

Salt pond blueberry barrens

Elena Bourakovsky <

Tue 8/13/2024 2:00 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Hello,

I would like to add my voice to so many others in a matter of development of Salt Pond blueberry barrens. Our part of the world is so well known for its austere, breathtaking and uninterrupted natural beauty. What kind of sense does it make to develop and thus destroy the very thing that is so appealing to people coming to spend time in Maine? There is plenty of room for building new houses, it can be done tastefully and without destroying the very environment that people seek to escape to. I strongly oppose to this ill conceived idea of developing Salt Pond Blueberry barrens.

Please make my opinion known.

Thank you

Respectfully,

Elena Bourakovsky

Backstage Farm

1361 Pleasant St

Blue Hill

12 August 2024

Barbara Wilks
48 Allen Point Lane
Blue Hill

Dear Blue Hill Planning Board—

As a landscape architect and architect and frequent visitor to Blue Hill since 1980, I am writing to support conservation of the blueberry fields overlooking the Salt Pond. The large rock outcrops and topography in the center of the property create a unique visual landmark with outstanding views over the Salt Pond. With the blueberries at your feet it is also a cultural landmark, sharing its past history as a blueberry field through the man-made landscape of exposed boulders. So as a scenic and cultural landmark it is worthy of preservation, as stated in both the new Blue Hill Comprehensive Plan and the Downeast Coastal Scenic Inventory. The current plan sites houses at the high points of the site, which would disturb its scenic quality as well as in other areas which are difficult to reach and require a lot of regrading. **This site is worthy of a more considered and site sensitive approach.**

Locating housing along the southern edge near the woods would preserve the high central boulder area. The view over the Salt Pond is quite nice from this prospect and soils are deeper. The existing drive drops away from the public road and minimizes disruption of views. Clustering homes in this area, a technique recommended by the new comprehensive plan, and re-using more of the existing road would allow for preservation of the central site features while still allowing for development.

I urge you to use your powers to recommend these best practices for sustainable and site sensitive development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Wilks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Wilks
Fellow, American Institute of Architects
Fellow, American Society of Landscape Architects

Opinion on Salt Pond subdivision of blueberry barrens

Ann Luskey <

Tue 8/13/2024 9:14 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Ann Luskey

119 Falls Bridge Road
Blue Hill, Maine 04614

August 13, 2024

Blue Hill Planning Board

18 Union Street

Blue Hill, ME 04614

Dear Members of the Blue Hill Planning Board.

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the diligent work that the Planning Board has demonstrated in guiding the development of our community. Your efforts in balancing the growth of Blue Hill while maintaining its unique character and natural beauty have not gone unnoticed, and I am grateful for the thoughtful decisions you have made in the best interests of our town.

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed development of the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. This land is not just a piece of property; it is a significant view shed that contributes to the beauty and serenity of Blue Hill. The Salt Pond area holds immense value, both aesthetically and culturally, and its preservation is crucial for maintaining the character and spirit of our town.

I believe the construction of nine large homes on this iconic property will destroy the aesthetic value of the property and threatens the health of the Salt Pond. Without environmental impact studies it is impossible to know in what ways the Salt Pond will be impacted.

The recent loss of the historic Falls Bridge has already dealt a significant blow to our community. Losing the Blueberry Barrens to development would only compound this loss, stripping us of yet another piece of our natural heritage.

I believe the development of this land for cost-prohibitive housing does not align with the true needs of our community. We should focus on creating opportunities for all residents rather than catering to a narrow demographic with high-end housing that many in our community cannot afford.

I believe there are other options for this property that will benefit the larger community. Perhaps a group of citizens purchase the property and donate it to a land trust? The public trails and beaches in and around Blue Hill are actively used treasures in our community. Imagine how this property could be used.

In conclusion, I urge the Planning Board to carefully consider the long-term implications of developing the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. Let us protect this precious land for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I trust that you will continue to guide Blue Hill with the same wisdom and dedication that has earned you the respect of the entire community.

With gratitude,

Ann Luskey

Blueberry barrens proposed development

Swede Plaut <swedeplaut@bluehillme.gov>

Mon 8/12/2024 5:22 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

An open letter to the Blue Hill Planning Board,

I have had experiences with developers. I have had experiences with planning boards.

I am aware that when a developer approaches a planning board with a proposal to build 9 homes as is proposed on the shore of Salt Pond that the developer may only intend to build 5 or fewer homes. By submitting a proposal for 9 lots the developer has the opportunity to "compromise" in the face of opposition to the project, conceding half the project and thereby appearing to be sympathetic to the concerns of town officials and the public. And, of course, it is suggested that the so called compromise will avert legal action.

Nine lots or 5, 4, 3. Any development is unacceptable. Salt Pond is too fragile an ecosystem to risk this impact.

Thank you,

Swede Plaut
98 Hale's Hill Rd.
Sedgwick

Sent from me

August 12, 2024

To: Blue Hill Planning Board Members

We are writing to express concern about the proposed development on the Salt Pond blueberry barrens. Similar to Jan Crofoot's experience, as described in her letter to the Weekly Packet on Thursday, August 8, several generations of our family have experiences in and around the Salt Pond. We, along with our children and grandchildren, have many fond memories. Some of our earliest ones include picnicking and tenting at Baptism Beach with our parents and grandparents, the thrill of our Memorial Day tradition catching alewives with our hands while sliding on the rocks in Carleton stream, clamming commercially and for family gatherings, anticipating and enjoying the annual arrival of horseshoe crabs, and kayaking and exploring the Salt Pond from one end to the other.

And then there are the eagles and their enormous nest located on the tiny island in front of the barrens. One of the greatest thrills was the return of the eagles in the 1970s and that joy continues to the present day. Nothing can compare to seeing a pair of eagles from that nest who go on to raise their young in the Salt Pond, or driving by Carleton Stream just below the barrens and knowing that, if the tide is right, there might very well be an eagle perched in a tree waiting to capture lunch for its young, or wondering if that eagle dance on the ice in February really is a mating ritual. We could go on and on but you get the picture.

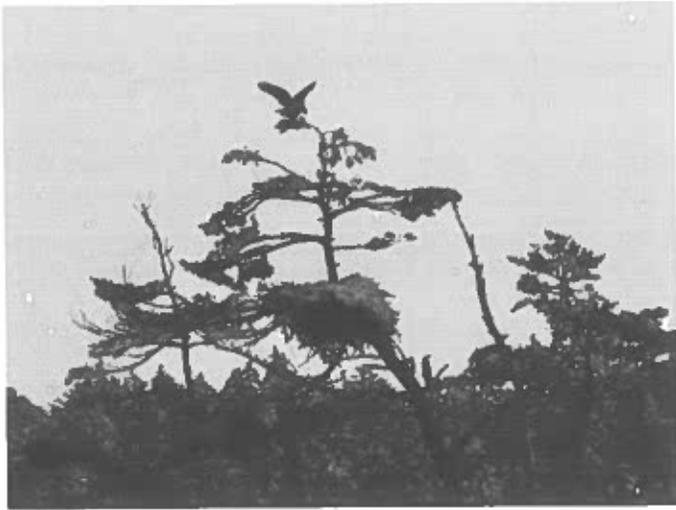
Over those 60 plus years we have witnessed many changes in the Salt Pond environment. Only 2 years ago were we once again able to clam year round thanks to improved water quality standards. Our shore is one of the state monitoring sites. We can only imagine and be horrified by the prospect of what this development could do to the Salt Pond, the eagles who once left and returned, and all other creatures who live there. Having appreciated the wonders of backpacking in the Grand Canyon, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, and working the Iditarod in Alaska with students at a remote checkpoint, we can say without hesitation that the Salt Pond is truly a unique gem. And we have it right here on our peninsula.

A bit about ourselves. Our Salt Pond property has been owned and cared for by 6 generations of our family. Not only has our family enjoyed this property, as teachers we have brought many classes of children to explore and learn about the wonders of the Salt Pond. Corinne has been a resident of Blue Hill since 1970 and enjoys the Salt Pond in the summer. With her family she owns 200 acres on the side of Blue Hill mountain. That property remains natural with no development. Nada has been a year round Sedgwick Salt Pond resident since 1975. We both have served on school boards in our respective towns and understand the challenges and responsibilities of serving one's community in a town government position. The blueberry barrens in question are irreplaceable. There are few, if any, places such as this remaining. Once it's gone you don't get it back. Please use whatever powers you have as planning board members to ensure its safety for future generations.

Respectfully,

Nada Cole Lepper

Corinne Cole Pert



Fwd: Save the Salt Water Barrens

Kathleen Johns <

Mon 8/12/2024 3:29 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kathleen Johns**

Date: Mon, Aug 12, 2024 at 11:22 AM

Subject: Save the Salt Water Barrens

To: <bfarnham@bluehill.me.gov>

Dear Town Planners,

Even the 9 privileged home owners will be short-changed if the Salt Water Barrens subdivision would be approved. Think of living in a gorgeous home atop the beautiful barrens only to look out on 8 other homes beside you interrupting your view. **Everyone on the peninsula loses.** No longer does anyone - local or otherwise - experience the joy of driving along the route, leaving the woodlands and suddenly ascending into the wild open fields with their scatterings of ancient boulders overlooking the sea. No money can make up for that view.

