



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK  
Planning Commission

**Executive Board**  
*Robert J. McIntyre, Chairman*  
*Kathleen R. Smith, Vice Chairman*  
*H. Stuart Hanes, Secretary*

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**Members**  
*Judith S. Gallicchio*  
*Richard R. Tietjen*

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, November 10, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.**  
Old Saybrook Middle School Auditorium  
60 Sheffield Street

**Alternate Members**  
*Salvatore V. Aresco*  
*Janis L. Esty*  
*James S. Conroy*

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Robert McIntyre called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**Attending Members**

Robert McIntyre, Chairman  
Stuart Hanes, Secretary  
Judith Gallicchio, Regular Member  
Richard Tietjen, Regular Member  
Salvatore Aresco, Alternate Member (arrived at 9:20 p.m.)  
Janis Esty, Alternate Member (seated for Kathleen Smith)

**Absent Members**

Kathleen Smith, Vice Chairman  
James Conroy, Alternate Member

**Attending Staff**

Christine Nelson, Town Planner  
Bryan Zielinski, Recording Clerk

**III. REGULAR BUSINESS**

**A. Minutes**

The Commission reviewed the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 10, 2004 and made the following amendments:

Page 1- Minutes

Amended sentence should read: A small septic system will be included with the proposed building for the workers' lavatory.

Page 2- Public Hearings

The commission has thirty-five days to close the public hearing, not sixty-five as written.

Add after "Public comments:" – The following questions were asked of the applicant. For all responses and further information please examine the detailed transcript available at Town Hall.

Page 5- Old Business- Item A

First sentences should read: Christine Nelson informed the commission that she visited, with a Department of Environmental Protection representative, all of the road endings that have water access and found out that tidal wetlands crossings must be at the narrowest point of the tidal wetlands. Since the Willard Avenue road ending is tidal, there probably cannot be an access trail to the water.

**MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2004 as amended. MOVED by Stuart Hanes. SECONDED by Richard Tietjen. In favor: R. McIntyre, S. Hanes, J. Gallicchio, R. Tietjen, J. Esty. Opposed: None. Abstaining: None. APPROVED 5-0-0.**

- B. Correspondence
- C. Committee, Representative & Staff Reports  
Nothing new to report.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (8:00 to 11:00 p.m.)**

- A. **“The Preserve” Special Exception for Open Space Subdivision (934 ac. total) & Open Space (542.2 ac.)**  
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.

Chairman Robert McIntyre opened the public hearing at 8:00 p.m. and informed the audience of the procedures of public hearings. The public hearings will continue to next Wednesday to gather input from the public. Everyone commenting on this application should direct his or her comments to the Commission after the applicant is through speaking.

Judith Gallicchio expressed to the audience that she lives on Pheasant Hill Lane in close proximity to the proposed subdivision, but doesn't think this should preclude her from making a fair decision on the application. There were no objections to her staying on the board from the audience or the applicant.

Christine Nelson stated that there were three pieces of correspondence received since the last meeting and these were included as exhibits.

David Royston, River Sound Development LLC attorney, submitted a report titled “Response to Town Review Comments” with all responses to comments at the last meeting and correspondence received. Other documents submitted were full-scale maps and 11x17 maps of the displayed map boards, and a copy of a letter from the First Selectman to the Town Planner stating that the Selectmen would accept the open space offered to the town in this application. Mr. Royston explained that the commission must determine if this special exception application for an open space subdivision meets their expectations.

Robert Landino, River Sound LLC engineer, reintroduced members of the development team. Speaking tonight will be Randall Arendt, Michael Klein, Michael Klemens, Stuart Cohen, Arthur Hills, and himself.

Randall Arendt, conservation planner/designer, described how the applicant began to develop the site. In a conservation plan the goal is to preserve the significant natural

features by setting that land aside before beginning to define lot lines. After identifying uplands, steep slopes, wetlands, wildlife corridors and habitat, the planner can find where the development would be best suited. Once the conservation land is excluded, the buildable land is divided into housing lots and roads avoiding all of the natural features.

Michael Klein, River Sound Development LLC Soil Scientist and Biologist, described his approach to evaluating the species and their habitats within the site. After reviewing the existing data from previous observations and delineations, he was able to determine where additional information was needed. The quantities and species of flora and fauna change over periods of time. Mr. Klein performed a bird survey, mammal survey, and plant species survey and submitted it in the report at the meeting last Wednesday. All of the information was put on the maps and assessed for function and value. High priority features were excluded from areas of development. The goal is to avoid or minimize the impacts to the surrounding quality of the environmental features.

