

PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
EXHIBIT 110

To the Old Saybrook Planning Commission:

RE: Modification application by RSD to develop the "3-pods".

I would like to thank the Commission for your volunteer work and long hours. This two-phased proposal is extremely complex, and the decision you make will be of upmost importance, as it will truly shape the nature and character of Old Saybrook moving into the future. I encourage you to read and absorb reports and documents from past Planning and Inland Wetlands hearings, as this information is crucial to fully understand the natural resources of this 1,000 acre coastal forest and wetland complex. Also, for those who have not yet taken a site walk of the 3 pods, it is my opinion that you should do so. Maps, reports, and oral testimony can only provide so much information; it is necessary to personally observe these parcels to make a complete and informed decision.

In 2006, the IWWC denied the Preliminary Plan application, and in so doing provided 11 strong reasons for its denial. Two of these reasons had to do with the plan resulting in non-conservation of certain vernal pools (using Dr. Michael Klemens' methodology), and therefore the loss of productivity (reduction in egg masses) due to the expected mortality of adult amphibians in their 750 ft. home-range, upland area.

The IWWC, using the testimony of both Richard Snarski (town's consultant) and Michael Klemens (the applicant's consultant), determined that there would be a loss of over 25% of total vernal pool productivity due to the development, and that this loss would further result in adverse physical impacts to the non-conserved vernal pools. Wood frog eggs and tadpoles number in the millions in the 38 vernal pools in The Preserve, and they provide a critical environmental service, "cleaning" the vernal pool water as they feed on detritus and algae. With a loss of wood frogs in the non-conserved vernal pools, comes the loss of the "cleaning" service, thus damaging the natural and balanced water chemistry of the vernal pool water. Dr. Michael Klemens refers to the wood frog as keystone species in the Preserve. As we know, RSD appealed this particular point in court, but the court upheld the reasoning and determination by the IWWC and found that there was enough scientific evidence presented to support the adverse physical impact determination. All 11 determinations made by the IWWC were found by the courts to hold true, and thus, the 2005 Preliminary Plan was (and is) not acceptable.

Now, in 2010, RSD throws the Planning Commission and the public a big curveball by requesting a modification to The Preliminary Plan, seeking permission to develop 3 pods around the perimeter of The Preserve, while reserving the right to develop "the core" later – in essence, a two-phased (or maybe more) development.

At a previous Planning Commission meeting, Charles Rothenberger of CFE charged the Commission to look at the **whole development plan**, not only the first 33 lots. He added that locking in the three pods now leaves restricted and limited options for the development of "the core" to address previously identified environmental concerns. I would like to support and underscore Rothenberger's statement.

Within the proposed 3 pod land areas are wetlands, as well as four (4) of the 20 non-conserved vernal pools identified in the final Preliminary Plan inventory. For illustration, let me focus on two (2) of these

vernal pools, numbers 16 and 31 located in the Ingham Hill pod, which have been identified as highly productive and classified as exceptional Tier 1 pools. These two (2) pools represent a significant portion of the 25% loss in productivity of the 20 non-conserved pools. Additionally, pool 31 contains all 3 obligate vernal pool species (wood frog, marbled and spotted salamanders) and is home to an eastern box turtle, a species of concern. This is a pool that requires extra special care and attention.

As mentioned earlier, the IWWC found the Preliminary Plan insufficient to protect the vernal pool complex, particularly those that were deemed to be non-conserved according to Klemens' accepted methodology. Both pools 31 and 16 are categorized as non-conserved even though the Preliminary Plan shows that both the east and west portions of the Ingham Hill pod were to remain undeveloped open space, with the exception of roads. And, the roads are the rub in the Ingham Hill pod area of the Preliminary Plan. In order to maximize the protection of vernal pools 31 and 16 and the creatures dependent on these pools, Klemens recommended that a 750 foot envelope (average home range of amphibians) around the pools, at a minimum, be conserved as open space. However, Klemens added that pools 31 and 16 could not be categorized as conserved because of the additional traffic generated from the planned development, leading to amphibian mortality on Ingham Hill Road and the new road from Ingham Hill road into The Preserve.

So, presently, the request to modify the Preliminary Plan by adding development (13 homes, driveways, lawns, pets, cars, septic systems, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) to the Ingham Hill pod only increases and accelerates the vernal pool degradation of pools 31 and 16, and decreases protection to the eastern box turtle living in and around pool 31. If the Planning Commission were to approve the Ingham Hill pod, thereby allowing excessive development and road traffic within the 750 foot amphibian home-range, the decision would be counter to the IWWC findings and determinations regarding the protection of vernal pools.

Does the Planning Commission wish to allow additional vernal pool degradation in the Ingham Hill pod beyond that already predicted in the Preliminary Plan, which has been found by the IWWC to be unacceptable?

If the Planning Commission allows the Ingham Hill Pod to be developed, leaving vernal pools 31 and 16 non-conserved, the standing IWWC decision would then reasonably dictate that the loss in productivity in these pools be "made up" elsewhere in the core. Does the Planning Commission want the Ingham Hill pod to be built now without knowing whether the plans for the future core will result in less overall amphibian mortality and improved conservation of the total vernal pool complex?

The above problematic example underscores the point made by Charles Rothenberger of CFE. Unfortunately, the Ingham Hill pod example that I used is only one example; there are several other examples of environmental concerns associated with the pod plans. The two-phased pod plan has been called uninspired and disingenuous, and I will add the word unfair. I believe it is unfair that the Planning Commission and the IWWC will have to sift through the numerous complexities and problems that a two-phased (or more) development of The Preserve brings. In Mr. Branse's memos to the Commission he outlines a host of problematic conundrums that are caused by a multi-phased approach of this

magnitude. In my opinion, this is simply an unfair burden for the Commissions, and is not in keeping with the intent or spirit of the Special Exception, Preliminary Plan approval.

I request that the Planning Commission deny the plan modification as proposed, because it is only fair that the Commission and the Old Saybrook Community see an entirely revised whole plan that addresses the severe environmental shortcomings of the original plan.

Thank you and Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Cryder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Cryder, 70 Chalker Beach Rd.