

Claudia G Peters  
147 Boon Road  
Stow, MA 01775

January 6, 2023

***Stow Zoning Board of Appeals***

Town Building  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775

Chairman Mark Jones and Members of the Board,

Living at 147 Boon Road for the past 35 years, I have sincerely valued residing next to Stow Acres Country Club ( SACC ) which, for almost 10 decades, has helped define much of the beneficial, historic, rural, and recreational character of the Town of Stow. I have made concerted effort to be a good neighbor during SACC's ownerships under the Page Brothers, Lankau & Kane, and Peter I Brown/Black Swan Management, LLC ( Stow Holdings, LLC). However, given a recent series of cascading events, I appeal to you with questions and concerns in light of Black Swan Management's Jan 9,2023 request for Special Permit to construct a 5,000 sq ft maintenance building within Stow Acres' top parking lot along Randall Road. I ask the Board's consideration of these concerns to vote against approving the request for Special Permit. My concerns will be anchored by **Five ( 5 ) Questions to The Board**, identified below.

**LOCATION:**

My lot is a corner lot, spanning frontage on Randall Rd as well as Boon Rd, with vistas from the front of my home that allow me to see, for most of 8 months of the year, the historic red barn, the golf school building, the clubhouse, 18<sup>th</sup> green, 10<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> fairways and 32 Randall Rd. neighbor's easement on Stow Acres' top parking lot. Below I have utilized a map entitled "Stow Conservation South Course Conservation Restriction Exhibit D Public Access Trail Map" and highlighted in yellow my residential lot in relation to the proposed location for a new maintenance building ( Note: You will also see therein four (4) additional highlighted areas within the 'Golf Course Core Building Envelope' which I will reference later in this letter ). I have both embedded a link to that highlighted map below, as well as attached a copy to this letter , in case that link is not supported by your web browser.

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:467b108a-f113-4137-b8a5-550db1467e4a>

My property on Exhibit D map is the highlighted as the first lot on Boon , with smaller frontage on Randall.

Please find below a recent photo taken from my home to across Randall Rd ( running north/south along Stow Acres top parking lot to the west side of Randall Rd ) , illustrating my three-season view of three-quarters of the identified location for the proposed new maintenance building. About another 20'-30' will continue north beyond the right frame of this picture.



Vista from front yard 147 Boon of Stow Acres top parking lot along Randall Rd

The next photo ( below ) shot again across Randall from my home illustrates the north portion of my neighbor’s property on 32 Randall, his well cap, painted blue & close to the stone wall. ( If you are viewing this online, you will need to expanded this photo to your maximum magnification ) along with the debris, tarps and materials Stow Acres has allowed to remain for years, lying on the easement from 32 Randall to Stow Acres’ top parking lot. ( This picture is adjacent south of the prior photo.)



Vista ( 147 Boon) slightly south along Randall Rd depicting edge of 32 Randal property & well cap

**My question to the Board- #1** : Is the location of the proposed 5,000 sq. ft. steel maintenance building allowed by regulations considering :

**Town of Stow Zoning By-Laws- thru 5/22 -**

**8.4 Golf Course Uses in the Residential District subject to a Special Permit by the Planning Board**

8.4.1.1 - no fairway, new BUILDING including improvements to existing BUILDINGS for golf related activities, and new parking area is within fifty (50) feet of any property line;

My question is further complicated because in a different portion of zoning by-laws I see, under

“ **Recreation-Conservation District 3.1**”- 3.1.1 Uses allowed, provided that no BUILDINGS are located within one hundred (100) feet of a district boundary line:

I am unclear which, if any regulation is applicable to this application, and seek an answer from the Board in conjunction with Question 1 as also reads:

Is the location of this new building, evidenced in 1/3/23 Site Plan by Stamski and McNary , and considering the incorporation of the width of Randall Rd from that building to my Randall Rd property line, and as being within 50’ of my property boundary, along with the properties lines of 32 Randall as well as 41 Randall Rd ( both my immediate abutters ) an allowable location for such a structure?

