

PLANNING
COMMISSION
EXHIBIT #67

Date: November 17, 2004

To: Old Saybrook Planning Commission Members

From: Michele Hanly, 36 Shepard St. Old Saybrook, Ct.

For some time now I have been following "The Preserve" project that is proposed by Riversound Development and I have a few thoughts I would like to share with the commission. Attached are three maps. Map 1 & Map 2 were copied from "The Preserve" literature and Map 3 is a combination of those two maps.

Along with many others in this town, I would first hope to see the land "preserved" as is. The more I listen to people speak about this piece of property, the more I realize the environmental value it possesses. Unfortunately, if total preservation of this land is not an option then it would be important to make wise decisions that would help shape it's development.

Much has been made of the benefits our town will receive by using this "open space" subdivision method of development (Map1). At first glance it looks like an interesting and desirable concept for large properties where most of the land is developable. However, that does not seem to be the case here in Old Saybrook. By Riverside Development's own account, (see Map 2) almost half of the property, 47%, would be left undeveloped as open space under the conventional plan. Of course, the accuracy of their conventional plan needs to be verified and I am told the town had hired a consultant to do that. In reality the amount of actual open space for Map 2 may even be closer to what is proposed in their plan (Map 1) which includes both housing and a golf course.

Note that I have colored in the golf course fairways to better show the contrast between the course and the real open space (Map 1). It seems to me that the fragmentation of open space caused by the golf course is not significantly different when compared to the conventional subdivision plan (Map 2, again this map needs to be verified by the town). This concept of fragmentation is often mentioned by the environmentalists when talking about conservation of land.

At the first public hearing, Riversound Development said they had established the number of houses in their plan (Map1) by first laying out Map 2 and then using that number as a maximum. I think that if there is to be a golf course on the property, then the maximum number of possible homes should be based on the conventional development layout with the golf course in place. That is what I am trying to show in Map 3. If you look at the map I think that fewer than 248 homes would be allowed and that access to some of the areas would be very difficult with the golf course in place. Once again the town verified map should be used.

If it is decided that the property will be developed, then what should be allowed? That decision starts with you, the planning commission. These are my thoughts.

Neither of the plans shown on Map 1 or Map 2 are great choices. They both will fragment and divide this pristine forestland into small open space areas. Problems due to increased pollution, traffic and the need for additional town services will exist with both proposals.

However, I am **more** concerned with the cluster housing proposal (Map1). It seems the potential for the pollution of ground water systems would be higher. In addition to the possibility of contamination from a large central septic disposal system, you would also have possible fertilizer contamination from a professional golf course. It also seems to me that both the community septic system and the golf course itself are located near the Pequot Swamp Pond. I would think possible contamination of the groundwater system would be more likely to occur at this wetland location. The increase of traffic due to the new development would in itself be a concern, especially for people coming into town by way of Bokum Road or School House Road. The golf course proposed with the cluster housing would compound that problem even more.

One last point I'd like to make. If for some reason the Riversound Development is not able to develop the cluster-housing plan and the efforts to acquire the property for conservation do not materialize then I would suggest the following. The town could add more stipulations to the existing codes to include stricter limits on building around wetlands, the white cedar swamp and vernal pools. With all of the information that now exists about this property we would be able to further protect more areas of this amazing piece of property from possible future development.

If all of what I have said in this letter is old news then I apologize. But if you do have any questions on anything that I have written, please feel free to call me at 388-5687. I thank all of you for the time and dedication that you give to the town of Old Saybrook by serving on this commission. In closing, I would urge you to walk The Preserve property as a group. Although drawings can give us a good picture of what the property is like, it can never replace the real thing. Good Luck.