*This undeveloped and open scenic view is a **gift** for all of us who live on the peninsula, including **especially** those of us who are not privileged or wealthy enough to own land next to the water.*

Please do not allow this land to be developed for the few at the cost of the many.

Most Sincerely,

Kathleen Johns of Orland (with family living in Brooklin)

PS. The peninsula could benefit from carefully located low income housing.

Salt pond subdivision

Gisele Bridges <_ _ _ _ _>

Mon 8/12/2024 12:04 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

I'm a resident of Sedgwick and will not be able to attend the meeting this week but wanted to voice my opinion against the development of the blueberry barrens along the salt pond which borders Blue Hill and Sedgwick.

This iconic view is one of the properties that makes our peninsula special to those of us who live here as well as the many visitors who come to our area. Once its lost, its lost forever for future generations.

I can't imagine the soils and ledges are adequate for proper sewage and drainage for the 9 large proposed mansions on the site without causing future harm to the salt pond.

Also, large developments like this along with over inflated land prices contribute to the difficulty of our young people who've grown up here to afford to buy land and stay to raise their families. We have an affordable housing shortage here and developments like the proposed one on the barrens is not what this peninsula needs to thrive.

I urge you to vote down this proposed development and it is my hope that the land trusts might be able to buy back this piece of property to keep it undeveloped for future generations. It saddens me that the local family who sold it to a southern Maine developer were not motivated to make a deal with the many land trusts in the area and state.

Be Well,

♥ Gisele Bridges

Certified Holistic Health Coach

Environmental Health Expert

Grab my free guide

[The Top 5 Places Toxins Are Hiding in Your Home & Sabotaging Your Fertility](#)

I help women take charge of their health and fertility so they can stack the odds in their favor for a healthy pregnancy and baby!

Join my free FB community Optimize Your Fertility [HERE](#)

Blueberry barrens subdivision

Jackie Bahn-Henkelman < >

Sat 8/10/2024 12:41 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I am one of the owners of the Peaceful Lane property. We are a small, incorporated, group of family and friends, committed to "The Gentle Stewardship of the Land." We have watched the slow, thoughtful development of the land along the Salt Pond since 1973. The proposal of 9 individual private dwellings on the Blueberry Barrens does not fit with 'thoughtful development' or 'gentle stewardship of the land.' It is a housing development, and not a welcome addition.

Jackie Bahn-Henkelman, Ph.D

90 Peaceful Lane

Blue Hill, Me

Blue Hill Subdivision

Stephanie Cole < >

Sun 8/11/2024 11:28 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

My name is Stephanie Cole, I am a resident of Sedgwick. I am writing to address concerns I have with the potential subdivision development on Rt. 172.

Specifically, Subdivision Review Criteria: **Aesthetic, Cultural and Natural Values.**

In regard to **cultural** values I have concerns from both historical and contemporary aspects. As far as historical value, though the developer obtained an archaeological investigation of the site indicating no pre contact period cultural materials or features found; it seems unrealistic the investigation provides one hundred percent certainty that artifacts, relics, burial sites, trash heaps, or other evidence of past communities do not exist. These concerns extend to both the history of first white settlers, and the first peoples - specifically our Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot neighbors. It is common knowledge these nations traversed the lands and waters along our peninsula and certainly relics exist indicating their past presence. Has there been any consideration to consult with an agency that specifically addresses the historical presence of the indigenous people on a specific site?

Secondly, in regard to contemporary culture: There is profound value to both local and native indigenous communities. Maybe less contemporary but still significant, many of our community members, or their parents, grandparents or great grandparents raked the Allen field. Blueberry agriculture was a means of income for families, similar to the fishing industry in which we hold in high regard. Elver fishing has historically and presently been a means to an income but also holds cultural significance to the Wabanaki people as well as non-indigenous locals. It appears as though the integrity of the developer in ensuring access to elver fishing on the property is not sound.

Lastly, the Allen field holds important cultural meaning to native people today. I had the honor of meeting Brian J. Francis, a member of the Elsipogtog First Nation of Mi'kmaq people, an author, poet, artist and director/producer. He and his family members make the journey to the field several times a year. It holds not just memories of raking the fields beginning in childhood, but a sacred place, a connection to ancestors, and a place of ceremony and prayer. To quote him "It was a yearly ritual, almost like a pilgrimage to pack our belongings and make the trek toward Sedgwick Maine. It was harvesttime, but not only that it was a special time of social interactions with members of our community".

I ask the planning board to consider the above when evaluating whether the developer's ravage of the property avoids destruction of cultural value to both local and native communities.

Again, to quote Mr. Francis: "The land holds the memories of our ancestors, their sweat, tears and triumphs etched into every rock, every tree, and every river. For generations, they lived with nature, taking only what they needed and giving back in return"

I ask the board to consider a consultation with a Passamaquoddy historian. As we know, cultural significance does not hold to county lines.

I appreciate all your work and attention to this matter.

For reference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVYty8Vng8s>

<https://youtu.be/1Yr1Y3WWgew?si=hbgqmj2vMe-Vx9DG>

<https://www.voicesfromthebarrens.com/about-the-film/creative-team/>

<https://lunderinstitute.colby.edu/2024/04/01/dwayne-tomah-named-a-2024-lunder-institute-fellow/>

Sincerely,
Stephanie Cole
13 Salt Pond Lane
Sedgwick, ME

Salt Pond blueberry field Herbicide use

Tim Dawson <

Mon 8/5/2024 4:33 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To the Planning Board:

The blueberry field herbicide 238-Hexazinone, commonly sold as "Pronone" or "Velpar" has been used for decades on the Salt Pond blueberry field to increase production, by killing "weeds".

It is highly soluble in water and therefore has a high probability of leaching vertically into groundwater. It also travels across soil surfaces in runoff, both in water and attached to soil sediments. It is a prime candidate for groundwater contamination. When runoff is contaminated, it has been implicated in a decrease of a variety of planktons and has been shown to have negative effects on salmonid populations as well as clams.

Because of the discovery of residual hexazinone in Maine's surface and groundwater, a number of government agencies are interested in determining the extent of contamination.

These include:

Maine Board of Pesticides Control (MBPC)

Maine Sea Run Salmon Commission (MSRSC)

Dept. Of Marine Resources (DMR)

Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Assoc. (MOFGA)

Maine Blueberry Commission (MBBC)

This information is also readily available in published papers from University of Maine, and many others.

Because these important issues are not addressed in the developer's proposal, we ask that this project be rejected.

Thank you,
Tim Dawson

The blueberry barrens subdivision

Tom Bjorkman <[redacted]>

Mon 8/5/2024 8:42 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear members of the Blue Hill Planning Board

Thanks to all of you for the hard work you do to help us all have a beautiful and inclusive community.

My wife Roxanne and I live in the historic Tide Mill section of blue hill.

I want to say that the proposed subdivision is totally out of character for the kind of community that blue hill has always been and that so many want it to remain. Our economy is based on that traditional character. The subdivision would begin to shift the sprit of blue hill in a new and divisive direction.

Thank you for weighing these issues carefully

Tom Bjorkman and Roxanne Donahey.

Sent from my iPhone

Subdivision on Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens:

Sally Littlefield <

Sat 8/3/2024 8:45 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Mr. Farnham,

Among other things, I am an oil painting artist. Iconic spots like the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens are hard to find. Access to such places is becoming more and more of a problem. For the sake of Mother Nature and all human kind please do not allow privatization by homebuilding there. Save the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens in Blue Hill for all to enjoy, not just a few. Shorefront access is hard to find. This kind of view shed is extraordinary.

I was there the other day documenting some final (I hope not) views and creating a small oil painting that captures the grandiosity of it all.

I find it hard to comprehend that this prime spot cannot be saved for the use of the larger population of the entire Blue Hill Peninsula rather than the sole owners of excessively spaced grandiose private homes. I made sure that my husband Jim Littlefields' Lookout Rock property (once a part of his Oakland House land in Brooksville) went to Maine Coast Heritage Trust to be cared for, accessed, enjoyed and loved over and over by nearly everyone near and far. I know this takes time, but time could be found if the Town of Blue Hill would make that happen fairly.

Please be forward thinking on the Subdivision Concept for the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. Please create time to get this worked out for the sake posterity, nature and access for more than just a few select homeowners.

Sincerely,
Sally Littlefield

38 Oakland House Road
Brooksville, Maine 04617

www.dreamingofmaine.com

Sent from Outlook

Blue Hill Salt Pond Development

Linda Laing ·

Sat 8/3/2024 3:17 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To Members of the Blue Hill Planning Board and Others,

I am deeply concerned about the proposed development of the area known as Blueberry Hill that borders on the Salt Pond.

I have walked this area many times and the beauty is without parallel in your town. I have seen evidence of many varieties of wildlife and the flowers and vines and yes, even the "weeds" are beautiful! Not to mention the blueberries! The huge boulders are marvelous; how will they be moved?

