

**Roger L. Demler**  
**Engineering**  
**169 Maple Street, Sherborn, Massachusetts 01770**  
**508.653.2069 demler@msn.com**

---

May 26, 2021

Sherborn Board of Appeals and files to:  
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

SUBJECT: 40B applications for 31 Hunting Lane and 41 North Main, Sherborn, MA.  
Concerns about Sherborn's town center drinking water and wastewater

**BACKGROUND:**

Geology and slowly developing knowledge have resulted in safety and viability concerns for the water and wastewater capacities in the town center.

**Geology** has left Sherborn with a shallow overburden in most of the town. One of the two sites in town with a potential for a modest-capacity overburden well is now covered by a 40B development. The other potential for a preferred overburden well is a modest-capacity well that is fortunately on Town land about one mile from the center of town. All Sherborn wells have had to be drilled into bedrock where it is difficult to determine the source and capacity of the well and thus difficult to know how to protect the wells from contamination.

The shallow depth to bedrock in most of the town also restrains, otherwise desirable, wastewater onsite recharge for septic systems. Recent advances in alternative septic field equipment have helped with the practical repair and replacement of systems on individual lots. Large land areas are still desired to protect nearby wells.

**Knowledge** has slowly evolved in the understanding of the performance of wells and septic systems. Downtown Sherborn is an example of how wells and septic systems were permitted, by the state and the town, to be located too close together. The map below shows the 12 Public Water Supplies (PWS) Zone 1's in big red circles, over 40 private wells in blue circles, but few of the septic systems on every property. Only one PWS has a formal Zone 2 determination shown in slanted red. None of the PWS's could be permitted under current state regulations.

**CONCERNS:**

The two 40B sites intersect the PWS Zone 1 at the upper left of the map. The proposed PWS Zone 1 would overlap an existing Zone 1, a railroad, and a public road. The proposed sites are in the watershed for this already highly stressed area. Any failure of the 40B well or sewer systems would have an immediate impact on the neighbors either by loss of water capacity or water quality

The Town is actively trying to reduce the water stress here by considering either providing water from a remote well, and/or by adding a central sewer and treatment system. An overburden test well one mile from the town center appears to have the potential to supply enough water to the center but without much growth capacity. The 40B sites are at the head of the watershed for the Town's test well. A central wastewater system for the center appears to be feasible but would reduce only one of the risks to the centers water quality.

**REQUEST:**

Please exercise great care in the engineering, testing and evaluation of this critical project.

Roger Demler: Water Commission Chair, Town Center Water and Wastewater Options Committee Chair  
Board of Appeals past Chair