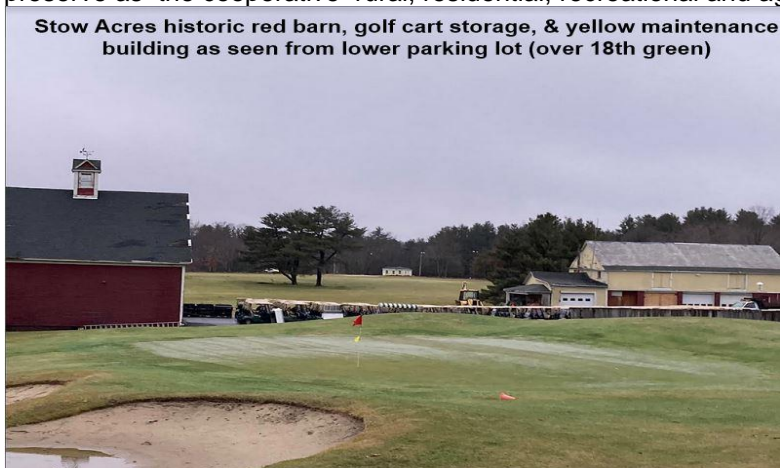
**My question to the Board- #2 - Has the Board advised or reviewed with the applicant consideration of other potential locations for the maintenance building within ‘Golf Course Core Building Envelope’?**

This question has a cascading effect to two other aspects of what I believed I understood when I voted in May 2021 and October, 2021 to approve the acquisitions by The Stow Conservation Trust and The Town of Stow of both The 151 Acres of South Course and subsequently a 115 acre-portion of The North Course for “conservation and recreational purposes” ( per Town of Stow website and numerous previous Board & Committee presentations ).

Below please find a picture of what many residents consider to be an historic red barn, characteristic of the rural turn-of-the 20<sup>th</sup>-century evolution of this Town during the early 1900’s when “Stow Acres” was being formed. Many residents, several historians, and some seasonal golfers know and value this barn’s existence and its relationship to current Stow Acres Clubhouse during 1926 when Robert Hawkins, a Black entrepreneur, purchased the 196-acre Randall Estate and created The Mapledale Country Club.

*“Known today as Stow Acres Country Club, the legacy of the Stow, Massachusetts golf course goes back to the early 1900s. **Opened in 1926 as a nine-hole course, Mapledale Country Club, as it was then called, was among the earliest Black country clubs in the country.**”*  
Website: [Freedomsway.org](http://Freedomsway.org)

Subsequent to Mr. Hawkins’ ownership, a Mr Cox acquired Mapledale CC, and operated both the golf course and the remaining acreage simultaneously in the 1930’s as a fully-functioning farm. To me this ‘history’ is highly indicative of what our what our Town stewards, today and in the past, have worked vigilantly to regulate, conserve, and hope to preserve as the cooperative rural, residential, recreational and agricultural nature and characteristics of this lovely Town.



**Stow Acres historic red barn, golf cart storage, & yellow maintenance building as seen from lower parking lot (over 18th green)**

When referring back to attached /linked **Exhibit D map**, I have highlighted with a yellow highlighted dot this potential area ( photographed above ) between the two existing maintenance buildings and within Core Clubhouse Envelope.

**Please consider Town of Stow Zoning By-Laws- thru 5/22** - under “ Residential District Uses” the following:

**3.2.3 Uses permitted by special permit, granted by the Planning Board:**

3.2.3.4 **Golf Course Uses in the Residential District as permitted in Section 8.4;** ( Note : previously discussed above )

3.2.3.5 **Uses not otherwise permitted in the Residential District, if such uses preserve historic and/or culturally significant BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES, provided that the historic and/or cultural character of the site, and BUILDING or STRUCTURE, in the opinion of the Special Permit Granting Authority, is not significantly altered, and the Special Permit Granting Authority finds that such uses, with any necessary mitigation measures, are in harmony with the character and uses permitted in the Residential District. This Section shall not eliminate the requirements of Section 3.2.2.5, which shall remain intact as written.**

**My question repeated, but with elaboration, to the Board- #2** - Has the Board advised or reviewed with the applicant consideration of other potential locations for the maintenance building within 'Golf Course Core Building Envelope'?

