



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Land Use Department

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-1741
Telephone (860) 395-3131 • FAX (860) 395-3125

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Via Hand Delivery

To: Robert J. McIntyre, Chairman, Planning Commission
From: Christine Nelson, AICP, Town Planner
Date: November 16, 2004
Subject: **“The Preserve” Conceptual Standard Plan**
Ingham Hill and Bokum Roads (Map 55, 56 & 61 / Lots 6, 3, 15, 17, 18)
Residence Conservation C District, Aquifer Protection Area
Applicant: River Sound Development LLC Agent: Robert A. Landino, P.E.

This memorandum summarizes a review of the subject Application, specifically with regard for the total lots that constitute a reasonable subdivision of the land as yielded by the proposed Conceptual Standard Plan. A review of the Preliminary Open Space Plan will follow in a separate report.

PROCEDURE

The subject application is for approval of a Special Exception use as may be granted by the Planning Commission, pursuant to §56 of the Zoning Regulations. The Zoning Regulations state “Special Exception uses that may be permitted in a district are unusual uses, which, under favorable circumstances, will be appropriate, harmonious and desirable uses in the district but that possess the special characteristics such that each use should be considered as an individual case.”

The Commission must now:

1. Review the **Conceptual Standard Plan** to determine from a conventional subdivision of the land the maximum number of lots (“yield”) that the applicant may later propose as an open space subdivision.
2. Review the **Preliminary Open Space Plan** to determine if the clustered design (“layout”) permanently reserves land according to the standards of open space preservation.

Although each step is “conceptual” and “preliminary”, the Commission should give consideration to the plans and standards that would eventually govern later applications for use and development if the Commission approves the pending Application.

Report on Administration and Design

The Commission must close the public hearing within 35 days and act within 65 days. [If the Commission approves the Application, that decision authorizes the Applicant to then apply for approval of a **Final Open Space Plan** within six months that is considered by the Commission in the same manner as a subdivision of land under the Subdivision Regulations.]

ADMINISTRATIVE & DESIGN REPORT

As observed from walking the site and from review of data presented in the application materials, the site of the subject Application lays in the northwest quadrant of Old Saybrook, which contains the largest area of yet undeveloped land in the town. These “highlands” comprise large blocks of typical southern New England woodland, visually characterized by the significant contrasts between its steep slopes and ridges, rolling terrain and ledge outcroppings, streams, marshes, and ponds.

Conceptual Standard Plan*

A year ago, the Zoning Commission approved a Petition by the Applicant to designate this property as Residence Conservation District, the purpose of which is “to cluster residential development amid open spaces at a density and in configurations suitable to preserve natural and cultural resources.” Since the natural resources of the site present unavoidable constraints to development, conservation of those natural resources should drive the design of this site, whether proposed as a conventional subdivision or as an open space subdivision.

In determining the number of lots that this site would yield for an Open Space Subdivision, the Conceptual Standard Plan designates open space for the purposes of habitat and public health & safety (e.g. water quality), but provides little for the purpose of recreation, which the Town actively promotes for the health of its residents and for which the Application should anticipate the needs of its incremental increase in residents to the town. The existing system of trails, cart paths, and woods roads serve the need for passive recreation, as well as for non-motorized circulation connecting to trails on adjacent properties in Old Saybrook and intermunicipally. Additionally, open space should be expanded to preserve cultural or historical resources by buffering it from incompatible physical, visual or auditory encroachments from adjacent development. The Conceptual Standard Plan does not provide for active recreation via parks or playgrounds, which would be a consideration of a standard subdivision plan, and this Conceptual Standard Plan should set land aside for the future. Lastly, the Conceptual Standard Plan should provide for all opportunities for vehicular circulation, including Bokum Road, to explore opportunities to distribute traffic efficiently.

These typical considerations of any subdivision of land affect the number of lots yielded by the Conceptual Standard Plan:

- Proposed driveways and other improvements associated with proposed lots in the Conceptual Standard Plan lie adjacent to or interrupt the historical travel way for Old Ingham Hill Road. Due to the historically rural nature of this unimproved right-of-way

* **Bold** type identifies lots previously recommended by this report to be eliminated for other reasons.

and its inherent ability to continue to serve as an intermunicipal trail, it should be adequately buffered from adjacent lots and associated improvements as a part of the open space system that should be created as a part of the Conceptual Standard Plan. Based on experience in creating aesthetic preservation areas along other corridors in town, it is recommended that the Old Ingham Hill Road right-of-way be located within an easement or fee simple strip at least 50' in width for its entire length with additional conservation easements on the adjacent lots that provide at least 50' of distance from any residential improvements. This would result in the modification of the following lots: 27, 28, 30, 98, and 131; and the elimination of the following lots: 26, 97, and 130.