Sincerely,

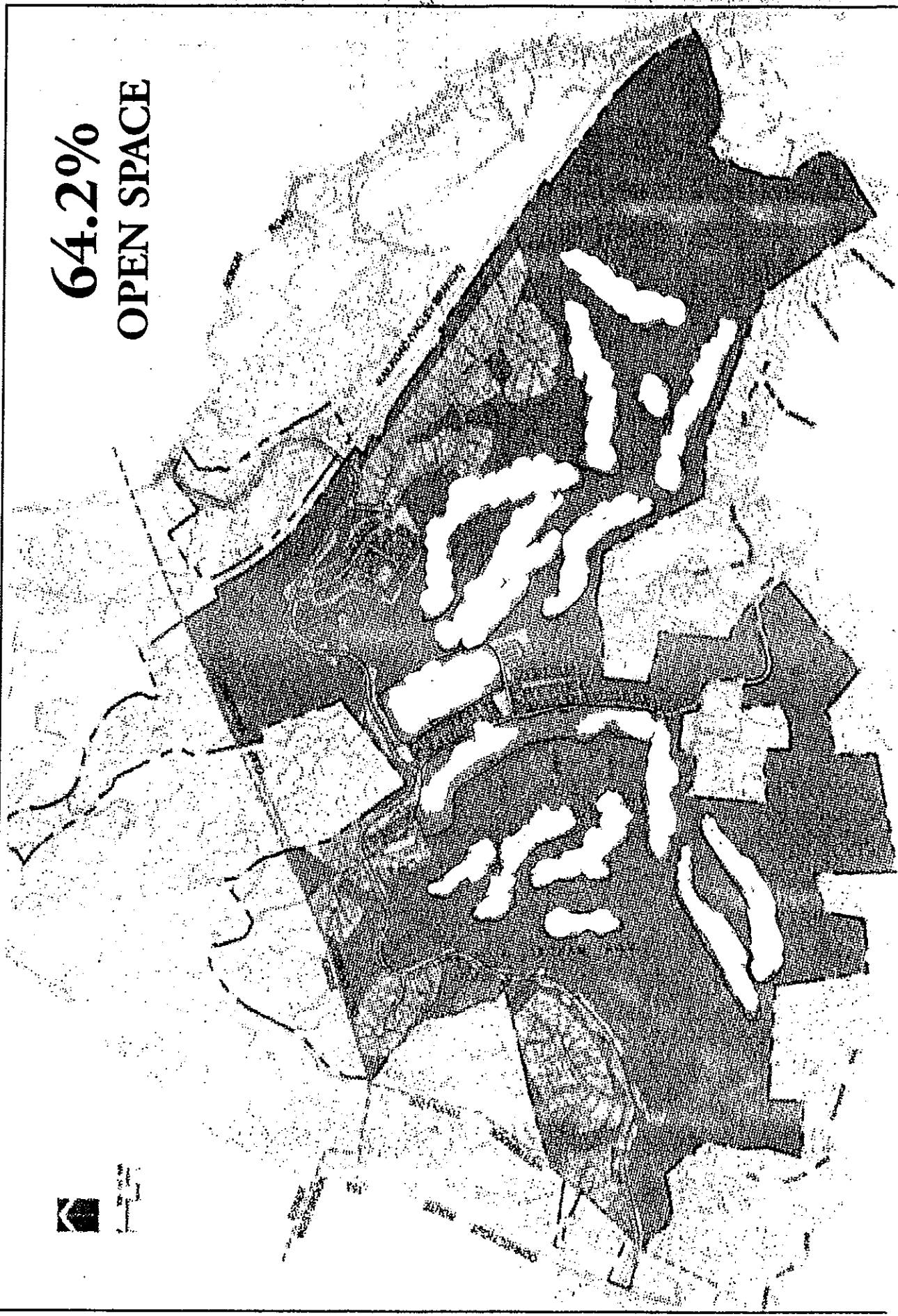


Michele Hanly

MAP 1

THE PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

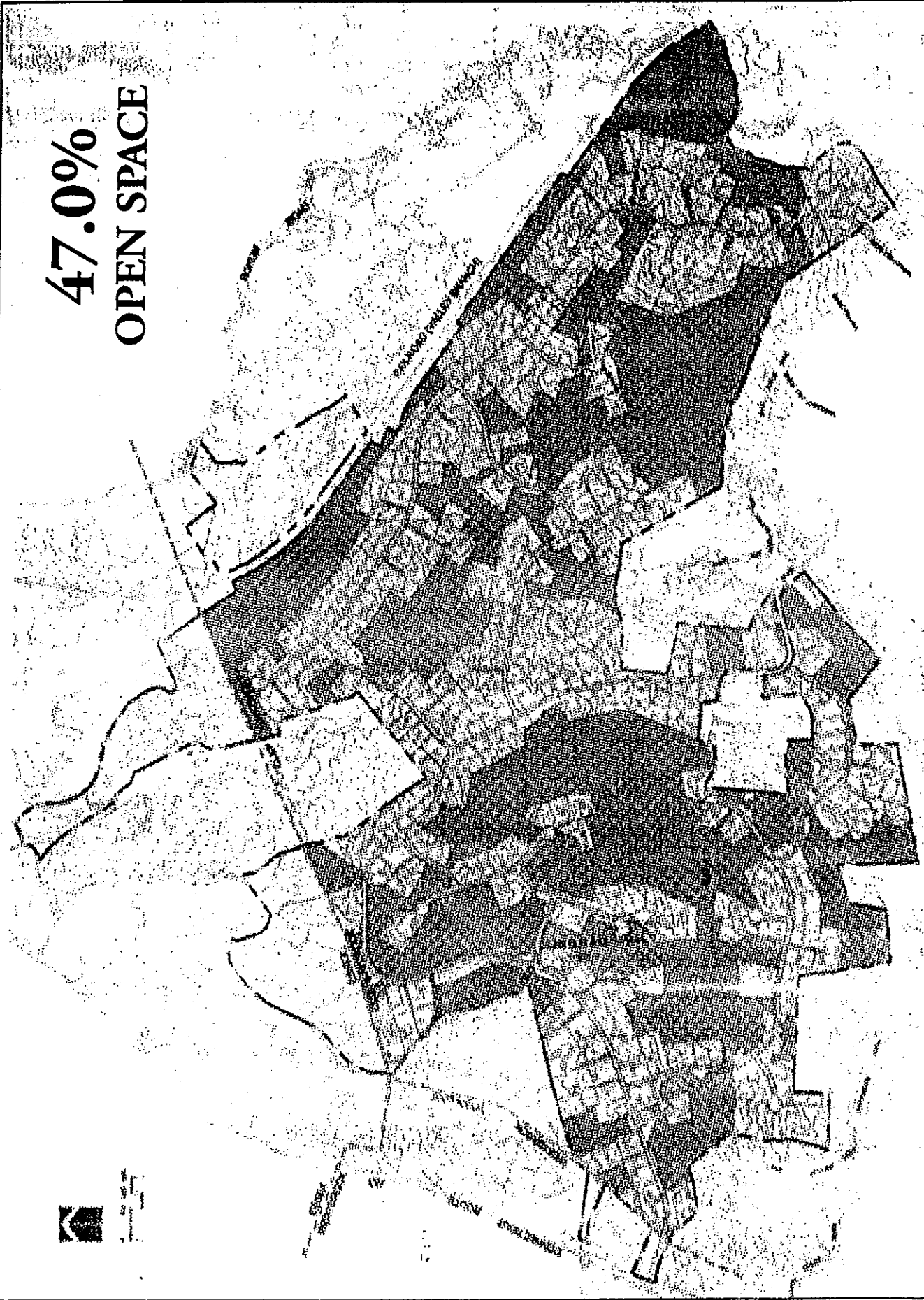
64.2%
OPEN SPACE



MAP 2

CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION OPEN SPACE

47.0%
OPEN SPACE



MAP 3

CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION WITH GOLF COURSE

- - open space
- ▨ - proposed preserve golf course
- ▧ - proposed preserve conventional subdivision EXCLUDING HOUSES WHERE GOLF COURSE IS PROPOSED.

