



Town of Stow

Conservation Commission

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TO: Jesse Steadman, Town Planner and Stow Planning Board
FROM: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Director KS
RE: The Cottages at Wandering Pond - Athens Lane – Preliminary Comments
DATE: July 20, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plans for The Cottages at Wandering Pond off Athens Lane. At this time, we have conducted only a very preliminary review of the plans and look forward to further review of this project in concert with the Planning Board over the coming months. The Conservation Commission voted at its July 19, 2022 meeting to send the following initial comments at this time:

1. We understand that the project is intended to be phased, with clearing and grading occurring as each “pod” is developed. We support such phasing, particularly given the amount of grading on the site.
2. Plans depict a single access with two wetland crossings – one at Athens Lane (Crossing 1) and one at the existing “Quirk” Access Road (Crossing 2)
 - a. Both crossings will be widened/reconstructed
 - b. The proposed crossings have been designed to mimic existing low flow and high flow and flood conditions with weirs to allow for flood events
 - c. Floodplain elevations have not been shown on the plan; it is not clear what, if any, work is in the floodplain and how much compensatory storage is needed.
 - d. We would encourage the applicant to evaluate improved compliance with stream crossing standards at the crossings, especially at Crossing 2 where four 42” RCP culverts are proposed. The Commission is interested in hearing more from the applicant about the design intent of this crossing and whether alternatives could be considered that would enhance wildlife passage through this area.
 - e. Total alteration listed for wetlands is about 3000 square feet. Two small replication areas are proposed, one for each crossing. As a possible alternative to replication we encourage the applicant to consider restoration of the severely degraded culvert at the crossing of Goshen Lane on the western side of the property. This crossing was identified as a priority for improvement of wildlife passage in the UMASS Critical Linkages Project.
3. The design of the two roads closest to the small pond on the south side of the site could be improved to move the units further away from the pond and better protect this area. In this

same area, we would recommend that any sidewalk be “inboard” of the development rather than in the backyards of the houses. This pond is essentially surrounded by development in close proximity, and we would encourage a larger buffer in this area.

4. A significant block of open space is being provided on the west side of the property which the Town and Stow Conservation Trust have encouraged. This open space is adjacent to Stow Conservation Trust’s Hale/Corzine Property. The applicant plans a network of trails which could link Arbor Glen through the property to Hale/Corzine, extending the Emerald Necklace into this part of Stow. It will be helpful to further refine this trail network at the project progresses, and to evaluate options for the ownership/management of the open space.
5. There are extensive dispersed stormwater structures; several of these are in the Riverfront Area. Riverfront calculations will need to be submitted with the Notice of Intent.
6. Invasive Japanese Knotweed will need to be addressed in several locations. Management of knotweed contaminated soil will need careful consideration.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

cc: Bruce Wheeler
George Dimakarakos
Sue Carter, PLACES