

Deb D'Eramo
127 Harvard Rd. Lancaster, MA 01523



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September 27, 2018

SEP 27 2018

Lancaster Board of Appeals
Lancaster, MA 01523

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PLANNING

Dear Lancaster Board of Appeals,

This letter is in response to the proposed Goodridge Brook Estates housing proposal. I fully support affordable housing for Lancaster but strongly object to the proposal. The development does not fit with the town's housing characteristics; as proposed, this project's density would result in safety issues for both current and future residents.

The plans originally submitted for the development and reviewed by state agencies have changed **substantially** - the state-reviewed plans showed 40 duplex condominiums and today the plans show 64 single-family homes. The plan should be re-evaluated by the state and if approved, the 180-day review process with the town should begin again.

Housing - Apartments

Scale - the enormous size of the apartment buildings is not consistent with town housing. It is an urban design in a very rural setting. The surrounding houses in the neighborhood are generally single-family, one floor ranch homes. This proposal is for three huge buildings each with six occupied floors and 40 or more units.

Quality of life - The apartment buildings are squeezed onto land that is surrounded by wetlands. There is no place to play or walk around the buildings apart from the parking lots. In Lancaster we value open land and trail walks. There should be space for outdoor play and recreation. With the expected number of children there should be adequate playground spaces and equipment.

Play area for children - In the recent project the developer built in West Boylston, there are two small fenced areas with a total of 2 swings in each, with no other playground



equipment. One of the fenced play areas borders the dumpster. This is not the situation we want for the Lancaster development. The park and recreation department should weigh in on an appropriate site, size and contents for the playgrounds. An earlier comment by a resident cited requiring purchase of parcel 34 for resident open space, this would be a great solution.

Buffer from industrial zone – As mentioned at the last ZBA meeting, the site shares a border with Bestway New England in an industrial area. This company has existed onsite for decades and has been a good neighbor and business in Lancaster. The company representative attending the last ZBA meeting, cited the need to locate the apartment building further from the border than currently planned, and to provide screening as well as a protective fence to keep children out of their work area. They utilize heavy equipment and have areas for pressure-treating wood and a kiln for processing wood. One of the Goodridge Brook apartment buildings is squeezed right up against the industrial property. There really should be a woodland buffer zone to create some distance between the apartment and the industrial activity – so that residents are somewhat protected from the noise, dust, vehicle exhaust, etc. from the industrial site.

School bus stops -- School bus shelters should be provided for each rental building. There should be a safe and weatherproof shelter for students to use that is close to their buildings and away from any traffic. The bus stops cannot be placed near parked cars – which would impede visibility of small children to drivers. Children are most at risk during the morning commute, when they will be gathering while adults drive off to work.

Sidewalks – The entire development should have sidewalks. Some are shown on the plans, but they are directly adjacent to the roadway, with no buffer strip for safety of pedestrians and room for snow swales. The sidewalks need to be set back from the road.

Will a fitness center be available on site?

Will bicycle racks/storage be available on site?

Will outdoor grilling areas be available on site?

If dogs are allowed, there should be a dog play area and dog litter bags should be available.

Mail and packages – a secure area to receive and send mail and packages should be provided for each rental building. Without such accommodation, items may be stolen or misplaced and result in the need for police intervention.

Agriculture is also important to Lancastrians, it's part of our town's heritage. At Bigelow Gardens (our housing for the elderly state-aided project), each residence has individual



gardens outside the door in addition to a community gardening area. These apartments should have space set aside for residents to have their own gardens – either flowers or vegetables in an area suitable for gardening. The Lancaster Garden Club or Parks and Rec should be able to review specifications and provide guidance.

Bike lanes and sidewalks should meet with the Mass. DOT specifications on the roads within the project and Sterling Road.

Parking

- Individual parking spaces proposed as 9' by 18' are too small for many of today's vehicles. A minivan or SUV is about 17' long and a pickup truck is about 20' long. The proposed mini-parking spaces should NOT be allowed. In the ZBA meeting, the developer said the shorter parking space size is sufficient, because vehicles can pull forward over the low Cape Cod berm (a type of low/sloped curbing). But this won't be possible when there is snow present, and in many cases, the apartment building access sidewalks are directly adjacent to the parking spaces, meaning the cars will be overlapping the sidewalks and impeding pedestrian access.
- Number of parking spaces is too few. Lancaster does not have public transportation (apart from MART). Any residents will need private vehicles for their transportation. A minimum of 2 parking spaces per rental unit should be included. These days it's often the case that grown children move back home to get a start on life. There could easily be 3 cars for some of the homes.
- There should be guest parking spaces, visitor spaces, rental office staff spaces, and as regulated, the appropriate handicap parking spaces for the total number of spaces.
- Looking ahead there should also be provisions for electric vehicle charging stations and parking spaces for rideshare vehicles.