Michael Klemens, River Sound Development LLC Vernal Pool Biologist Consultant, observed the vernal pools on the site and evaluated them for functionality and value. Active vernal pools with more than one species were considered highest priority for preservation and are twelve of the thirty-one identified. Most amphibians and reptiles were observed in the west and northeast portion of the site. A Connecticut Special Concern Species, the Box Turtle, was sited and identified on the maps. The culverts proposed for the roads are square in shape and allow light to pass through for species to pass under the roads.

The commission took a ten-minute break. Salvatore Aresco arrived.

Stuart Cohen, River Sound Development LLC Turf Management and Chemical Risk Assessor, worked with the development team to create an environmentally sensitive golf course using organic and bio-rational methods to maintain the fairways and greens. A lawn care management plan was also drafted for the homeowners living within this development. Through water quality monitoring and restricting the use of pesticides to certain parts of the golf course, the course could be developed without changing the conditions of the surface water and groundwater.

Arthur Hills, River Sound Development LLC Golf Course Designer, stated his credentials for golf course design and gave background to past golf courses built in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. The goal in this development is to minimize the amount of disturbance to the open space and work with the natural features of the land. Golf course play would be on areas outside of the wetlands and around some trees.

Robert Landino, River Sound Development LLC Project Engineer, described the open space as 514 acres deed to the town as well as 65 acres designated as a conservation easement restricting landowners from further development or changing the landscape of their housing lot. The housing types were derived from single family attached and single family detached, and in various settings with  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lots, estate lots with more than 2 acres, and village style condominiums. The connector road will run east to west from Route 153 in Westbrook to Bokum Road in Old Saybrook. The town's fire officials

determined that a fire sub-station was needed within the site to become a first responder to any emergencies.

Interested individuals can review the transcript of the meeting to get a more accurate account of the public questions and applicant responses.

Public comments:

James Keaney, Bayside Road-

Mr. Keaney has concerns with the amount of traffic from the development as well as the longevity of the proposed community septic system. He also mentioned that he has had first hand experience with the amount of fill needed to create house lots. 154 bird species were found in and around Essex Meadows which borders The Preserve.

Charles Rothenberger, CT Fund for the Environment-

As an intervener in the public hearing process, an alternative specialist is allowed. Jeff Hammerston, a zoologist, prepared comments.

Jeff Hammerston, Professor of Conservation Biology-

It cannot be said that there has been an exhaustive search of the property to find and chart all of the species that either reside there or migrate to or through the property. There are some threatened species of plants on the property. The most important consideration that should be made is for the interaction of the vernal pools because they are usually are shared.

REPLY:

There have been significant man hours on the property to identify and log all the plant and animal species. River Sound Development has also worked with the Dept. of Environmental Protection to find the species of conservation concern.

Tom Unger, 8 Trask Road-

Mr. Unger submitted open space calculations that he was unable to understand. There are 528 acres of land unsuitable to build on, 514 which will be given to the town. This land will be taken off of the tax rolls. Why is the town willing to accept land that is useless as public open space.

REPLY:

Upland areas and some of the steep slope areas can be developed.

Kathy Connolly, North Cove Road-

Organic gardening and farming is not to be taken lightly. There is no such thing as partially organic. There is a National Organic Program List of everyone registered as an organic farmer. If it is found out that someone has used pesticides or anything other than what is allowed on the list, there are fines imposed by the National Organic Standards Board. The golf course will need significant work to transform the ground to a usable turf. It will take a lot of fill to prepare the fairways for turf management with grass. Will the developer chemically analyze the soils brought in for potential pesticides or pollutants that will alter the landscape?

REPLY:

No soils will be imported except for the septic system and those soils will undergo testing.

Sally Faulkner, Fenwood Drive-

There is a discrepancy between the number of lots on the conventional plan, the open space plan, and the town's report on the yield that the land can sustain.

REPLY:

There will need to be an assessment to find out how the town staff derived their information.

Bob Fisher, Ingham Hill Road, Essex-

The golf course will need significant water to keep the fairways. Did the developer determine that there is enough water to sustain the golf course using wells to irrigate the course? This will probably deplete some of the water that neighboring houses will use. In drought conditions how will the course get watered? It is extremely important to monitor the water quality and quantity.

Mark Branse, Planning Commission Legal Counsel-

The objective of this hearing is to determine if the developer has established an appropriate number of housing lots on the conventional subdivision plan and located them in a manner suitable for an open space plan.

