

Paul Bochicchio
41 Hunting Lane
Sherborn, Massachusetts 01770

May 17, 2021

BY EMAIL

Town of Sherborn
Zoning Board of Appeals
19 Washington Street
Sherborn, MA 01770
Attention: Mr. Richard Novak, Chair

Re: 40B Application Submitted for 31 Hunting Lane

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter supplements our letter to you dated May 14.

As you know, at Saturday's Annual Town Meeting, the residents of Sherborn voted to approve Article 15 allowing the Town to purchase the 31 Hunting Lane property by an overwhelming 327 to 9 margin (over a 97% approval rate).

In the several weeks before the Annual Town Meeting, there were many posts on NextDoor Sherborn concerning Article 15, including posts from the applicant. One such post was made by Jo Sagar who lives at 51 North Main Street, two houses from the new 12-unit development at 59 North Main Street. Since Jo's comments typify our concerns about water resources, which we have been raising throughout the hearings, we felt that it was important for the ZBA to be aware of them and the Sagars' situation and their concerns about the proposed 40B projects at 41 North Main Street and 31 Hunting Lane.

Jo's NextDoor comments are as follows:

“Vote YES on article 15; this post [a previous post from the applicant] is nothing short of propaganda. I live on N. Main Street and have just spent \$35,000 on drilling a new well, when we moved in 4-years ago we were producing 7 gallons a minute, (then the 59 N Main development was constructed) and still after drilling to 800ft, we still only produced 1 gallon a minute, after Fracking its now just short of 4 gallons per minute, the well driller with over 30-years experience of drilling in this area was astonished that given this area is already so depleted of natural water sources that a development could even be considered.”

Attached is copy of an email that Jo sent to the Board of Health last November (and which email has been recently shared by the Board of Health with the ZBA) in connection with the 41 North Main Street and 31 Hunting Lane 40B proposals. Jo mentions in her email that her immediate neighbors has also noticed a decrease in the quantity of their water. We do not know how widespread these water degradations are in that area, which possibly may have resulted from the 59 North Main Street development. Given the Sagars' horrendous experience where they were actually without well water for a period of time before they dug their

new well at great expense, you can well appreciate the concerns that the Hunting Lane/North Main Street neighborhoods have with these two proposed projects. The comments from Northeast Water Wells to the Sagars are particularly compelling.

We realize that the Sagars' situation is not conclusive "evidence" that the 31 Hunting Lane 40B project will adversely affect neighboring wells or even "evidence" that the 59 North Main Street development caused the Sagars' well problems, but it is certainly a strong cautionary red light which bears closely looking into because of the timing involved.

Jo and Paul Sagar have kindly agreed to attend the May 27 ZBA hearing to personally explain their well situation and their grave concerns about the proposed 41 North Main Street and 31 Hunting Lane projects' possible further impact on their well.

Again, as explained in previous letters, given Sherborn's almost total reliance on private wells and septic systems, developments such as these two proposed ones create a grave threat to the health and safety of large areas of Sherborn. As discussed in our May 14 letter, MassHousing has recognized the unique water and environmental issues that Sherborn has, as such issues were cogently pointed out by the Select Board, the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission and other Town officials and Town residents in their comment letters to MassHousing.

It is now incumbent upon the ZBA to protect Sherborn residents. As MassHousing did, the ZBA must act in full recognition of Sherborn's fragile water resources to protect its residents and be willing to effectively explain its position to relevant state authorities. The ZBA can demonstrate Sherborn's previous affordable housing actions and its commitment to approve additional affordable housing projects evidenced by the fact that Sherborn is very close to achieving its 10% affordable housing goal ahead of most other municipalities in the Commonwealth.

We again respectfully submit that the ZBA must obtain sufficient information (as detailed in our May 14 letter) to enable its wastewater, stormwater, drinking water and wetlands Peer Reviewers to give their final opinions to the ZBA in order for the ZBA to determine whether there is enough "evidence" to decide whether a Comprehensive Permit should be denied. If the evidence presented by the Peer Reviewers results in a denial by the ZBA, that denial process would be entirely consistent with MassHousing's directive in its April 30, 2021 Project Eligibility Approval Letter and should withstand scrutiny by the Housing Appeals Committee.

As with our previous letters, although I have signed this letter individually, all the abutters and other concerned residents cited in our previous letters fully support the contents of this letter.

Thank you for considering these important issues.

Sincerely,

Paul Bochicchio

cc: Zoning Board
Town Planner
Town Counsel

Jeanne Guthrie
Kathleen O'Donnell, Esq.
Craig D. Mills

John Garrison
Jo Sagar

Desheng Wang