- Similarly, proposed lots and associated improvements interrupt some of the more prevalent trails that exist on the property or reasonable connections to them, including a trail from Road #1 (near the Westbrook entrance) to Old Ingham Hill Road; a woods road (from “Essex West”) to Road #7; a perimeter trail (follows most of the CL&P easement line), the cart path (across the former CL&P property that is now town-owned), a woods road loop (from “Essex East”), a trail head at Wild Apple Lane (to the northernmost tip of town-owned property on the west), a woods road from Old Ingham Hill Road to the northernmost tip of town-owned property on the east and through to a trail that intersects Road #8 (close to Road #17). This would result in the modification of the following lots: 8, 94, 100, 107, 127, 128, 237, 238, and 240; and the elimination of the following lots: 24, 96, 101, 103, 106, 126, 142, 152, 153, 161, 162, 193, 265, and 287.
- Proposed roads and other improvements should not destroy particular stonewalls that demarcate the boundaries of early settlement of Old Saybrook, particularly adjacent to areas from which these walls will be viewed as residents pass through open space on recreational trails. Certain stonewalls should be encircled by preservation easements or encompassed by the boundaries of open spaces proposed adjacent. This would result in the modification of the following lots: 26, 95, 99, 100, 102, 107, 240, 241, 242, 243, 259, 260, 261, 262; and the elimination of the following lots: 101, 106, 126, 131, 132, 133.
- The Ingham Homestead lies beside the Old Ingham Hill Road, consisting of the foundation of the original structure and the stone fence for the adjacent garden or animal pen. It would be appropriate to reserve an area for this historic home site that is at least as great in area as that required for any new home in the new neighboring development and situated to buffer the site from adjacent development by 100' in distance from proposed property lines. This would result in the elimination of the following lots: 130, 131, and 132.
- In determining the need for reservation of open space, the Subdivision Regulations guide by a standard of ten percent (10%) of the land area of the subdivision, and state that a lesser area is sufficient to satisfy the need if adequate existing parks, playgrounds, recreation areas, and open space are available in the neighborhood. It is recommended that a buildable area (equal to at least 10% of that proposed for residential development) be set aside for active recreation; the area could be designated from either or both of

what the Conceptual Standard Plan currently proposes as open space or as residential development.

- Proposed Road #5 serves lots located within an area that should be designated for the preservation of the Ingham Homestead and the Old Ingham Hill Road, as does proposed Road #4. It is recommended to eliminate both roads and replace any need for access to any remaining lots by driveway. This would result in the modification of the following lots: 129; and the elimination of the following lots: **131, 132, and 133**.
- Road #7 serves only two lots through which runs a woods road identified by this report as an appropriate intermunicipal connection via passive recreation trails. It is recommended that the northern cul-de-sac of Road #7 be eliminated. This would result in the modification of the following lots: **142 and 143**.
- Road #2 serves only three lots through which runs an area identified by this report as an appropriate area for protection of the historic Old Ingham Hill Road. It is recommended that Road #2 be eliminated. This would result in the elimination of the following lots: **97, 98, and 99**.
- The opportunity to provide for vehicular access to and from the site via Bokum Road should be proposed as a part of the Conceptual Standard Plan to provide for east-west circulation across the site, alternate north-south access from Ingham Hill Road in Old Saybrook, additional emergency access, and additional connection to economic and civic resources in town. It is recommended to connect Road #11 to Bokum Road across the “Pianta parcel”. This would result in the elimination of the following lots: 192.
- The Pianta parcel should be included in the Conceptual Standard Plan to derive the number of lots it would yield for later development as another phase of the Open Space Subdivision.

The modifications recommended in this report and in the reports of the other consulting and municipal experts and agencies are intended to bring into compliance the lots, roadways and infrastructure improvements of the proposed Conceptual Standard Plan pursuant to Section 56 Open Space Subdivisions of the Zoning Regulations.

END OF MEMORANDUM