

April 8, 2022

Mr. Michael G. Livingston, Town Engineer/Planner  
Ms. Shannon L. M. Belanger, Assistant Planner  
Town of Wells  
208 Sanford Road  
Wells, ME 04090

Dear Michael and Shannon:

We are writing in regards to the Notice to Abutters of a Subdivision Pre-Application and the Notice to abutters of a Subdivision Amendment Application regarding Burnt Mill Estates. We live at the southern end of Hobbs Farm Road and purchased our home in 2019. At the time, we were aware of the Burnt Mill Estates Subdivision and the plan to build 174 dwelling units. While that large number gave us pause, we decided to go ahead based on the agreement already made between the Town of Wells and Burnt Mill Estates. The key parts of this agreement were:

**New construction on the southwest side of Hobbs Farm Road**

- Around 10 new Multi-Family homes on Meadowview Drive (now renamed Cider Press Lane) (Lot 54). There had also been signage that this was to be a 55+ Community.
  - Instead, to date, 4 Single Family homes have been built, with 6 more planned.
- Ten Duplex homes on Hobbs Farm Road near Meetinghouse Road.
  - Instead 10 Single Family Homes were constructed (Lots 1 – 10).
- Eight Single Family homes on Parkland Drive, attached to Parsonage Way (Lots 26 – 33).
  - Instead, per an October 2021 approved Amendment, 7 of the Single Family homes were relocated, leaving a large Single Family lot at the end of the cul-de-sac, perhaps to accommodate a buyer.

**New construction on the northeast side of Hobbs Farm Road:**

- Approximately 135 homes (both Duplex and Single Family) were to be built on existing Storer Lane, the original Old Mill Trail, Greenview Drive, Trail Headland, and other new roads (Condo Book 379, Page 28) – with the vast majority built into the "golf course area", not directly on Hobbs Farm Road.

**New construction south of Hobbs Pond and the Merriland River on/off of Hobbs Farm Road (Burnt Mill Holding Company, a.k.a The Settlement):**

- There were 3 existing homes in this area, although 2 may be counted as new (Lots 95 and 99).
- The other 8 homes, of which ours is one, are on Lots 62, 96 – 98, 100 –103.

These were the facts when we purchased our home. The Pre-Application we received on Saturday April 2, 2022, however, dramatically changes this understanding and current agreement with the Town of Wells.

Below are some reasons why we believe the Pre-Application should be rejected by the Planning Board in favor of the existing plan:

1. Many abutters of this subdivision made substantial investments based on agreements already in place between the town and Burnt Mill Estates. At the time of our home purchase in 2019, we knew it was unlikely that the golf course was going to be built. There was no indication, however, that Chinburg Development was considering flipping the construction and putting approximately 135 homes on the southwest side and closer to the southern end of Hobbs Farm Road.
2. By flipping the construction, Chinburg Development hopes to put 104 dwelling units south of Hobbs Farm Road and closer to Hobbs Pond and the Merriland River. These 104 dwelling units are proposed as a Multifamily Development. Based on the site plan, there are 104 separate units. This change eliminates what was going to be open and viewable space with the cancellation of the golf course.
3. We are concerned about the environmental impact the approval of this pre-application would have on the waters of both Hobbs Pond and the Merriland River, chiefly in the form of runoff from lawn treatment (pesticides, herbicides) and perhaps leach fields. Although we are sure that Chinburg Development would adhere to all town and state environmental regulations, the proximity of these 104 units can't help but have a greater adverse effect on the water compared to the existing plan.
4. Hobbs Pond is a popular fishing spot and the impact on fishing enthusiasts from both the potential water pollution and the proximity of over 100 homes will diminish the outdoor nature of the spot.
5. The bridge on Hobbs Farm Road, already showing a crack at one of its seams, continues to be stressed from dump trucks filled to capacity that go back and forth over it most every construction day. Add to that 2 cars average per home in a 174 dwelling unit subdivision, and you have a significant amount of traffic on a bridge and road not built to sustain it. With the original plan, it was our understanding that not all of the traffic would egress onto Hobbs Farm Road and that minor amelioration would be created by connecting some of the new roads to James Street and Parsonage Way. Please see the attached bridge photos.
6. It was discouraging to recently see a sign for Old Mill Trail go up (see attached photo) on the southwest side of Hobbs Farm Road (not the northeast side, per existing agreement) as if this proposal is in fact a done deal.

Thank you for taking our input seriously. To be clear, we do not object to the subdivision, but we do think that the word "amendment" is a misnomer given the scope of the proposed changes. Approval would fundamentally alter the terms by which we and our neighbors made our home-buying decisions in 2018 – 2020.

While we have raised some legitimate reasons for disallowing this amendment, what it basically comes down to is fairness: Developers should not enjoy the retroactive right to keep changing the rules of their own game plans. We homeowners enjoy no such right, nor do we expect to. We respectfully hope the Planning Board will take all of this into consideration in asking the subdivision developers to stop all of these changes and stick with the last plan agreed to.

Thank you for your review and consideration.

Best,

Attachment

Attachment  
(Pictures Taken April 4, 2020)

