolchildren to the area each year, where they work on farms on both sides of Wheeler Road. The current low traffic levels in the area would be subject to substantial impacts with the addition of the proposed 36 units of housing.

In the case of the proposed Elmrock Estates development, use of a well-meaning statute is being attempted in a manner that creates a net negative public impact. I encourage our Town boards to take all actions within their power and authority to either deny or constrain the proposal to mitigate these impacts and preserve the existing public benefit being enjoyed in this area today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Crater', written over a white background.

Kenneth C. Crater

Attachment: Open Space Map of Brigham Hill area



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