Traffic flow

- MART van access should be provided for each rental building. Each space should be close to the building and handicap accessible.
- Space close to each building entrance should be available at each rental building for tenants to move in/out of the building
- Road width – the proposed 24' width for driveways within the apartment development is a **major safety issue**. In many areas the 'short' parking spaces back up to either side of the narrow driveways. This will result in road widths of less than the proposed 24 feet particularly in winter. The Cape Cod berms as requested in the waivers will NOT help the situation.
- Is there a plan to handle snow in a way to protect the wetlands?



- Emergency access – first responders will likely have a difficult time navigating the narrow dead end driveways with their emergency vehicles. Without sufficient room to turn around the vehicles, they'll be backing out the long drives and losing critical time to serve residents and possibly endangering the lives of the first responders themselves. There are good reasons that DEAD END roads are not allowed in Lancaster developments.
- Trash truck access should be provided to trash dumpsters. The dumpsters were not included in the plans.
- The town should never accept the roads in the development as currently designed to be public roads. The roads do not meet the town specifications.
- The three rail crossings close to the development should be upgraded to account for the increased traffic and ensure public safety.

Houses

The setback of the proposed houses on Sterling Road is insufficient for public safety. It is a busy street. The town should impose the minimum setback for these houses to ensure safety of residents and traffic. All driveways that touch Sterling Road should have turnarounds so that residents leaving their driveway can enter traffic head in, rather than backing out onto this busy road.

Developer

The experience with West Boylston and other towns with the developer should be considered in order to avoid similar issues in Lancaster.

Thank you for your time to review my concerns. Please consider these as you review the proposal. It is in the best interest of current and future residents that these are addressed.

Sincerely,

Deb D'Eramo



Debra Dennis

From: on behalf of Contact form at Lancaster MA
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 8:14 PM
To: Debra Dennis
Subject: [Lancaster MA] Goodridge Brook Estates (Sent by Christine and Roy Mirabito,

Hello ddennis,

Christine and Roy Mirabito has sent you a message via your contact form
(<https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/user/1503/contact>) at Lancaster MA.

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If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at
<https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/user/1503/edit>.

SEP 27 2018

Message:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PLANNING

From: Roy Mirabito
Subject: Proposed Goodridge Estates Development
Date: August 31, 2018 at 2:11:04 PM EDT
To: comments-gbe@lancasterma.net

Greetings Members of the Board of Selectmen,

Mr. and Mrs. Mirabito would like to share our concerns regarding the Proposed Goodridge Development. First, we are supportive of a 40B development constructed in harmony with Lancaster's existing community's landscape and history. Lancaster has maintained a rural community presence through intelligent choices regarding zoning of business and protection of its richest resource, Lancaster's fields and forests. Lancaster deserves credit for maintaining the integrity of its' land which promotes harmony in the daily lives of Lancaster's residents. Adding the necessary number of low income buildings and residents to be in compliance with Massachusetts Law, is a worth while, positive, humanistic goal. Care must be taken to protect the existing Lancaster community in meeting the state's mandate.

Lancaster already has an attractive model to follow regarding scale and design for low income housing, The Bigelow Housing Development. Bigelow is a good model in scale and structure, Bigelow's modest dimensions meld into the landscape. Contrastingly, The Goodridge Brook Estates Development is not of the same character. Here are the reasons why. Goodridge's 4 storied apartment structures will stand as ugly urban invaders. These buildings alone will interrupt the peaceful flow of rural space. Goodridge's unattractive choice of urban design and materials will loom over pastoral surroundings and family neighborhoods. The buildings will appear interruptive in an unsettling and jarring way. Additionally, the density of the project is overwhelming to a town that prides itself on spacious landscapes linked to elegant structures and family homes of the past. Historically and currently, Lancaster's housing demonstrates an appreciation of large and small homes glorified via the view of well preserved and expansive natural environments. Thus, the historical and family atmosphere of current Lancaster will be compromised by the structures and magnitude of The Goodridge Brook development.

It appears that The Goodridge Brook development is only in the best interest for the pockets of the developer. The Best Way company expressed its concerns on the extremely close proximity of their company to the Goodridge

development. Best Way voiced alarm over safety concerning the operation of its large machinery. The Best Way representative stated that with such a small buffer zone between industry and housing lives could be compromised. Thus, the location and design of the project is not only unattractive but a hazard to the people it will house.

Conservation of land, plant and animal species is at risk through the Goodridge development. The builders of Goodridge will be invading the tranquil environment of Lancaster's neighborhoods with increased traffic, traffic' associated noise and pollution, and increased water and sewer demands. The family atmosphere of current Lancaster may be compromised by the magnitude of the Goodridge development. The Goodridge development is out of sync with the Lancaster community.

In closing, there are many reasons to decline or modify the Goodridge Project. The inclusion of low income housing in Lancaster is welcome on a scale that would promote harmony in the community. Low income housing that will welcome the new residents because the existing community has not been compromised by the services that it would need to extend. Low income housing that melds into the existing environment without compromising it's visual integrity. This can happen with thoughtful development.

