

February 18, 2021

Dear Planning Board and Conservation Commission,

I am writing to you regarding our proposed subdivision off of the Gerrish Extension, specifically to address the anticipated impact on adjacent property values.

The proposed homes are to be constructed using high quality, sustainable building materials. The small to moderate sized, New England style homes, will blend well with the character of surrounding properties. The subdivision is designed to be a “pocket neighborhood,” which features homes clustered around a center green. There will be a significant buffer between the new homes and the existing Ambler/Gerrish subdivision. The entrance road is designed to the same standards as the existing roads and the new stormwater collection and treatment system will significantly reduce the effects of surface water runoff. In addition, the over 55 residents will add an inconsequential amount of traffic to the u-shaped Ambler/Gerrish neighborhood. The new road’s generous landscaping is designed to provide an added buffer from traffic. This project’s homes will connect to the municipal sewer system. There will be an opportunity for Gerrish Lane residents to connect as well, thereby further reducing the negative impact to adjacent and downstream surface waters. In addition, connection will cost significantly less than septic replacements. The “pocket neighborhood” will provide community walking trails throughout 12 acres of new conservation land.

One of Durham’s 2015 Master Plan recommendations is to, “Encourage infill development within established neighborhoods that are compatible with current land uses...” Development of the Gerrish Extension clearly fulfills this recommendation and fits in with the character of many local subdivisions. Several of Durham’s high demand subdivisions, such as Canney Farms, Stagecoach Farms, Johnson Creek and the Faculty Road area, have a series of interconnected roads that enhance their desirability. Many residents enjoy walking, running and bike riding on these slow-speed, neighborhood roads.

Home sale prices in Strafford County saw a price increase of 11.7% from 2019-2020 and in December of 2020, statewide there were only 1,383 houses on the market, which was the lowest inventory ever recorded in NH to the point. According to Jim Lee, President of NH Realtors, “...that trend doesn’t seem to be going away so far in 2021.” Furthermore, a median home in Durham sells for around \$348,500, the fourth priciest in the state according to homesnacks.net. Meanwhile, there is a notable absence of middle market housing for retirees who want to stay in, or relocate to, the community.

As demonstrated above, the proposed Gerrish Extension subdivision will provide many benefits to the residents of Gerrish and Ambler and there is no evidence that the project will have a *significant* negative impact on the property values of neighbors. The demand for Durham properties is high, prices continue to escalate and inventory is at historical lows. There are no market indications that this trend will change in the foreseeable future.

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