Also the elver fishermen are a great bunch of people who respect the land and neighbors. My beloved daughter and her husband live next to the creek and enjoy the views and the sightings of birds and bobcats and many other wild creatures that make the blueberry barrens their home.

I, along with hundreds of others, implore you to spare this beautiful area from needless development. The runoff from sewage, fertilizer and other bad chemicals humans produce (weed killer!) will flow into the bay to poison, pollute, and be of great danger to the sea life as well as the sea birds.

Thank you for your heartfelt consideration to deny this development,
Linda Laing-Brubaker

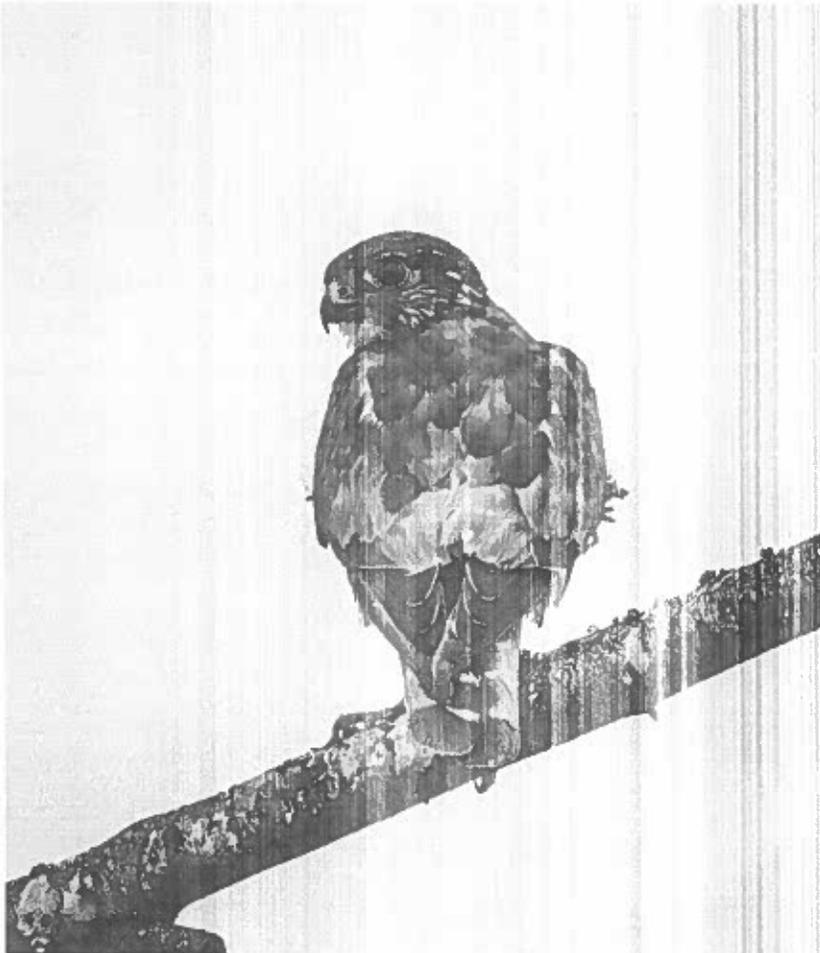
Salt Pond Tract Development

Linda Laing <

Sat 8/3/2024 2:59 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To The Blue Hill Planning Board:



Merlin Hawk

In regard to the proposed 9 - house subdivision on the Blueberry Barrens: As many others have listed all of the other legitimate reasons to stop this proposal, I wish to concentrate on the total loss of wildlife habitat that would occur if this project goes through.

The above Merlin Hawk photo which I took while waiting for a meal on this site on July 29th is representative of the numerous species of wildlife I have personally witnessed that are dependent on sustenance and shelter that these barrens provide. These include Bobcats, a Fox family, Mink, an Eagle pair, Northern Harriers, and Red-tailed Hawks to name a few.

There are also dozens of both breeding and migrating birds that will no longer be able to rely on shelter and food that this gem of a property provides.

JANE MC NICHOL & JAMES CONBOY

July 15, 2024

Blue Hill Planning Board
Blue Hill Town Hall
18 Union Street
Blue Hill, ME 04614

c/o Bryce Farnham@bluehillme.gov

To whom it may concern:

On our first trip to the Blue Hill peninsula, Jim and I were headed to Sedgwick to visit friends there. We were almost there, after a long drive, and we drove through the blue berry fields on Salt Pond Road. The drastically different look of the fields from all we had just travelled through was stunning. Jim said, "Where are we, on the moon?" In a twist of fate, we ended up buying a house at 367 Salt Pond Road. We see the fields from our driveway, as they rise south away from us. They are a daily reminder of the toughness and beauty of the down east landscape – ledge and blueberries and salt water. Those fields produce blueberries and fishing and recreational opportunities for all. Daily we hear the loon, who nests on Third Pond, fly over to fish in the Salt Pond. There's a Bald Eagle family who nests on Carleton Island, who fly over regularly.

Some evenings, you can watch from those hills as the fog comes up the Salt Pond from the Benjamin River, filling the landscape with mystery and cooling us after a hot summer day.

A development of 9 houses will clearly affect this unique ecosystem in negative ways. I can't imagine that the field could handle the septic systems of that many houses that would no doubt have multiple bathrooms, therefore causing polluted run off into the Salt Pond. That dramatic landscape would be transformed to a suburban looking subdivision. What a loss!

I hope that you will consider limiting the plans at the Salt Pond. We look forward to attending the August 14th meeting to voice our concerns in person.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about this letter or our concerns,

Very truly yours,


Jane McNichol and Jim Conboy
PO Box 412, 367 Salt Pond Road, Blue Hill, ME
Cc: Saltpondfield@gmail.com

Planning Board

I attended the Planning Board meeting on July 10th concerning the lot on Salt Pond Road. This is a surprisingly rugged piece of land: full of rocks, dips, hills, boulders, with a view of Salt Pond Shallows---very shallow. And lots of blue berries; it is part of an old blueberry growing operation. Some of the local speakers referred to it as "Blueberry Barren" recalling early walks, visits.

Now consider: the new owner paid \$900,000 for the entire tract. That is a familiar figure --for a single nice, shore house with a good view gets \$900,000. So, the owner can build 3 houses -- \$2,700,000- or 4 houses- \$3,600,000. A tidy sum. Each with a nice view of Salt Pond, lots of fun climbing around rocks, tons of blue berries. He will do very well with his Blueberry Barrens Park.

And, all it will take to make it a park is some paths, and a few wooden signs here and there. And perhaps a bench.

Nancy Struever

69 Tamworth Farm Rd.

Blue Hill, ME

Nancy Struever
July 31, 2024

Development on barrens

Nervous Nellies <... n>

Sun 7/28/2024 3:36 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Planning Board—

This spot is one of a handful that—for the 40 or so years I've lived here year-round—always lifts my heart when I drive by, or stop for a sandwich in the car, or marvel at the changing colors of the barrens.

We are blessed with handful of such places hereabouts that touch everyone.

This development would “destroy” one of them forever. Then the handful shrinks, permanently.

Development for a privileged few—at what cost to the many, to the habitat and its creatures, to the Salt Pond watershed? Does this proposal contribute to or damage the “rural, small town” character sought in the Comprehensive Plan?

The particular assets and value of this site are unique. Should they be commodified for the benefit of a few or does that value belong to the “rural, small town” as a whole?

I urge you to find a rationale for denying this application. It is the right thing to do.

Anne Beerits

Sent from my iPhone

Blue Berry Fields on the Salt Pond

Jane McNichol <

Mon 7/15/2024 8:23 PM

To: saltpondfield@gmail.com <saltpondfield@gmail.com>; Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

July 15, 2024

Blue Hill Planning Board
Blue Hill Town Hall
18 Union Street
Blue Hill, ME 04614

c/o Bryce [Farnham@bluehillme.gov](mailto:bfarnham@bluehillme.gov)

To whom it may concern:

On our first trip to the Blue Hill peninsula, Jim and I were headed to Sedgwick to visit friends there. We were almost there, after a long drive, and we drove through the blue berry fields on Salt Pond Road. The drastically different look of the fields from all we had just travelled through was stunning. Jim said, "Where are we, on the moon?" In a twist of fate, we ended up buying a house at 367 Salt Pond Road. We see the fields from our driveway, as they rise south away from us. They are a daily reminder of the toughness and beauty of the down east landscape – ledge and blueberries and salt water. Those fields produce blueberries and fishing and recreational opportunities for all. Daily we hear the loon, who nests on Third Pond, fly over to fish in the Salt Pond. There's a Bald Eagle family who nests on Carleton Island, who fly over regularly.

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A development of 9 houses will clearly affect this unique ecosystem in negative ways. I can't imagine that the field could handle the septic systems of that many houses that would no doubt have multiple bathrooms, therefore causing polluted run off into the Salt Pond. That dramatic landscape would be transformed to a suburban looking subdivision. What a loss!

