



**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK**  
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission

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**PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
EXHIBIT # 37**

**REPORT**

*Via Hand Delivery*

**To:** Robert McIntyre, Chairman, Planning Commission  
**From:** Paul H. Smith, Vice Chairman *PHS*  
**Date:** October 29, 2004  
**Subject:** **“The Preserve” Preliminary Open Space Subdivision  
(934 acres total) & Open Space (542.2 acres)**  
Ingham Hill and Bokum Road (Map 55, 56 & 61 / Lots 6, 3, 15, 17, 18)  
Residence Conservation C District, Aquifer Protection Area  
Applicant: Riversound Development, LLC. Agent: Robert A. Landino, P.E.

This report is submitted in response to the Planning Commission’s request and referral of plans submitted to your Commission on the Preserve project as part of an application for granting of a Special Exception from the Planning Commission for an Open Space Subdivision “Master Plan” layout for development. We understand that this layout includes a “Traditional Neighborhood Development” segment of 179 clustered homes as well as 45 half-acre to three quarter-acre building lots, 24 two-acre building lots and a golf course lot.

The Old Saybrook Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) has met to listen to the Applicant’s Consultants present an overview of the “Master Plan” layout, and to discuss the possible positive and negative elements of this plan related to the existing wetlands and adjacent buffer areas regulated by our Commission. It is important to note that the IWWC review of this matter was general in nature, and related to the application for granting of a Special Exception to allow subdivision approval for the general site layout presented by the Applicant. Detailed plans, reports, analyses and evaluations were neither provided to nor reviewed by the IWWC.

We understand that the Planning Commission has requested technical review and reports from some of the same Town consultants who are also frequently used by the IWWC for consultation. We recommend that the Planning Commission pay considerable attention to technical reports from the Town’s consultants.

The IWWC is supportive of the Applicant's request for a Special Exception, based on the information presented to and reviewed by us, to allow the Preserve property to be subdivided such that the Open Space Subdivision "Master Plan" layout as presented to us would be permitted. This consensus decision was reached by the IWWC due to a number of positive elements that were represented by the applicant as being part of the project, including:

- Construction of an east-west connector road between Route 153 in Westbrook and Bokum Road in Old Saybrook, with bridges to span wetlands and a portion of adjacent regulated areas at the three proposed roadway crossings of wetlands;
- Construction of a greenway/bikeway generally following the primary east-west site roadway to promote alternative modes of travel through sensitive wetland areas;
- Provisions for wildlife crossings beneath the roadway on higher volume roads to enhance migration of wildlife among the property's wetlands and vernal pool areas;
- Avoidance of any disturbance in vernal pool areas, and minimization of disturbance (less than 25% of the area) in the 750 foot vernal pool envelope;
- Construction of a project-wide wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment system that would only discharge treated wastewater into the subsurface discharge areas;
- Construction of facilities that will provide various levels of treatment to storm water run-off prior to the run-off entering regulated wetland areas;
- Provision of increased wetland buffers and open space to provide habitat and enhance migration where species of special concern (ie: box turtles and ribbon snakes) and rare vegetation have been identified;
- Construction and maintenance of nature trails adjacent to wetland areas that avoid sensitive areas and allow access by the general public, and the monitoring and enforcement of prohibitions for motorized vehicles on this trail system;
- Construction of buildings and wastewater discharge areas outside of wetlands and adjacent regulated areas; and,
- A commitment to work with the Town to minimize encroachment in, and potential impacts to, wetlands and wetland regulated areas from the proposed golf course during construction as well as during operation and maintenance of the facility.

The IWWC believes that there are many issues that will require further review and evaluation during the more detailed Site Plan reviews that still need to occur for this property. In general, it is our position that wetlands, watercourses and adjacent regulated areas be avoided completely. This means keep roads, buildings, wastewater disposal systems, golf course

improvements and other activities out of these sensitive areas. We are encouraged by the measures identified to date by the Applicant's development team of consultants to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive on-site wetland and watercourse resources, and look forward to reviewing specific issues in more detail as part of future applications.

The IWWC feels that approval of the Special Exception by the Planning Commission will allow the Open Space Subdivision "Master Plan" layout for development, which will contribute to an increase in the amount of open space/undisturbed land on the property, and increased protection to the existing wetland and watercourse resources.

Thank you for giving the IWWC the opportunity to provide input and comments to the Planning Commission on this important application that is before you. Please contact us if you have any questions concerning the issues discussed in this report.

Copy to: Christine E. Nelson, Town Planner

**END OF MEMORANDUM**