

## Karen Edwards

---

**From:** Carroll, John <John.Carroll@unh.edu>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 13, 2021 6:34 PM  
**To:** Karen Edwards  
**Subject:** Gerrish: public vs. private road

Please send to the Planning Board. Thank you.

To the Planning Board,

At Wednesday night's meeting of the Planning Board (3/10/2021), two Board members, Acting Chair Parnell, and Board Member Kelley, rightly placed a spotlight on the private vs. public road issue concerning Gerrish access to the development.

In truth, both alternatives present significant disadvantages. While a private road is narrower and thus a bit less impactful to the wetlands and a little less impactful to the immediate abutters, and costs the developer less, the complicated and expensive nature of the construction and drainage places a big financial burden on the 15 homeowners of the development if there is serious flood impact to the structure. This is a burden so high that it could cause a significant decline in the property values of the 15 homeowners, in addition to further challenges to the property values of the immediate abutters. Who pays? is not the only question. The bigger question is, who can afford to pay? If the 15 resident families or individuals cannot agree and/or if they find the costly nature of repairs and maintenance financially too much, then their property values drop with impaired access, likely significantly. Slum type housing could be the result.

On the other hand, our town officials, the Director of Public Works, and our Town Engineer, our Town Administrator, among others (and I think likely the Town Council as well) do not want the town to take financial responsibility because they recognize the great maintenance cost involved in this plan and its impact on the town budget in future – all for serving only fifteen households. And the developer likely at this point doesn't want to alter their plans and absorb the great cost of building a wider public road, both the engineering cost and the construction cost. This is a true financial dilemma for both the applicant and the town.

A further complicating factor which came out of the engineering report presented this week, and which is not by any means rudimentary, is the use of the "100-year flood" statistic. It is today widely viewed that the so-called "100-year flood" must now be altered to the "20-year flood", or even more frequent flood, something which is now statistically occurring throughout the nation, considering our changing climate and the greater precipitation frequencies and storm events resulting therefrom. Obviously, our flood frequency statistics need to be re-calibrated in the face of the changing reality.

All the above is likely avoided through the much simpler and less complex Bagdad Entrance, an alternative which both the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission have neglected to study. The best path may well be abutter (and scientist) Mike White's suggestion to lay out on paper a potential access route via the Bagdad Access, backed by appropriate engineering data, and accompanied by an ecological study of the wetland buffer and wetland which would be impacted by the choice of that access route.

John E. Carroll