I hope that you will consider limiting the plans at the Salt Pond. We look forward to attending the August 14th meeting to voice our concerns in person.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about this letter or our concerns,

Very truly yours,

Jane McNichol and Jim Conboy
PO Box 412, 367 Salt Pond Road, Blue Hill, ME
Cc: [Saltpondfield@gmail.com](mailto:saltpondfield@gmail.com)

Bryce Farnham/ Salt Pond barrens

Shepard Krech <

Thu 7/11/2024 4:38 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Bryce Farnham,

As a long-time summer resident of Sedgwick, I may lack standing in Blue Hill but do happen to know this landscape--the Salt Pond barrens-- not merely because it abuts rte 172, the shortest shot between my camp in Sedgwick and the market town of Blue Hill, and because for decades I have been especially interested in the peninsula's birds, butterflies, and other living beings as well as its deep structure and architecture. At this very place also--and not trivial as natural assets-- are the beavers that have maintained their dam for years at the outlet from First Pond into the Carlton Pond Stream and Salt Pond beyond. Hence I slow down and look at these barrens and beyond on every trip to and fro. (With respect to the beavers, years ago a photographer conducted a photo shoot at that spot to accompany an article for the Chronicle for Higher Education about a book that I wrote on ecology, resource extraction--including of beavers--and conservation among the indigenous people of North America; but that is a separate story.)

In a nutshell, from my perspective the Salt Pond barrens is priceless landscape, rich in its deep history and in its stories about the natural world (that can be imagined or actually seen on every pass through.) Given the times we live in, it seems a pity if not mighty shortsighted to simply carry on here as one has already in Kennebunk and elsewhere. It is enough to make one wonder about how many people must be oblivious about--unconscious of--the potential of the sheer beauty of the natural world. Some, perhaps, are irritated that it is not yet fully domesticated.

For me, the Salt Pond barrens is not a place to dynamite rocks and boulders and ledges atop highest points for passive visual enjoyment from a dwelling of whatever character. I like to think--and dare to hope--that at least some of us of all stripes here in the peninsula, from those whose families have been here for centuries to the newest residents attracted to the *here and now* for its landscape, its history, and yes, the present-day culture in which we all share. I agree with Blue Hill's stated hope that future development takes place in and near town, not in places like these barrens. Protect these barrens at all cost.

Yours,

Shepard Krech III

July 10, 2024

To the Members of the Blue Hill Planning Board,

Thanks again to all the Members of the Planning Board and to Bryce. Your commitment to serve on this board and to help lead our town into the future with eyes wide open is very much appreciated.

The last time I spoke regarding the proposed Blueberry Barrens development project I went into great depth about the wildlife that currently depends on this habitat, including the adjacent Salt Pond. Suffice it to say they are all still there and benefiting from the wildlife corridor that thankfully has not been disrupted by a massive development project.

I do some photography work for the Raptor Expert, Erynn Call at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. After hearing about our nesting Salt Pond Eagles and the proposed development project she offered to inquire with her colleague Emily Robinson who did the initial Wildlife impact evaluation for the developer. As you can see in the Initial evaluation I have attached, The department's recommendation was preliminary. They did not have the full development plan available when they did the review and did not know the location of the proposed houses 150ft from the wading shorebird habitat.

Erin responded to my inquiry (also attached) stating a more in depth look at the project and Wildlife impact could be done at the request of the planning board or code enforcement officer.

I strongly urge you to request that reevaluation so that they can respond in time for the August Planning Board Meeting. The information gained from such a follow up is essential to determining if the Planning and Land Use Regulation is being adhered to by the developer. Particularly in regards to Question # 8. Is this land a significant wildlife habitat? My experience on and around the Blueberry Barrens tells me it is.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Brubaker

Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens Proposed 9 house division

Landere Naisbitt <landere.naisbitt@bluehillme.gov>

Wed 7/10/2024 8:17 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Hi Bryce,

I just wanted to add my comments to the decision making pool regarding the salt pond barrens. I am concerned about the pollinator and native plant habitat that will be gone when the blueberries are removed for construction and also the choice of expensive housing options.

While I know that development in Blue Hill is inevitable and people need housing as much as wildlife, insects, plants, birds etc. mini mansions are not the best option in my opinion in this prime green open space. There are already plenty of large houses on the coast that are empty for more than half the year that could provide good housing for many people wanting to move here. I think concentrating development closer to town is better and choosing to focus on affordable housing would be more inclusive for all hoping to move to this area versus offering expensive lots that are only accessible to those with higher income levels. People from other parts of the country will be fleeing climate conditions - heat, fire etc and we don't want our place to only be a refuge for the wealthiest.

And for one person to gain wealth over the loss of so much beauty and earth space is not ethical in my opinion to other forms of life who need space here as well.

Also who do we want to be here in 50 years? Only people or also eagles, loons, fish, good water for them/us all, pollinators, wildlife and a good interconnectedness between us all?

Thank you for reading and good luck!

all the best,
Landere

Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens Proposed 9 house subdivision

Adam b Chittenden <[redacted]>

Wed 7/10/2024 8:52 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Hi Bryce,

I am sure you have received your fair share of these emails about this proposed subdivision. Needless to say, I am not for it.

As a carpenter, I realize these possible houses could provide work for folks around here but I don't think it's needed. There are far too many jobs and not enough hands to fill them.

The Salt Pond and that field is far too precious to develop. I remember as a kid when the painters would be out there... That unto itself is enough in my book to cancel the proposal. The health and prosperity that comes from consciously connecting with our little world there is not to be underrated... the experience of the painter and the ones who come into contact with the work done is profound. I think it is extremely valuable to enable folks in the future to have the opportunity to engage in art making directly on the land, as it is.

Also, the Salt Pond at night is pure magic. The stars are bright and coyotes and loons and eagles are really remarkable. I would hate to see the darkness blasted by a slew of houses and the darkness and wildness (albeit dwindling) is part of what makes Blue Hill such a wonderful place.

Thanks for taking the time to consider the proposed subdivision and not just doing it because we're here now.

Adam

Salt Pond Subdivision

Claire Malina < >

Fri 7/12/2024 5:07 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To Bryce and the Planning Board,

I recently learned about the potential for the subdivision on the Salt Pond and I am very upset by this possibility. For context, I live in Harborside year-round and work in Blue Hill. I've lived on the peninsula for 10 years, but have been coming to this place since I was born to visit family. This area means a lot to me for many different reasons and it is heartbreaking to hear that this beautiful blueberry barren overlooking the Salt Pond is at risk of being utterly destroyed.

This subdivision would destroy the breathtaking view, but more importantly, it would have a devastating impact on the natural world and wildlife. This is a really special ecosystem-- blueberry barrens along the Salt Pond, with the connection to Carleton Stream. There are so many species that would be impacted by the destruction of their habitat, from birds to fish, deer to fireflies. I cannot even begin to name them all.

I admit that housing is a huge issue in this area and there is a vital need for affordable year-round housing. This subdivision would definitely not address this need though as I am certain it would only be accessible to very wealthy folks who can afford waterfront/waterview properties.

I hope that you will take this proposal very seriously and realize how much is at stake. It will be impossible to regain the life, beauty, and magic that exists in that place if a subdivision is created. Please help us protect this place and all of the species who rely on it being their home.

Respectfully,
Claire Malina

Please use this version instead -- fixed a typo!

Dr. Laura Markham < >

Wed 7/10/2024 5:03 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Blue Hill Planning Board,

I'm writing to express my concern regarding the recent proposal by a developer to build houses on the Blueberry Barrens.

The Blue Hill Blueberry Barrens is not just another blueberry field. Everyone who has driven on Route 172 between Sedgwick and Blue Hill knows the thrill of topping the rise and seeing the sprawl of boulders giving way to the tranquil water of Salt Pond, bordered by pines and framed by the mountains of Acadia in the long view to the east.

This breathtaking view is the reason the Barrens were included in the Downeast Coastal Scenic Inventory, along with Blue Hill Falls and Blue Hill Mountain. The State's Planning and Land Use Regulations, which make clear that development should not have an "undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area," could have been written expressly for this site.

The Barrens is more than just a scenic area; the land is a vital part of our local ecosystem, beloved by residents and visitors alike. For fifty years, generations of eagles have occupied the nest on the island in Salt Pond that is directly across from the Barrens. Kayakers explore Salt Pond with the specific goal of bird-watching near the eagle's nest and enjoying the view of the Blueberry Barrens from the water. School children visit the Beaver Dam at Carleton Stream, which also provides opportunities for bird watching and hiking.

Maybe most importantly, Salt Pond is a vulnerable ecosystem. The granite ledge of the Barrens has minimal topsoil and inadequate drainage, so nine septic systems would likely lead to negative runoff issues and, eventually, to pollution in Salt Pond.

Many of the residents on Salt Pond near the Barrens have been forced to install extensive reverse osmosis water systems because of salt incursion and the inadequacy of the local water table. Adding nine more wells to the water table is likely to worsen the already-existing supply issues in times of drought.

Blue Hill does need affordable workforce housing near the center of town. But the houses proposed for the Barrens are large, expensive houses that are unlikely to be bought by local families who have children in the schools and invest in our community. This housing is likely to be purchased by out-of-town investors who use it as AirBnB rentals.

