

CHARLOTTE PLANNING COMMISSION
Charlotte Town Office
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June 2, 2006

Peter Schneider and Jessica Donovan
38 Scarff Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401

Re: Sketch Plan Review; Application PC-06-05

Dear Mr. Schneider and Ms. Donovan,

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the Sketch Plan Review for your proposed five-lot subdivision on Hinesburg Road, held at the Planning Commission's meeting on April 20th and for which a site visit was conducted on April 15th. The Planning Commission classified the application as a Major Subdivision.

Additionally, the Planning Commission makes the following comments regarding the project and recommendations for the Preliminary Plat Application, which supplement the requirements of the Charlotte Land Use Regulations:

1. The project should be configured and reviewed as a Planned Residential Development, and it should be designed using the Conservation Subdivision Design Process as described in Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the Charlotte Land Use Regulations. Additionally, the Planning Commission recognizes that this parcel contains many features of high public value, including wildlife habitat, steep slopes, surface waters and wetlands and therefore utmost care should be given to minimize the impact on these areas. These features may warrant conservation of greater than 50% of the parcel.
2. The Planning Commission has discussed various development areas for this project including: a smaller development on the top plateau, closer to the southern edge of the woods and meadow outside of the wetland, or partially up the slope south of the wetland buffer but below the top plateau, in order to reduce the impact on steep slopes, wildlife habitat and minimize the need for extensive road construction with switchbacks and associated tree-cutting. There was, however, no clear consensus within the Planning Commission as to where the most appropriate location for development should be on this property. Nevertheless, several Planning Commissioners are opposed to siting the development on the top plateau.
3. The development site on the top plateau (as proposed at Sketch Plan) may be more visible from farther distances than Hinesburg Road, including Mount Philo Road and Route 7, particularly if tree cutting occurs for the access road and to create views from dwellings.
4. The Planning Commission is in agreement that a Master Plan for the development of the entire property is appropriate for this parcel, even if only a portion of the property will initially be developed.
5. The design should minimize the fragmentation of areas of high public value including large contiguous areas of wildlife habitat.

6. No matter what area is proposed for development, there should be a wider preserved area along the southern edge of the proposed open space where it links to the adjacent Pease Mountain parcel.
7. There appear to be several additional wetlands on the site that were not noticed during the initial wetland delineation process that should be delineated.
8. As building envelopes are finalized for this development, they should be delineated so as to eliminate steep slope areas, evergreen tree stands, and other sensitive natural areas.
9. The Planning Commission will be looking closely at the proposed drainage systems for the roadway and house sites located on the side or at the top of the upper plateau to make sure that they will not increase runoff to neighboring properties or create flooding potentials at the bottom of the hill.
10. The potential to shift the entry road further to the east on the school property could be explored to eliminate the division of the wetland meadow by the roadway.
11. The Preliminary Plat Application should include the following items:
 - A. Existing elevations and proposed grading plan (5 foot contours) in the vicinity of the development area.
 - B. Proposed road profile (draft).
 - C. Proposed phasing schedule, including future phases (draft).
 - D. Proposed covenants, easements, conserved land agreement, road maintenance agreement, roadway waiver, wastewater system maintenance agreement, wastewater waiver, trail easement and offer, and deed restrictions in paper and electronic formats (draft).
 - E. Proposed homeowner agreements (draft).
 - F. Stormwater and erosion control plan
 - G. Landscape plan
 - H. Proposed driveway locations.
 - I. Proposed building envelopes.
 - J. A management plan for the proposed designated open space and for the remainder of the parcel that is not proposed to be designated open space.
 - K. The completed wildlife analysis and report by David Capen, which should consider the relationship of this parcel to the full range of the wildlife which utilizes it.
 - L. A proposed trail plan.

Other issues may come up during the review of the Preliminary Plat Application. In accordance with Section 6.3(D) of the Charlotte Land Use Regulations, the Sketch Plan is valid for six months.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions related to these requests or your Preliminary Plan Application.

Sincerely,

Dean Bloch, Charlotte Town Planner