**Elaborated :** Would The Board consider discussion with the applicant to preserve and improve the 'historic red barn ' and improve the current "yellow maintenance shed" to incorporate and allow construction between the two, then-preserved and improved, culturally-significant sites, an additional facility in the amount of total square footage for "storage" that would be architecturally in keeping with the nature and history of this cultural-historic district? **NOTE:** The special permit applicant would therefore also be required to subsequently request from the Board as well as the Conservation Commission additional approval to construct that new building within 100' of existing wetlands. ( the stream that runs below the yellow maintenance building.)

**Further Elaboration, considering 3.2.3.4 above,** Can a cost-efficient, new structure between the pre-existing, but then improved maintenance buildings, be designed with less "industrial " appearance than the proposed steel structure?

Consider also below what a steel building can and does look like within a neighboring Massachusetts private golf club in Weston, with a similar clubhouse built originally from a Victorian estate.



In speaking this month with Pinebrook's general manager, he explained although Pinebrook constructed this recreational building via Special Permit from Weston, he detailed that neighboring residences were not within 1000' of this structure and no sightlines of either of two neighbors who abut downhill of the eastern side of this property were effected. He also stated no other abutters can see this steel structure, since their properties are over 1000' feet from all course boundaries and on the other side of the clubhouse. This structure is depicted also to exemplify how a steel building is clearly not harmonious with architectural similarity of either that clubhouse or the neighborhood. Finally, although this steel building is potentially 15' wider and 50 ' longer, and with a different roof line, it's one of the very few illustrations of similar golf course structures including an historical clubhouse as could be found in Middlesex County.

**UNKNOWN INFORMATION AT May 2021 and October 2021 TOWN MEETING VOTES:**

It is my understanding , along with the understanding of several abutters and neighbors who received or were told of the Abutters' Letters for this Hearing, that the **Conservation Restriction( for the South Course)** ,( as approved by Town and State authorizing agencies, and recorded in Middlesex ( South ) Registry of Deeds on **December 27, 2021 , )** was in **development after the Town purchased first the South 151 acres , then the North Course's 115-acre properties .** Having researched Board minutes , Town meeting forums, and Town website information, I also now understand the full compilation of the wording and agreements within **Conservation Restriction** were not complete nor made public to Stow citizenry until its posting on the Town website in December 2021.

**My question to the ZBA Board- #3:** Am I correct with the facts I have detailed in the paragraph above? If incorrect, could the Board inform me at what other date was the contents of the Conservation Restriction for the South Course made public?

I ask this respectfully for the purpose of identifying to the Board why I, and several additional abutters and neighbors, voted in May 2021 and October 2021 to approve the sales and these actions between the Town's agents ( Stow Conservation Trust and Stow Conservation Commission ) and Stow Holdings LLC, operating Stow Acres, ***without full knowledge*** that certain parcels of land within what subsequently was identified to the public as "Stow Acres Clubhouse Core Envelope" and simultaneously " South Course 151 Acres Conservation Restriction" would be given special designation with exclusions via the Conservation Restriction, such as "Leased Parcel " within " the entirety of the 151 Acres of South Course " .