The Blueberry Barrens are an iconic landmark that deserves to be preserved for future generations. After all, Robert McCloskey wrote "Blueberries for Sal," not "9 McMansions for Sal."

I greatly appreciate the volunteer work of the Planning Board on behalf of the long-term interests and values of our community. Thank you for protecting our irreplaceable natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Laura Markham

From: Robinson, Emily <

Date: Mon, Jul 8, 2024 at 10:38 AM

Subject: RE: FW: Blue Hill Salt Pond Blueberry Hill Development

To: Amy Brubaker < >, Call, Erynn <

CC: Perry, John < >, Dunham, Steve <

Hi Amy,

Thank you for reaching out, and we understand you have concerns. I spoke with my supervisor, and we are only able to review and provide recommendations on projects that are submitted to us for review by the applicant, their agent, or the permitting authority, which in this case is the town. Otherwise, we are unable to provide recommendations or comments on projects based on concerns raised by abutters or other concerned parties that may be concerned with a particular project. That said, if the town manager, planning board, or code enforcement officer reaches out to us with questions or requests our official review, we'd be happy to provide follow-up comments.

Please feel free to reach out with any other questions.

Thank you,

Emily

Emily Robinson
Resource Biologist
Environmental Review Program
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
353 Water Street, 41 SHS
Augusta, Maine 04333-0041

www.mefishwildlife.com



BLUE HILL HERITAGE TRUST

A LAND CONSERVATION TRUST SERVING THE TOWNS OF THE GREATER BLUE HILL PENINSULA

July 9, 2024

Blue Hill Planning Board
Attn: Mr. Farnham Blair

Re: Salt Pond Road Development Fund, LP

Dear Mr. Blair and the Town of Blue Hill Planning Board:

Please accept this letter regarding Blue Hill Heritage Trust's interest in identifying any conservation solutions that can be applied to the property now owned by the subject entity on Tax Map 32 Lot 23. The property has been undeveloped for ages, offering scenic views of the Salt Pond and Carleton Island (a BHHT property) as well as having been identified by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Beginning with Habitat, which includes Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat.

As the regional land trust for the Blue Hill peninsula, we are aware of the impact this project would have on this treasured viewscape as well as the local wildlife. Blue Hill Heritage Trust is open to being included in an amenable outcome where this treasured asset can still remain in the "public domain".

Sincerely,



George R.A. Fields, P.G.
Associate Director
Director of Land Conservation

Blueberry Barrens

Susie Fay <[redacted]>

Mon 7/8/2024 11:54 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

So beautiful and special and rare! Please don't let this place turn into another subdivision. For what? Nine lucky landowners? So much is lost for the rest of us who love this place for its peace and beauty. Do the right thing and say "no" to the developers.

Save an iconic Blue Hill Salt Pond scene from 9 house development

skipfel <

Sat 7/6/2024 1:41 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Bryce

We fervently hope the Planning Board preserves this area of beauty and peace, one that painters, walkers and our family have enjoyed over decades.

Surely, with a little effort the developer/ investors can find alternative land investments (quicker and higher return) that don't require destruction of a classic Maine vista-- salt pond, glacial boulders and blueberry barrens.

We hope for better judgement over what is legal for private business over what is right to preserve for future generations.

We ask you and other members to reject degrading this site for commercial gain, as if a particular individual owes nothing to the community. I refer you to the economic ethical case in "**The Tragedy of the Commons**" (refer to wikipedia as needed) where a single opportunistic farmer can ruin traditional "common" grazing land for other farmers in pursuit of private gain.

We have faith the planning board will be just and rational.

thanks

skip moreau, Janet. Lauren and Jaime

Blue Hill Peninsula

Salt Pond Subdivision (Planning Board)

Mary Glassanos < >

Tue 7/9/2024 3:52 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To Members of the Blue Hill Planning Board,

Please do not approve the proposed Salt Pond subdivision. A subdivision on what in an ideal world would be open public space in perpetuity would not only be an ecological disaster impacting hundreds of species and many local livelihoods but would forever alter, possibly destroy, an area of unsurpassed natural beauty. This 30+ acre lot illustrates magnificently the reason so many people are drawn to this area as both visitors, seasonal, and year round residents. The rocky blueberry fields rolling down to the Salt Pond and Carleton Stream are unique in this area and have inspired countless artists and photographers. Others have raised the issues and impact nine large new build infrastructures would have on this particular piece of land. I want to stress that the singular and unaltered beauty found there would be lost forever. Blue Hills own town subdivision ordinance explicitly states :

“The proposed subdivision will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, significant wildlife habitat identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or the Town, or~ and irreplaceable natural areas or any public rights for physical or visual access to the shoreline.”

I respectfully ask you each to consider the impact of allowing this project to move forward because once done never undone. Please act as trustworthy stewards of our towns precious natural resource and preserve a piece of this fragile, rapidly changing, beautiful place for the generations to come.

Thank you,

Salt pond Development

Tim Dawson <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Tue 7/9/2024 5:59 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <barnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: saltpondfield@gmail.com <saltpondfield@gmail.com>

To The Blue Hill Planning Board,

As a citizen that lives adjacent to the Salt Pond and regularly enjoys the natural beauty and quiet of this wonderful place I'd like to convey my concerns to you. I believe this proposed subdivision is different in kind than any other single family home that has been built on the shoreline. It should be understood in its entirety, not as 9 separate projects. With that perspective, this project comes up short historically, archaeologically, visually, and practically. I will limit myself to some of the practical issues in this email.

1. Hydrogeologic report:

I think there are significant shortfalls in this report. The assumption of only 4 people for each large house, while convenient, isn't likely accurate. And it doesn't allow for the irrigation of landscaping and large lawns. So the assumed groundwater withdrawal rate is less than actual rates are likely to be.

Further, the recharge rates to groundwater assume the entire property is pervious. No impervious surfaces are presumed in this analysis. Between new development, existing gravel roads remaining, and large areas of surface ledge, It looks like more than 5 acres of impervious surface.

This implies more runoff post development and less recharge which means that more water will be withdrawn than recharged.

2. Septic Fields

The soils reports show high groundwater and poor percolation throughout. The engineer recommends very large septic fields, either because of the poor conditions, or because water usage might be higher than stated. Or both

3. Storm water management post development:

The applicant has stated that this development will increase runoff and is asking for a waiver since the Salt Pond is tidal and connects to the Atlantic. Given the effluents from vehicles and pesticides and fertilizers the applicant presumes on every lot, we don't want this large development polluting the Salt Pond. As everyone who spends time on the water here knows, the tidal prism of the pond is much smaller than the Atlantic, and the water exchange lessens the further from reversing falls you are.

This plus the large mud tidal flats in front of the property will also accumulate toxins from the land. We don't consider the Pond or the ocean to be dumping grounds.

There are no plans for mitigating drainage from the developed portions of each lot. With driveways included, the average impervious development per lot is about 11,000 sq ft. (98,400 sq ft in total unaccounted for in runoff control). As the soils report demonstrates, most of the land is not conducive to soaking up rainfall readily. This lack of ability to deal with the significant increase in runoff is sufficient to deny the application on its own.

4. Visibility of Houses:

4404 Review Criteria page 4 paragraph 2

" only the extreme western edge of the project site is visible from Salt Pond Road or any other public roads or Lands."

This is wildly inaccurate. The applicant has chosen a single Sitaline from the road that makes his case. In fact, you will likely see up to 6 houses from the road on the southern approach, and at least 1 from the north.

As to the Public Lands, Carleton island is public and all 9 houses would be visible from it. This island is cherished and used by the public for sunbathing, picnicking and swimming. Even occasional camping. A group of Penobscot Wabanaki canoed across the Salt Pond 2 years ago and visited the island which has indigenous burial middens.

5. Roadwork and grubbing:

carbon footprint of Mega Homes!

Frances Eastman <

Tue 7/9/2024 12:00 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Mr. Farnham,

Because the very rich are usually onto the next big thing — in this case the newest popular, cool, unspoiled place to build a castle to their success, they are now coming to Maine in droves. We do not want their giant consumption of town services, the thinly stretched local plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc, ground water, fire protection, etc. Starting a trend here which will be in magazines, newspapers, and their networks. It will drive our prices up to meet those of Mt. Desert, because the rich are used to paying twice what we do for services.

Please offer an amendment to the town building document, adding environmental impact or whatever you deem common sense.

How about a campaign to raise money for the Heritage Trust to buy it?

Thank you

Fran Eastman

Sargentville

Salt Pond

Swede Plaut <[redacted]@bluehillme.gov>

Tue 7/9/2024 10:33 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Mr. Farnham,

Kindly accept this open letter to the Blue Hill Planning Board.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the housing development proposed on the blueberry barrens along the shore of Salt Pond in Blue Hill.

Many have expressed sadness at the prospect of losing such an iconic landscape and vista. I share this sentiment but I am most upset at the prospect of harm coming to the waters of Salt Pond. A subdivision of this intensity in such close proximity to the water will surely risk contamination from septic system discharge, fertilizer runoff, residential use of pesticides and herbicides, etc. The potential harm to Salt Pond and Blue Hill Bay is frightening.

