

February 22, 2021

Dear Conservation Committee & Planning Board,

Thank you all for taking the time to listen to our concerns each meeting. I speak for my husband Jim & I, & our 2 children, but know we have the support of many neighbors in the Gerrish Ambler subdivision. By now, you have all heard our concerns about the issues that arise from the “crossing” of the wetlands at the end of Gerrish Dr. Again, this is not a simple crossing to be built...this will decimate the wetlands. Recently we have taken a step back & wondered how this has all happened so fast...are we actually at these potential final stages? We remember back a few years ago when this all started with a simple lot line adjustment. Even though many neighbors, including us, asked for a site walk & brought up the concern that the adjustment would give way to potentially more issues of building, the town approved it. Then came the Right of Way. Again, even though many neighbors opposed this, as they have lived here many more years than the Mulherns & have first-hand knowledge of the purpose these wetlands serve for them, as well as, requested a site walk be done; this again was turned down. There was & continues to be talk that this was originally intended to be a “future road”, however everyone seems to keep forgetting that these official documents were lost in town hall so do we really know what was intended?

There seems to be, at least to us, many smoke & mirrors being presented to the Planning Board & Conservation Committee around what this development is going to look like. How the houses may be solar, that they will be green in so many ways, more housing for the over 55 year old community, that all the concerns have been adjusted to make the best pocket neighborhood they could make. However, at the end of the day, it really does not matter what it will look like if it should not even be there at all. We keep hearing how there are 3 ways in...the 108 access will not work, however there are then 2 other ways in. The Gerrish access is the way the Mulherns want to go because of cost, & and the fact their immediate neighbors are not in approval. The Baghdad access is the other option. This access should be looked at much more. The fact that their neighbors are not happy with this option, should not be taken into consideration as forfeiting this way in, since the town attorney has already declared the Mulherns have the legal access. The site walk there has not been conducted by all parties making decisions on this approval & we really feel that it is a reasonable expectation that at the very least, this be done. The fact that this access may not be the best option due to wetlands is possible, but again, we then ask why does it even have to be built...just because they want the neighborhood back there? If by crossing wetlands at either access there will be an issue, then maybe the plan itself is the issue. To know that there are 2 possible ways in & to only look at one, does not seem to be fair.

We fully understand that the Muherns own this property & want to build on it. We understand that in order to make this happen, they choose to obliterate the wetlands at the end of Gerrish, causing potential harm to those abutting properties and change this neighborhood forever. We understand that they are willing to say pretty much anything at this point to make people feel this is the only option for this pocket neighborhood to be built. However, in saying all of that, is it really fair to only take a single lens view of this project & then make a decision?

Again, thank you all so much for your time & consideration with all that you hear...your jobs are not easy, & we fully appreciate you keeping such open mindedness when it comes to making such big & important decisions for our town and land in Durham, since at the end of the day, they do not own this Right of Way, we all do.

Jim, Christine, Lauren & Brendan Conlon

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Durham