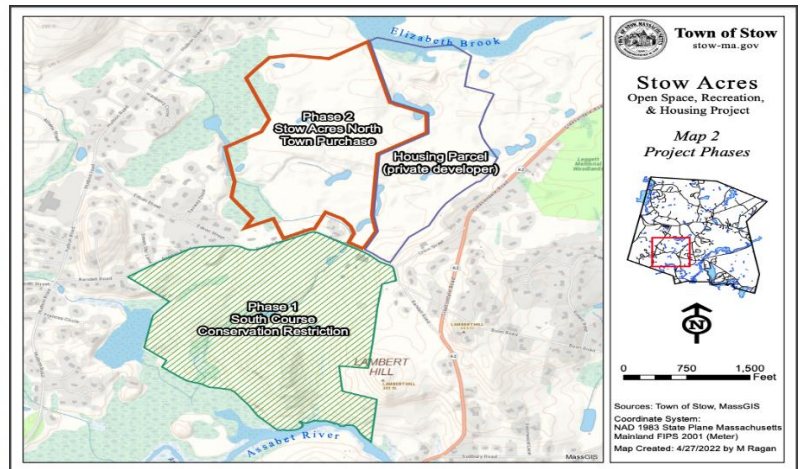
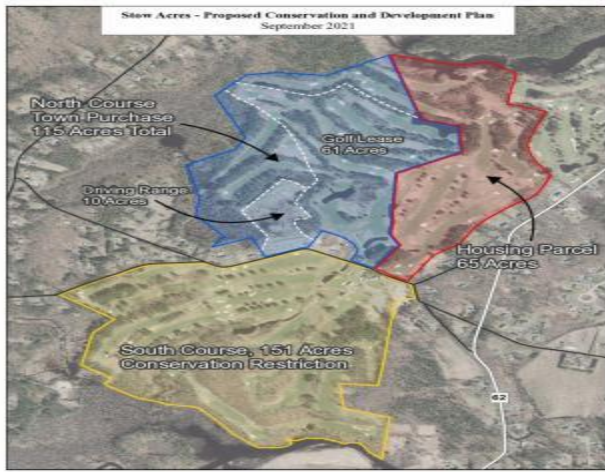
In addition, I understand the " Clubhouse Core Envelope" now contains the North Course " Driving Range Relocation Area" , as evidenced in the link below. ( Also highlighted on " Exhibit D Trail Map " . ) So when considering where else the 5,000 sq ft steel maintenance building could be relocated, the cascading effects of these prior "plans" and potential " commitments " point to serious misunderstandings even within the most studied and vigilant Stow citizenry , and potentially limited considerations by this Board.

**My question to the ZBA Board- #4 :** Does the Zoning Board of Appeals consider with weight the " Purposes" , " Conservation Values as Protected by The Conservation Restriction" , "the Permitted and Prohibited Acts and Uses" as are articulated within the Town's Conservation Restriction on these properties in full consideration of all Zoning Regulations , or is it just the authority and responsibility of the Conservation Commission and the Stow Conservation Trust?

Question #4 s reveals my confusion , especially in light of the following quote from Conservation Commission's Director's 12/26/22 letter contents to this Board :

**Stow Acres Maintenance Building - Black Swan Management LLC**

While the Conservation Commission has no regulatory jurisdiction over the proposed maintenance garage under the Wetlands Protection Act and Town of Stow Wetlands Protection Bylaw if constructed in the proposed location, we do co-hold a permanent Conservation Restriction with Stow Conservation Trust over the Stow Acres South Course that was purchased by the Town in 2021. At the time the Conservation Restriction (CR) was negotiated, it was known that Stow Acres intended to replace the existing maintenance barn and provision for this in terms of general location and size was made in the language of the Conservation Restriction and accompanying development envelopes. Please see the plan on the next page which governs the location of the maintenance building – it can only be located within the Golf Course Core Building Envelope shown on the plan (outlined in yellow). The Conservation Department and Stow Conservation Trust are meeting with Stow Acres next week to review the proposed maintenance building and its consistency with the specific terms of the Conservation Restriction. The decision-making on consistency with the CR lies with the Conservation Commission and SCT and is independent of the ZBA's review.



