

State of Connecticut

PLANNING
COMMISSION
EXHIBIT # 169

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Hartford

January 11, 2005

Mr. Robert J. McIntyre
Chairman
Planning Commission
Town of Old Saybrook
302 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475-1741

Re: The Preserve, Application for Special Exception

Dear Mr. McIntyre:

I regret that I cannot be present at the final hearing on this matter, rescheduled to January 12 from a week earlier when I planned to attend. I ask that my written comments in this letter be included in the record of public comment and considered accordingly.

The Preserve is a critical environmental resource of statewide importance. As we all know, The Preserve is the heart of Long Island Sound's last large coastal forest. Its wetlands, marshes, streams, forests and beaches comprise one of the largest remaining unfragmented habitats on the Connecticut coast. It is home to a large number of important plant and animal species, and provides seasonal food and cover for numerous migratory birds, as well. It is beautiful and unspoiled.

I strongly support efforts to purchase this property -- to hold and protect it as undeveloped conservation land in perpetuity. That result is surely the best for all concerned. Nevertheless, since those efforts have not succeeded, at least so far, this Commission must fully and fairly evaluate the proposal before it, including all of its environmental, economic, and esthetic implications.

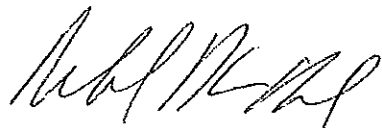
Maintaining large areas of contiguous forest is essential to the health of any ecosystem, and it is especially critical when dealing with a large pristine habitat such as The Preserve. By breaking this property into numerous separate developed and undeveloped sections, the developers propose to fragment it, leaving only relatively small separate isolated sections of the original habitat. This fragmentation will effectively destroy the natural resource value of The Preserve, even though if it may preserve a minimum number of required acres. Preservation of critical habitat cannot be achieved simply by keeping undeveloped acres here and there. Instead,

Mr. Robert J. McIntyre
January 11, 2005
Page 2

real preservation requires maintaining large enough unfragmented habitats to permit plants and animals to utilize their surroundings to thrive.

The applicant's proposal for The Preserve fails to respect the need to preserve this critical resource. Scattering a large golf course and various housing clusters, roads and other infrastructure around such large and separate areas of the site will virtually destroy its natural and environmental resource value. That result is unacceptable. Accordingly, I urge you to reject this ill-conceived application, and to protect this site for the benefit of your Town and all of Connecticut.

Very truly yours,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

RB/pas

cc: Christine Nelson, AICP
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