I am a resident of Sedgwick. Over the years I have come to understand and appreciate the unique value that Salt Pond contributes to the beauty and rural nature of the Blue Hill Peninsula.

I hope the members of the Blue Hill Planning Board will reject this proposal based on the risk of harm to a precious ecosystem.

Thank you,

Swede Plaut
98 Hale's Hill Rd.
Sedgwick

Sent from me

A subdivision on the Salt Pond?

Prue Larocca <pruelarocca@bluehillme.gov>

Tue 7/9/2024 9:16 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: SaltPondField@gmail.com <SaltPondField@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Board,

It is hard to imagine that an environmental impact assessment of the fragile ecosystem around the salt pond, supports development of a subdivision. Has one been prepared?

Away from the the environmental impact, how about the how this will impact the quality of life of those of us, who live in the beautiful Blue Hill Peninsula because of its natural beauty, and wide open spaces, not because it sprouts a subdivision of exclusive homes in every beautiful spot that we enjoy on a daily basis. It is hard to understand how this subdivision helps anyone, but the town coffers of Blue Hill and the developer.

How about supporting some affordable workforce housing?

Respectfully submitted,

Prue Larocca

Sent from my iPad



Dr. Marika Knight
Friends Academy
270 Duck Pond Road
Locust Valley, NY 11560

July 8, 2024

Letter of Concern Regarding Salt Pond Subdivision

To Whom It May Concern,

If an eagle feather is found, it cannot be sold off for profit. You may not reap financial gains through taking apart an iconic, majestic symbol. In the same sense, it would be a travesty to partition off the iconic, majestic blueberry fields along Salt Pond. The sum of the parts will never come close to the value of the whole.

As a three-decade summer resident, I see the fields along Salt Pond as iconic, and believe with firm conviction that they should never be changed. Please do not allow the subdivision to occur.

Thank you for your consideration and careful discernment

Sincerely,

Dr. Marika Knight
US Mathematics
Cum Laude Honor Society Chair

No subdivision on the blueberry barrens

MARJORIE WARNER <r...>

Mon 7/8/2024 7:28 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: SaltPondField@gmail.com <SaltPondField@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. Farnham and the Planning Board,

Whenever we take out of state house guests on a tour of our area, one of the most breathtaking sights-the one most people ask about-is the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. This unique landmark should never even be considered as a development. Ever. Once destroyed, it can never be replaced. For a state and a town that depends on tourism as part of their economy, we must strive to keep what is beautiful about Maine a special place for future generations, and not a playground for the wealthy. A friend in Castine has a sign in his house that reads, "Maine-Love It And Leave It Alone". It brings to mind bumper stickers that we had here in Blue Hill many years ago that read, "If you don't like our zoning laws, Go Back To Beacon Hill!"

It is time to stand our ground once again. Please allow the Blue Hill Heritage Trust to purchase this rare property so we and others can continue to enjoy the view, keep Salt Pond clean, and not negatively impact wildlife and the beauty this place brings to us on a daily basis. Thank you for your consideration. (We will be away for Wednesday's meeting)

Sincerely,

Alan and Marjorie Warner

62 Back Pasture Lane

Blue Hill, ME

For the record of the hearing July 10 on the blueberry barrens subdivision

Don R Hecker <drh@bluehillme.gov>

Mon 7/8/2024 1:28 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To: Blue Hill Planning Board

via Bryce Farnham

Re: Proposed Salt Pond Blueberry Barren 9-unit subdivision

Greetings,

I urge you to reject a proposed housing development on the blueberry barrens on Route 172 overlooking Salt Pond for the following reasons:

Foremost, the area is a unique landscape feature -- not merely a special or very attractive one. I do not believe you can find this combination of height, geology and view anywhere else along the mid coast. As a unique feature, it is an important draw to the Town of Blue Hill, bringing the visitors who patronize Blue Hill's merchants. Lose this scenic attraction and Blue Hill becomes a bit more like any other mid coast town. I believe this alone is a legal basis for rejection of the proposal.

Secondly, while I'm sure the developer offers to meet or exceed current requirements for septic systems and runoff, I believe the board must consider the rapid climate change our area is undergoing. That means today's standards are inadequate for providing future protection.

Third, I do not believe this subdivision fits within the town's comprehensive development plan. It certainly is in direct opposition to the concentration of development nearer to the town center.

Finally, while I understand that each proposal before the planning board must be considered on its own merits, I believe the board would be remiss if it did not bear in mind some larger issues. The housing in this proposal would obviously be among the more expensive in the area -- with purchase (or rental) costs far above what middle-class wage earners in the area could afford. But it is those middle-class wage earners -- police officers, teachers, hospitality workers, plumbers, electricians, landscapers and many more -- who provide the resources you need to support these houses. The mid coast region already has an affordable housing crisis. Put simply, you do not have the human resources you need to support this development. (Additionally, whatever the developer plans, I would ask the board to consider whether these homes will be or become largely seasonal.)

Thank you.
Don Hecker
139 Reach Road
Brooklin

No subdivision on blueberry barrens

Nora Flanagan <[redacted]>

Mon 7/8/2024 1:23 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear planning board,

As a member of the Blue Hill Farmers Market, I know that my customers/ visitors appreciate the unspoiled beauty of the area. Building houses on a special 'overlook' contaminates the experience of the setting. Please do not allow such a reckless, thoughtless use of a beautiful piece of land.

Thank you, Nora Flanagan

Sent from my iPhone

Town of Blue Hill
Planning Board
18 Union Street
Blue Hill, ME

July 8, 2024

To the Planning Board in the matter of the proposed nine lot subdivision of the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens property:

I first came to Blue Hill as a young child in 1972 to visit my great-grandmother. She owned a house across from Peter's Cove and first came to Blue Hill in the 1930s. In 2018, my wife and I were fortunate to purchase our property on Allen Point Lane. Over the years, we have visited numerous places throughout the Blue Hill Peninsula with our family, and we have hiked and picked blueberries on the referenced property. We have not seen any other space that offers the same seasonal beauty, views, and home for wildlife that this property affords. The scenic beauty of the granite ledge and blueberry barrens is unique for Blue Hill and for Maine. The birds, animals, and insects that nurture it are an integral part of the Salt Pond and Carlton Stream ecosystems. We feel strongly that along with the creature inhabitants of the acreage, the open space should be protected because it reduces light and noise pollution. This unparalleled site should be preserved for future generations. Your ability to act on behalf of this land is in line with the community vision for protecting greenspace, nature, and hiking trails, and for preserving views, historical areas and access to community and maritime pursuits such as kayaking as contained in the long-term planning documents.

Turning the blueberry barrens into nine, approximately two acre building sites creates a precedent for density and development that is not currently in line with our community nor the long-term community vision. During at least one of the Blue Hill town planning meetings, a member of the developer's team stated multiple times that the size of the parcels is "generous," and we disagree with this opinion. After analysis of the surrounding properties, it has been determined that the proposed lot sizes are comparatively small. We have no interest in seeing Blue Hill turned into a busy tourist destination like Bar Harbor, or a packed summer community like those in southern Maine, such as Kennebunk, Wells, Orchard Beach, or even Cape Cod. Destinations such as those offer oversized summer homes built on small lots. These areas are oversaturated with traffic and other density issues. We would like Blue Hill to remain a rural, caring, coastal community. This desire is in keeping with the Blue Hill Comprehensive Plan to retain the "rural, small-town character" of the town and concentrate future development toward the town center. Construction of nine primary structures on this land is contrary to that goal.

We are also concerned about the requirements for constructing roadways/drives, drilling wells, digging septic, and building, which could include blasting, paving, or other irreparable modifications to the natural granite ledge and outcroppings. Adding nine more wells to the water table may have negative runoff issues or supply concerns in times of drought. Allen Point already has challenges brought on by salt incursion which either require expensive remediation or monitoring by the residents.

The State of Maine values historic and scenic property. This property enjoys both the history of the blueberries as a core feature to Maine's agricultural history, and the fishing/clamming history of local fisher people and Native Americans. Today, this property remains a resource for clamming and elver fishing as well as recreation and wildlife. Protecting the natural beauty, diversity, and open space should be a priority. A nine-home subdivision will do irreparable harm.

This property is a valuable natural resource that should be respected by all and managed appropriately.

Sincerely,

Caldwell and Sylvia Hart

NO to Subdivision!

Amy Real < >

Mon 7/8/2024 11:25 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: SaltPondField@gmail.com <SaltPondField@gmail.com>

I vehemently oppose building on the salt pond blueberry barrens property.

I live in Stonington and take route 172 to Blue Hill to shop. The barrens are the most scenic part of my drive, and I am often struck by their ancient beauty and the expansive stunning view. I want to hike it, paint it, pick the blueberries but never do. I feel future generations should have an opportunity to enjoy and explore this property without intruding on private land.

Please do not allow the subdivision.

