



Town of Natick, Massachusetts
Department of Community and Economic Development
13 East Central Street, Natick, Massachusetts 01760

January 21, 2021

RE: #0 Pleasant Street - Conservation Analysis Map Review

Dear Planning Board members,

The Natick Conservation Commission (NCC) reviewed the **#0 Pleasant Street Conservation Plan Preliminary** dated 12/29/21 and submitted to the Planning Board under the Residential Cluster Bylaw. The Conservation Analysis Map appears to include known natural resources within the project vicinity including: Bordering Vegetated Wetlands, Intermittent Stream with associated bank, and 100' wetland Buffer Zone jurisdictional to the NCC under state and local laws; and some slopes over 15%.

The proposed preserved open space under the cluster proposal incorporates the majority of the wetlands on site, however does meet the requirement that over 50% of the proposed preserved open space is outside of the delineated wetland areas.

The majority of the structures developed under this cluster, or as part of a by-right subdivision will need to undergo a Notice of Intent wetlands application where work falls within the 100' Buffer Zone. Some portions of the project may also trigger the Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw. There is construction of a structure very close to the 40' No Build Zone, which may necessitate the installation of signage to demarcate the 25' No Disturb Zone to prevent alteration the this area by future homeowners.

While these are early plan sets, the currently proposed roadway off of Pleasant Street crosses through an intermittent stream corridor. As plans for any approved project move forward, this stream crossing must be designed to meet the Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards and the Bordering Vegetative Wetland performance standards outlined in 310 CMR 10.55(4)(a-e). There may be a need for wetland restoration/replication on site to meet those standards, which could impact the preserved open space calculations. The roadway crossing proposed for the Cluster will impact the 25' No Disturb Zone and may require significant mitigation, if the Commission feels that the plans presented during the Notice of Intent process are permissible under the state and local wetlands regulations. This also applies to the traditional subdivision.

The Commission has the following thoughts and opinions regarding the potential development at #0 Pleasant Street.

The Commission does maintain that there are obstacles to be overcome for the proposed inclusionary subdivision plan to be permissible under state and local wetlands regulations based on the current level of project design.



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The Commission has doubts that the presented subdivision plan is an appropriate comparison to the cluster because of these concerns, and therefore cannot make a definitive statement that one of these proposals is demonstrably better than the other.

Should the Planning Board determine that the 6-lot inclusionary subdivision is permissible, the Commission has determined that based on values outlined in Section 5 of the cluster bylaw, the proposed cluster development does have some advantages over the currently proposed inclusionary 6-lot subdivision.

Specifically the proposed cluster would preserve a large area of forest and wetland, and has a reduced wetland impact when compared to the proposed 6-lot inclusionary subdivision. The upland habitat preserved by the cluster proposal has significant benefits for the vernal pool located on the adjacent lot. There are also measurable benefits in regard to the on-going ability of forest and soils preserved by the cluster proposal to sequester and store carbon.

The abutting land to the south (owned by Sheila Magullion) of the proposed development is protected open space under a Conservation Restriction, but there is no public access associated with this Conservation Restriction. This means that any open space preserved under this cluster development is likely not ideal for public access, as there are no available open space connections or existing trails in the surrounding area. The Natick Conservation Commission does not feel that with the current surrounding land conditions, this preserved open space, due to the limited connectivity and expansive wetlands, would be appropriate for the creation of publically accessible trails.

Looking forward to construction on the site, there would be greater impact and a larger area of impact to construct the 6-lot inclusionary subdivision as compared to the cluster.

Based on the materials submitted for review to the Town, the Natick Conservation Commission cannot make a determination that the proposed cluster development is demonstrably better than the proposed 6-lot inclusionary subdivision. The Commission looks forward to reviewing more detailed plans for either proposal or other alternatives. They voted to issue this memo stating this at their 1/20/22 meeting (6:0:0).

Sincerely,

Claire Rundelli
Conservation Agent
Town of Natick