




**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
MASSACHUSETTS  
01519  
**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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**Date:** December 9, 2016  
**To:** Planning Board  
**From:** Joe Laydon, Town Planner   
**CC:** David Crouse, Highway  
Steven Charest, Fire  
Maria Mast, Conservation  
**Re:** Department Consensus on The Ridings and Length of Dead-End Streets

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On Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> I met with Maria Mast, Conservation Administrator; Steven Charest, Assistant Fire Chief; and David Crouse, Highway Superintendent to review the various iterations of the Ridings Subdivision in order to provide the Planning Board with a consensus opinion on which scenario is preferred by Staff.

Staff first discussed the conventional subdivision plan with the revision date of September 2, 2016. The subdivision comprises 43 single family lots, and increase of four from the origin conventional plan and flexible development plan. This plan also included two wetland crossings and included two cul-de-sacs, one of which was in close proximity to the Mass Turnpike and a third wetland system. In addition, this scenario had the longest roadway length at 5,700 feet. In comparison, the original conventional subdivision was 5,225 feet in length and the flexible development was 3,518 feet in length.

Staff then discussed three versions of the flexible development plan. The first version (Alternative 1) included the 900-foot-long cul-de-sac originally proposed. The second version (Alternative 2) was a plan that reduced the cul-de-sac at 550 feet and another cul-de-sac at 250 feet. This additional cul-de-sac results in a total of three cul-de-sacs. The third version (Alternative 3) was a concept that was shown the Board last month that included a cul-de-sac at 650 feet in length and an additional 250-foot common drive.

Staff first acknowledged that the topography is sloped and therefore to is not possible to design a “dumb-bell” cul-de-sac on the north side of Road A without violating change in grade requirements of the subdivision regulations. Regarding the Alternative 2, Highway did not support this alternative due to the need to plow and clear an additional cul-de-sac. Cul-de-sacs take the most time for highway to clear in storm events. Furthermore, the creation of another intersection will lead to snow stockpiled at the southern intersection thereby increasing snow banks that could minimize sight distance.

Conservation did not support this alterative because it pushed development towards wetlands located between the Pike and the proposed house lots. In addition, the house lots require significant fills in

order to construct homes and rear yards. One lot will require 20 feet of fill. This will have significant impacts to wetlands in the rear and open the development to views of the Mass Pike.

Regarding Alternative 1 and 3, Fire Department Staff stated they would prefer a 500-foot road but acknowledged that there are existing roads in town that are in excess of 500 feet in length. He stated the road should be no more narrow than 24 feet. In deciding between the Alternatives 1 and 3, Fire and Highway expressed concern about access to the rear lots not immediately accessible off the common drive proposed in Alternative 3. Responsibility of those residents to arrange for snow removal and the potential for residents to unintentionally block or restrict access in cases of an emergency present a level of uncertainty in accommodating emergency response that was not viewed positively. Fire and Highway acknowledged that the extra time it takes for emergency vehicles and plows must travel under Scenario A is minimal.

Staff was also unanimous in supporting Flexible Development Alternative 1 over Alternative 2. Alternative 1 had the least environmental impacts associated with the construction of the road and construction of lots. Alternative 1 will require less time to clear in snow storms compared to Alternative 2 since cul-de-sacs require more time to clear than straight sections of road. Also, the additional intersection with Road A will require more time to clear and may result in snow banks that limit sight distance.

Staff unanimously supported Alternative 1 over Alternative 3 because of number of lots accessing the common drive, the uncertainty of the level of maintenance over the common drive, and that access to the rear lots will continue to effectively be up to 900 feet in length and must include a turnaround for emergency vehicles.

Given the option of supporting the conventional subdivision or Alternative 1, Staff was unanimous in recommending against the Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> Conventional Subdivision. Under the Conventional Plan, the impacts to wetland systems will be significantly greater, the road will be 2,200 feet longer, and three additional housing units will be built within the development.

Thank you.