REPLY:

CT water company submitted a letter stating that there is enough water on the property to serve the golf course.

Dani Redak, Waterbury Street-

It is unacceptable to build in this area. This is habitat for other things besides us.

William Dannaher, Coulter Street-

We already have enough golf courses in this area. There is no way that this one would be an asset to an area that has at least six courses within a half hour drive.

Mark O'Neill, Westbrook-

Why should we have to choose to approve or deny a subdivision and a golf course in this area? Why can't we choose to do something else with the land?

Jim McNeish, Ingham Hill Road-

The access road through Ingham Hill Road will most likely be used and should be stated as such.

John Stengle, Pepperidge Trail-

Mr. Stengle moved here from out of state for the character the town has. This type of development has the appearance of a gated community. There was an organic golf course on Long Island that didn't work out and went back to using the typical pesticides

and fertilizers. This proposed type of golf course community would completely change the area and take away from the character that is already here.

Wayne Orsie, Attawanhood Trail-

This will be the largest development in the state. How can anyone determine the amount of school children and types of people that will buy these homes? The traffic and pollution alone from this development will change the structure of Old Saybrook. This will alter the quality of life of the town.

Geoff Jacobson, Town Consulting Engineer-

Where does the golf course come in to a four step process of 1) determining what land to conserve 2) determining where the houses will go 3) drafting connecting roads 4) drawing lot lines?

REPLY:

Between the conservation land and housing locations because it is greenspace and should be located as greenspace.

Geoff Jacobson-

Why is it that on the Open Space Subdivision Plan the development is extremely sensitive to all environmental considerations by not on the Conventional Plan? Why place some roads within the 100-foot regulated area on the Conventional Plan? Why have different standards for both plans?

REPLY:

The Conventional Plan meets the wetland regulation requirements, conforms to the law, and there is no jurisdiction over open space.

Richard Snarsky, Town Consulting Soil Scientist-

How often might metamorphs (baby salamanders) cross the fairways and become subject to the chemicals picked up along the way? Also there was a vernal pool not on the map, number 31.

REPLY:

The development took all activity outside of the regulated area.

Richard Snarsky-

There is a DEP listed species of special concern on the property that is not identified on any maps or reports. Also, was the golf course layout designed before or after the conservation data was developed?

Mark Branse-

Did Arthur Hills design the driving ranges? With the proximity of holes 3,10, and 18 to the houses, aren't they within range of being hit with golf balls? Also, how do you get from hole 9 to hole 10?

REPLY:

Arthur Hills- He did design the driving range. The houses are far enough away from the reach of golf balls. There might be a case of being hit but a slight chance. To get from

the ninth to tenth holes it is necessary to travel through the clubhouse and parking lot around the residences.

Mark Branse-

Has read Randall Arendt's books and they typically say to get away from the grid pattern and provide central greens or center focus but this development has none of that.

REPLY:

Randall Arendt- This development has vistas and curves with the landscape. It has a compact design, which is a current trend in development to create neo-traditional neighborhoods. This will represent a traditional New England atmosphere.

Bruce Hillson, Town Consulting Traffic Engineer-

Does the street from Route 153 to Bokum Road meet the standards for a local residential street or a feeder street?

REPLY:

It meets the alternate road standards to produce a traffic calming effect. The abutting lots have streets that meet the local residential street standards.

After the public and consultants finished asking questions, the commission members decided to hold their questions until the next meeting on November 17. The commission needs full-size and 11x17 color copies of all the maps shown tonight to view at Town Hall.

**MOTION to continue the public hearing of "The Preserve" Special Exception for Open Space Subdivision to 7:00 p.m. Wednesday November 10 at the Old Saybrook Middle School Auditorium, 60 Sheffield Street. MOVED by Stuart Hanes. SECONDED by Judith Gallicchio. In favor: R. McIntyre, S. Hanes, J. Gallicchio, R. Tietjen, J. Esty. Opposed: None. Abstaining: None. APPROVED 5-0-0.**

- V. **OLD BUSINESS**  
Nothing scheduled.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS**  
Nothing scheduled.
- VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 12:50 a.m. until the next regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday November 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Saybrook Middle School, 60 Sheffield Street. MOVED by Stuart Hanes. SECONDED by Judith Gallicchio. In favor: R. McIntyre, S. Hanes, J. Gallicchio, R. Tietjen, J. Esty. Opposed: None. Abstaining: None. APPROVED 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Zielinski, Recording Clerk