Amy Real

Subdivision overlooking Salt Pond

Cindy Pepper <[redacted]>

Mon 7/8/2024 10:55 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: saltpondfield@gmail.com <saltpondfield@gmail.com>

I am writing regarding concern over the development of the land just south of Carlton Stream, which for many years has been an open blueberry field. I am hoping that development could be done smartly: preserving the shoreline beauty for the public and limiting any housing to roadside location(if at all).

The Salt Pond it is such a beautiful field of berries and when I walk the property trails I enjoy the lack of houses there. I would hope Blue Hill could preserve places like this for public access before they are snatched up by developers from away.

It is also an access to Carlton Stream for the fisherman harvesting Elvers, under a very informal agreement that would be a shame to lose. And once when I was walking the field, I came across two beautiful long legged cranes. It is sad to think of the creep of development and its likely impact on places we enjoy, and perhaps take for granted at times.

Is there any way for the town or one of the trusts to purchase this ??? It seems like development should occur near town, not on pristine shoreline.

Please take this into consideration.

I treasure this site.

Thank you for hearing me out.

Cindy Pepper (formerly Avery)

Update on Blue Hill Salt Pond from Elver point of view

Jennifer Larrabee <[REDACTED]>

Mon 7/8/2024 10:22 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: Larry Lefkowitz <escapecontrol@gmail.com>

Just a quick note to let you know that we have been in communication with the developer. On the whole their draft requirements for allowing access to the Carlton Stream are fairly reasonable, however the fisherman have advised them of two concerns; 1. The information they are requesting annually is cumbersome and we have asked that they limit the requirement to only a copy of a DMR license since the license would have all the information they are requesting and 2. Allowing the HOA to revoke access at any point in time really eliminates the point of the document. We feel strongly that this cannot be left in the document.

We feel the need to remain on civil terms with the developer to keep the access conversation going, however it is our opinion that their initial offer was generally received as offensive to most of the fishermen in the group we talked to. As you well know, keeping fishermen at the table of discussion is difficult and most do not want to continue the conversation after the first offer.

We appreciate your time on this issue, and we appreciate your recognition of the importance of retaining historical access to commercial fishermen.

Thank you

Ryan and Jennifer Larrabee

Letter to Blue Hill Planning Board about Blueberry Hill

Wendy Schweikert <

Sun 7/7/2024 3:48 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

July 6, 2024

To Bryce Farnham, Code Enforcement Officer and the Blue Hill Planning board:

We lived across Carleton Stream from Allen's Blueberry Hill on the Salt Pond for 27 years, from 1993 until we sold our beloved property in 2020. Most locals would agree with us that Blueberry Hill is the most beautiful viewpoint and significant natural feature on the Salt Pond. Probably the Reversing Falls would be a close second. Neither would be an appropriate place for a Nine-Unit residential development. This ill-advised project would create an eyesore unlike anything else on the Salt Pond. Blueberry Hill is steep and loaded with granite, a very challenging location for NINE new homes. I wonder how they will dig foundations without blasting? One can't imagine a worse location for a development of this scope on our beloved tidal pond.

The former Allen property is a landscape feature unique to the Salt Pond. Popular with residents for generations for walking, picnics, bird watching, sketching, photography, launching canoes or kayaks and enjoying a magnificent view, it is also the staging area for as many as seventeen fika nets for trapping elvers, and numerous night dippers. Every spring this activity generates much needed income for many local families. Over the years we were lucky enough to live in the shadow of the Allen property we (and the resident nesting pair of eagles) observed thousands of people, young and old, enjoying Blueberry Hill in myriad ways, from children clambering the giant rocks, artists painting plein air, to hikers, swimmers, and boaters, enjoying this one-of-a-kind location on the Salt Pond.

Allowing this property development to occur, in our opinion, would be an atrocity to the environment of our beautiful peninsula. We cannot think of anything more inappropriate or insulting to our collective sensibilities. We hope the town and people of Blue Hill and the Peninsula will be wise enough to preserve this valuable and irreplaceable feature for future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely yours,

Ken and Wendy Schweikert

Cc: Weekly Packet

Amy Brubaker and Larry Lefkowitz

--

*Wendy W. Schweikert
286 Northport Avenue
Belfast, ME 04915*

proposed subdivision on Salt Pond

Vivian Pyle <

Sun 7/7/2024 9:57 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: SaltPondField@gmail.com <SaltPondField@gmail.com>

I'm dismayed to learn of plans for a subdivision on the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. This is a beautiful spot enjoyed by all who love the Blue Hill Peninsula. The character of the entire area would be affected by turning this magical spot into a housing development.

Vivian Pyle, a resident of Surry who treasures the beauty of our peninsula

proposed subdivision on Salt Pond

Vivian Pyle <vpyl@bluehillme.gov>

Sun 7/7/2024 9:57 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Cc: SaltPondField@gmail.com <SaltPondField@gmail.com>

I'm dismayed to learn of plans for a subdivision on the Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens. This is a beautiful spot enjoyed by all who love the Blue Hill Peninsula. The character of the entire area would be affected by turning this magical spot into a housing development.

Vivian Pyle, a resident of Surry who treasures the beauty of our peninsula

Re: Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens Proposed subdivision

Sally D. Charnow < >

Sun 7/7/2024 9:33 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Re: Salt Pond Blueberry Barrens Proposed subdivision

Dear Blue Hill Planning Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed development of nine houses on the Blueberry Barrens in Blue Hill.

As a Brooklin resident, I drive past the Blueberry Barrens frequently. This is a unique public landmark, cherished for its stunning views and natural beauty. The proposed large-scale development for this site would be comparable to building houses on Caterpillar Hill or along the Falls Bridge. These sites need to be protected not destroyed. The barrens, like other protected areas on the peninsula, provide essential habitat for local wildlife; they add immeasurably to the iconic beauty of this area beloved by residents and visitors alike.

The Blue Hill Comprehensive Plan specifies the town goals as retaining the "rural, small-town character" of the town, and concentrating future development towards the town center. Developing the Blueberry Barrens is clearly not in keeping with that stated goal.

To be clear, we desperately need affordable housing on the peninsula, not McMansions. We need housing for those who work in Blue Hill and the surrounding towns, housing closer to the town center.

Let's prioritize sustainable development and protect our precious natural landmarks, like the Blueberry Barrens, for the enjoyment of all and for generations to come.

In hope,

Sally Charnow

Sally Charnow
Chair, Department of History
Co-President, Society for French Historical Studies, <https://www.societyforfrenchhistoricalstudies.net/>
Professor of History
Hofstra University
301A Shapiro Family Hall
Hempstead, New York 11549

Forum: *Digital Humanities -- Ways Forward, Future Challenges*, co-editor and wrote "Introduction" with Jeff Horn, in *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, winter 2023.

Honoring David Kammerling Smith and the Digital Public Sphere; Acceleration?; Digital Humanities for the People(?); Infrastructure as Privilege; Computation, Cultures, and Communities; Digital Humanities and Generational Shift

Edmond Fleg and Jewish Minority Culture in Twentieth-Century France, (2021), <https://www.routledge.com/Edmond-Fleg-and-Jewish-Minority-Culture-in-Twentieth-Century-France/Charnow/p/book/9780367186142>

Artistic Expressions and the Great War, A Hundred Years On (ed), (2020)
<https://www.peterlang.com/view/title/70010>

Concern re the proposed blueberry hill subdivision

Larry Lefkowitz <

Sat 7/6/2024 4:11 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Bryce, if you would be so kind as to pass this onto the Planning Board, please... .Tnx

Dear Blue Hill Planning Board:

Let me begin by thanking you (again) for the time, effort, and thoughtfulness each of you is putting into this situation. It is appreciated.

I have previously voiced my concern about the proposed 9-house subdivision on what is an iconic and irreplaceable natural area. I would like to expand upon this concern to address the disdain that the Developer has shown to the Board and, by extension, to the Blue Hill community.

The Developer, in their initial presentation, tipped their hat to the beauty of this site and claimed that he aimed to preserve it (and was not in this for the money). Their actions speak otherwise. In particular:

- When the Board recognized the potential impact of the proposed 9-house plan, they asked the Developer to provide a visualization of the resulting development so they could better assess the impact it would have on the current pristine site. The Developer responded with a cross-sectional sketch showing the view of the final few houses. It did not reflect the totality of the project nor provide a view that would be seen from those on the Salt Pond, the overlooking hills, or even from the road. We provided the Board with the following much more realistic view based on the house site information in the Developer's proposal.



- At the "special meeting" of the Planning Board on 6/5, the Board requested that the Developer re-submit their plans to, in part, address the undue adverse effect on the scenic area. In their updated proposal, the Developer essentially ignored this request. The only change that was even vaguely responsive was to update the Subdivision Plan to identify "building envelopes" on each site. However, these appear to have moved at least several of the houses even closer to the shoreline, placing them further from the specified septic sites and further downhill from those sites. If anything, this makes things worse from visual, environmental, and feasibility perspectives.
- Furthermore, as the Board undoubtedly recalls, the Developer attempted to minimize scrutiny by claiming that they were only developing a road and not actually building any houses. This approach was also reflected in some of the supporting documentation and studies the Developer included with their application. For example, the so-called approval letter from the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife included "**Please note that as project details are lacking our comments should be considered preliminary.**" The updated Subdivision Plans have been provided to the DIFW which is now re-assessing the proposal based on this more complete picture.