Debra Dennis

From: Matthew J. Mayo <
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 4:27 PM
To: Debra Dennis
Subject: FW: [Lancaster MA] GoodridgeBrookEstates (msg sent to Noreen P. also) (Sent by Marcie Giannattasio,

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Comments sent to me below

SEP 27 2018

Matthew J. Mayo, M.S., GISP, CPG, P.G.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PLANNING

-----Original Message-----

From: cmayo@ci.lancaster.ma.us <mailto:cmayo@ci.lancaster.ma.us>
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 3:55 PM
To: Matthew J. Mayo
Subject: [Lancaster MA] GoodridgeBrookEstates (msg sent to Noreen P. also) (Sent by Marcie Giannattasio,

Hello mmayo,

Marcie Giannattasio <https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/user/613/contact> has sent you a message via your contact form at Lancaster MA.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/user/613/edit>.

Message:

September 26, 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

In appreciation of the 30-day comment period now open for the Goodridge Brook Estates development on Sterling Road in Lancaster, I wanted to take a moment to express a few of our concerns about this project.

In no particular order:

Public Safety and Town Services

The proposed property, with the requested waivers for road width and lot size variances, doesn't seem to leave a lot of room for emergency vehicles to enter and exit easily.

Police, Fire and DPW will need to increase their staff to handle the increase in residents and issues arising from this development. A project of this size and magnitude is sure to impact all of these departments and is a public safety concern for all of Lancaster.

Are the current homeowners expected to carry the financial burden for years to come?

Lancaster taxes are already high enough.

Water and Sewerage

We already have a water shortage. We are asked to conserve water, yet are able to support this enormous project? Where is this additional water coming from?

There are people in the area of this proposed estate who are not able to tie into town sewer, yet have been promised for years that they would have the opportunity. Why does this project have access to something our very own residents don't have access to yet?

Do we have the water and sewer capacity to handle this sized project without negatively effecting the existing Lancaster residents now and in the future?

Traffic

Traffic has increased in Lancaster since I have been a resident, it will only increase more with this proposed development. Our roads are already breaking down and congested.

It is difficult to get from Sterling Road to Rt. 62. The impact of the increased number of cars and commuters both into and out of our area needs to be addressed and a plan put in place to deal with the wear on the roads from the extra traffic in addition to the noise pollution.

Environmental Impact

The suggested plan for removing and replacing the wetlands in this area makes NO sense. Can you REALLY move wetlands? Is there a plan that shows how this is done?

I am not allowed to change ANYTHING around my house because of the wetland's regulations, WHY is it even being considered for this project?

A variety of animals live in the woods and the wetlands where this project is proposed. The destruction/drastric altering of the forest and wetland habitat in this area should not be allowed.

Lancaster's history and future

Lancaster is a rural community, the oldest town in Worcester County, has lots of history and a small-town feel. It's part of the reason we moved here.

We need to keep in line with this as we look to increase development in our area.

We are losing our green space at an alarming rate. With all of the proposed changes to Lancaster in the coming years, there will be very few green spaces left. Are we willing to destroy our green spaces for this development? I hope we are not.

Development is necessary but this project doesn't reflect the Town of Lancaster. The proposed number of homes and apartment buildings for this parcel of land are like nothing else in town.

A project of this size, where only 30 of the proposed 200 houses/apartments will be classified as 'affordable', while the rest are for profit, will have a measurable impact on the town services, safety, and on the residents of this town. How can we pass this project through, under the 40B banner, when so much of this project is not 'affordable'? Why are we not insisting on a more reasonable number of units and a look that better represents our town?

The opinions of the town's residents were not considered as part of the original approval decision process, but they should have been since these decisions will have a long reaching effect on all of our lives. I am not opposed to more affordable housing in Lancaster, but the size and scope of the project has to work for the town it is moving into. A project of this size and scope does NOT work for Lancaster. Please consider carefully what a project of this size would do to our community, our resources, and our way of life

Thank you,

Marcie and William Giannattasio
Fire Road 11
Lancaster, MA

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September 26, 2018

Board of Appeals
Prescott Building
701 Main Street, Suite 4
Lower Level
Lancaster, MA 01523
Subject: Sterling Road Development (aka Goodrich Brook Estates)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
, ID PLANNING

Board of Appeals,

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed Goodrich Brook Estates on Sterling Road in Lancaster. As a Lancaster resident and tax payer for 44 years, I am very concerned about the impact on the public water supply in town. We live on Beach Point Road, and have seen a slow decline in water pressure provided to our house over the years.


The increase in cars on already narrow , poorly lit, or non lit roads is very concerning. Many of the roads would need re-design, and installation of stop lights, for the safety of residents. The impact on wetlands, and the ruination of natural habitat for many animals and birds is alarming.

A development of this size and scope is not appropriate for the size of this town. The proposed four story buildings are completely out of character for this town. A two story structure would be much more acceptable . There are no residences in Lancaster that are fourstories, nor are there apartments with four stories in town.

I am not opposed to mixed use development in town. However, this plan is inappropriate in size and scope.

Thank you for working in the best interest in the town of Lancaster.

Sincerely,


J. Wayne Paradis
133 Beach Point Rd.
Lancaster, MA 01523

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Prescott Building
701 Main Street, Suite 4
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Sincerely,


Dianne R. Paradis
133 Beach Point Rd.
Lancaster, MA 01523