Also see in link below

[file:///C:/Users/Claudia/Downloads/exhibit b - final survey stow acres .cr .pdf](file:///C:/Users/Claudia/Downloads/exhibit_b_-_final_survey_stow_acres_.cr_.pdf)

Though this “ Final Survey’ ( above ) was posted within the Conservation Restriction posted 12/14/21, identifying relocation plan for the North Course Driving Range., it does not identify the “ Leased Parcel” between top and lower parking lots on which a cell tower plan is also being considered , which is within 1000’ feet of many more than 4 abutters, and 250’ of three abutters. I recognize this is NOT the business of tonight’s hearing for ZBA approval.

**My question to the ZBA Board- #5 :** Can the ZBA advise or restrict Stow Holdings, LLC and Stow Acres from tearing down the “ historic red barn” or “ yellow maintenance building” to accommodate an apparent previously “ fixed” delineation of the “ Driving Range Relocation Area”? The applicant appears to have had such plans envisioned potentially in Dec. 2021 during the framing of the Conservation Restriction with the Conservation Commission and / or the Stow Conservation Trust.

**POTENTIAL OTHER SITE FOR 5,000 SQ FT MAINTENANCE BUILDING :**

Finally, I request the Board analyze a potential other location for a steel maintenance shed, out of sight of abutters and neighbors , but within an existing wooded lot in the Core Clubhouse Envelope , and without shrinking the maintenance building’s footprint, may fall within 100’ of wetlands, but not 35’ as other setbacks do require. Please consider the location highlighted along “ Exhibit D Walking Trail Map “, between the South Course 15<sup>th</sup> Green and the lower parking lot after the stream identified on the following exhibit prepared by A & D Klumb Environmental , LLC for Stow Acres and Verizon Wireless in their presentation Dec 2022 to the Planning Board for Wetlands Protection study

[file:///C:/Users/Claudia/Downloads/402628 stow 2 ma 16658600 wetland report rec09212021 rev0 102621.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Claudia/Downloads/402628_stow_2_ma_16658600_wetland_report_rec09212021_rev0_102621.pdf)

Please examine the map prepared on the last page of her report. Please also reference the following pictures taken in December 2022 of the walking path leaving the unpaved area of the lower parking lot, advancing beyond the dumpsters to the dirt path through the wooded grove of pines. These pictures below illustrate the dirt path along the proposed walking trail for the South Course which could provide enough room if cleared to house the requested maintenance building , given appropriate Board and Conservation Commission approvals and some diligent ground preparation for the site by Stow Holdings, LLC.



**Dirt road from Stow Acres lower lot to 15th green in clearing of south trees**



**View of Dirt Path to Lower Lot from 15th Green (Over 60' of pathway and over 35' from wetlands)**

This location is the yellow highlight dot furthest south on Exhibit D.

Thank you to each member of the Board who considered the extensive details and requests made to the Board within this letter. I apologize in advance for its length. I cannot apologize for my first concern raised in writing to any Town board or committee in my thirty-five years of living in Stow, and trying very hard to be a good neighbor. I tried for three seasons per year for over five years to speak directly with the manager of Stow Acres Country Club to clean debris, trash and heavy equipment off the top parking lot. I was patient when after five years and 15 seasons little true clean-up was evident. Though a bit of clean-up to the top lot did occur after Stow Building Inspector prompted improved and diligent clean-up efforts by Stow Acres commence in the top lot before the Town vote was undertaken in Spring of 2021, I have remained vigilant towards those 'more simple' ends. However, given the gravity and cascading negative effect approval of the 5,00 sq ft maintenance building will have upon the whole look and culture and subsequent development of Stow Acres South Course, I hope my deliberate actions in requesting you vote against approving this Special Permit request is to consider, I have remained a good neighbor in Stow.

Respectfully,

Claudia Peters  
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Stow, MA 01775  
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Exhibit D Walking Trail Map – showing 5 yellow highlighted areas referenced with this letter  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:467b108a-f113-4137-b8a5-550db1467e4a>