There are numerous other concerns, especially with regard to potential environmental harm and threats to the various fishing and aquaculture development, but I will leave that for those most directly impacted to address.

This proposal, as it currently stands, seems to clearly not satisfy all of the Maine state subdivision land use criteria and should not be accepted as is. I appreciate the Planning Board's continued diligence and attention to this matter.

Best,

Save an iconic Blue Hill Salt Pond scene from 9 house development

skipfel <

Sat 7/6/2024 1:41 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Dear Bryce

We fervently hope the Planning Board preserves this area of beauty and peace, one that painters, walkers and our family have enjoyed over decades.

Surely, with a little effort the developer/ investors can find alternative land investments (quicker and higher return) that don't require destruction of a classic Maine vista-- salt pond, glacial boulders and blueberry barrens.

We hope for better judgement over what is legal for private business over what is right to preserve for future generations.

We ask you and other members to reject degrading this site for commercial gain, as if a particular individual owes nothing to the community. I refer you to the economic ethical case in "**The Tragedy of the Commons**" (refer to wikipedia as needed) where a single opportunistic farmer can ruin traditional "common" grazing land for other farmers in pursuit of private gain.

We have faith the planning board will be just and rational.

thanks

skip moreau, Janet. Lauren and Jaime

Blue Hill Peninsula

Salt Pond Blueberry development

Robert Patti Rollins <

Fri 7/5/2024 3:51 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

As part owner of the three hundred acres across the road from the proposed development I am strongly apposed to this.

1. I have viewed wildlife on this track of land for twenty years. I feel the Eagles and the Loons will be adversely affected.
2. The development of the land for utilities of this magnitude will certainly adversely impact the water quality of the Salt Pond .
3. The entrances to the proposed development will be a vehicular/ pedestrian and cycling hazard on this road. Approving this plan could lead the town of Blue Hill liable for injury, death or law suits. Due to the site lines and high speed of traffic that frequently occurs.

Patti Rollins

DBA member

Please don't do it!

Leslie Stevenson <[redacted]>

Fri 7/5/2024 11:47 AM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

To whom it is concern:

Please do not sell the blueberry property so that the new owner can't build nine houses. If residents wanted to live next to a bunch of houses, they would move to NYC.

It is so magnificent just the way it stands.

Please, I beg of you, don't let this happen.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

Leslie Stevenson

Concerns over the Salt Pond Development

Christina L . B. Allen <

Wed 7/3/2024 1:50 PM

To:Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

Hi Bryce- I would appreciate it if you would pass along my concerns around the proposed development at the Salt Pond property and blueberry fields in Blue Hill. This area is not just an iconic scenic vista that has been much beloved for hundreds of years, but it is a very important part of the local ecosystem and health of the Salt Pond itself, and is likely an important part of the Wabanaki homeland. It should have been conserved for community and cultural significance, and BHHT attempted to do so. Anything that can limit the development there, or avoid it altogether, would keep that possibility for conservation open. I recognize that the PB may be limited in what they can do, but I encourage and appreciate any efforts they put towards this end.

Thank you for sharing this.

--

*-Chrissy L. B. Allen
43 Timberledge Ln
Blue Hill, ME 04614*

Blueberry Hill development plan

Donald King <d~@bluehillme.gov>

Wed 7/3/2024 1:03 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

My name is Donald King and I live on the Salt Pond a short distance from the blueberry barrens that are slated for development. Those fields are one of the reasons we purchased our house. We were looking at houses and coming from Deer Isle when we came to that view and then what would be our home shortly after. It was so beautiful that we pulled over to enjoy it. It would be such a shame for the town of Blue Hill to lose that. It's one of the most widely loved and painted vistas on the peninsula. Building nine houses there would be the equivalent to putting a McDonalds in the Congregational church downtown.

I sincerely hope that you have some ability to stop or amend this development plan.

Thank you.

- Donald King
234 Salt Pond Road

Allen's Saltpond property development

Zachary Holderby <

Tue 7/2/2024 9:16 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

A friend and Audubon member expressed concern about a housing development near her house and the Salt Pond. While it is a right for a property owner to sell their land, and for an owner to build on that land, special consideration should be taken near a unique feature like the Salt Pond. Like along the coast, houses are not suppose to clear and otherwise majorly alter the shoreline view. Also the steepness of the sides of the hill and its affect on erosion and thus water quality in this productive estuary (mussel farms and large numbers of sea ducks in winter). While this area is already clear because it is a blueberry barren, a reasonable set back would make sense (I believe its 250 feet for Maine), and a more diffuse number of houses. View shed and house density affect how an area is perceived which in turn affect real estate value of an area. Maybe 4 or 5 houses worth much more would suffice? Also, allowing a small parcel near the stream outlet and parking area as public access could go a long way in community trust.

Thank you for listening to our concerns,

Zachary Holderby, Vice-president and Conservation Chair Downeast Audubon.

Blueberry Fields development

Tue 7/2/2024 3:45 PM

To: Bryce Farnham <bfarnham@bluehillme.gov>

I am writing to express concern regarding the development of the blueberry Field on salt Pond Road at Carlton stream. I feel that this iconic spot on the blue Hill peninsula should not be overdeveloped. As an arborist I have been involved with developers that promised to preserve the environment but failed time after time. They were unable to protect the environment from run off during heavy rains containing contaminated soil.

Perhaps less lots would be the solution to this situation.

Robert Rollins

DBA property owner

Blue Hill

Sent from my iPhone

Good Evening,

My comments will touch on Review Criteria 1,2,4,9,12,14 and 16 and the Blue Hill Healthy Ecosystem Ordinance in relation to review Criteria 1 and 16

I'd like to speak briefly to the groundwater report. In their engineers analysis of withdrawal and recharge rates to the aquifer, he neglects to factor in any of the impervious areas. In total, this might be as much as 4 or 5 acres unaccounted for. Taking his own equation and conclusion, but factoring in the impervious area, the groundwater withdrawal rate will be greater than the recharge rate.

Clearly unacceptable.

In this same report, the geologist includes a vague map of the underlying geology. It looks like Allen Point is on the wrong side of the pond and at one point says the eastern border of the assumed bedrock geology ends on the east at highway 172. Either he is very confused or sloppy or perhaps his report just contains errors.

This field has been sprayed for decades with Velpar, an herbicide that kills "weeds". It is highly soluble in water and is a prime candidate for vertical leaching into the aquifer. It can also be found in Stormwater runoff, and has been implicated in negatively affecting various planktons, clams, and the salmonid fishery in studies to date. There are multiple state agencies working on monitoring and understanding this hazardous chemical. For all of these reasons we question approving this project when the water may be insufficient or polluted.

The more important point is the elephant in the Stormwater submittal documents. They are using a technical definition of this development to skirt the clear intent of the State Stormwater Law. By declaring that they are only developing a road on .95 acre, they don't have to mitigate the much greater runoff the entire project will incur. Any subdivision with over 1 acre of new impervious development has to mitigate increased runoff. Instead, they are requesting a waiver for this responsibility. We don't consider the Salt Pond or the Atlantic to be dumping grounds.

This fiction of each lot owner doing their own development at under 1 new impervious acre gives them a fig leaf. In fact, the developer is incentivizing each lot owner to use him as the preferred builder on pain of paying him \$25,000 if they use someone else. Plus a \$20,000 escrow fund to enforce his preferred landscaping. He clearly wants to do the whole thing.

The entirety of their Stormwater runoff plan is for the initial access road. Though the submittal says its for the lot developments too, they only propose silt fences etc during construction. Nothing for the completed large project going forward.

It stands to reason that the land won't hold as much water when the amount of impervious surface is dramatically increased. This will increase the amount of runoff with greater velocity, temperature and sediment load which also carries pollutants to the Salt Pond. In fact, one civil engineer who looked over the documents, thinks runoff at study point 1 will likely erode and channelize that wetland with the increased speed and volume of runoff.

This unplanned for disruption of existing wetlands might also affect setbacks for septic fields and building envelopes. The full impacts are not addressed in their submittal. In my communications with the Dept of Environmental Protection, they are very concerned that this is an attempt to skirt their oversight.

The fact that the developer has started excavation, groundwork and grubbing along the highway with zero mitigation measures and apparent erosion, speaks poorly for his ability to manage the site development competently. Planned road and driveway work will have to be blasted into bedrock ledge in some places and filled in other places up to 5'. It is very difficult to mitigate erosion on this type of roadway over the years. When the lack of adequate Stormwater mitigation becomes apparent soon enough, the town's only recourse will be to try to enforce inadequate construction documents. This is not an outcome anyone wants.

This project should be entirely rejected as a disingenuous effort to circumvent our local and state laws. It is one large subdivision masquerading as one man building a road at .95 acres and 9 lot owners developing their own land at less than 1 acre each.

Thank you,
Tim Dawson