

January 3, 2023

Vineeta Mathur, Principal Planner
Stamford Land Use Bureau
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901

Re: Text Change Application 222-35

Dear Ms. Mathur and Zoning Board members,

Please see below responses to several departmental and public comments received in regard to the pending Text Change application. In response to one of the concerns raised (the ability to park in driveways) we have added language to set a minimum of 20' setback where a 50% reduction in the R-7½ could otherwise be 15'. This ensures all driveways can accommodate additional vehicles. Please see attached.

I. EPB comments from Robert Clausi, EPB Executive Director, dates 12/6/22:

We appreciate that EPB staff appears supportive of the proposed regulation in general and agrees it will “provide more flexibility to both design a reasonably useful residential recreational area in the back yard and allow for an adequate protective wetland and watercourse buffer.” We further understand that such flexibility does not, in itself, alleviate the need for EPB review and/or permits, where necessary. Each subdivision and building permit will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

II. Engineering Bureau comments from Willetta Capelle P.E. dated 12/15/22:

The Engineering Bureau suggests that “other alternatives” are available, including “cluster subdivisions, smaller building footprints and Zoning Variance requests”. While cluster developments are a good planning tool, they are not permitted on properties less than 8 acres. I have previously proposed 3 acres, but the Zoning Board increased it to 8. Trying to reduce it now with typical opposition to text changes and zone changes with wider applicability would be difficult. Smaller footprints are not a practical solution for single family detached homes. We already have regulations that limit building footprints, which in all cases on both Demonstration Sites provided are already more limiting than the constraints of setbacks and regulated areas. Variances are a last resort, not a vehicle for good planning, nor are they applicable to lots in a subdivision which are not directly impacted by constraints.

Below are additional responses to the enumerated comments in the Engineering memo:

- 1) *Although the Project Narrative discusses reducing impacts to wetlands or increasing the distance of homes from the shore and flood zones as benefits to the front setback reduction, under this amendment, building footprints could be expanded up to the buffer and flood zone limits, which could potentially negate the benefits indicated in the Project Narrative.*

This is not true. On all lots on both “Demonstration Sites” (15 lots in total) the permitted Building Coverage is already more limiting than the buildable area created by setbacks prior to any reduction. This is even true on Lot 1 of Demonstration Site A, which is limited by 3 front yard setbacks and Lot 9, which is most impacted by regulated areas.

The reduced impacts to wetlands and increased distances from the shore and flood zones are being undervalued by the Engineering Dept.

- 2) *Reducing the front yard setback will reduce driveway lengths which may force on-street parking. Proposed developments with narrow roadway widths are not suitable for on-street parking and pose potential safety concerns due to limited emergency vehicle maneuverability.*

This is a planning issue that can be easily addressed during a subdivision review by the Planning Board, which includes referrals to the Fire Dept and others. A 20’ setback is still enough room to accommodate additional parking in a driveway, with the distance to the traveled way even further. Also, required parking is already controlled by the Zoning Regulations, which generally require single-family homes to accommodate at least 3 off-street parking spaces per lot.

The nearby Sterling Lake cluster development maintains a travel way narrower than the proposed subdivision with smaller setbacks to the roadway, more homes, and street parking; and was reviewed by the Engineering Dept. at the time of development. To our knowledge the development has not posed any safety issues.

- 3) *Reducing front yard setbacks may create an adverse grading condition and lead to steeper slopes due to less distance available for driveways, as an example.*

This again is a hypothetical potential concern that can be addressed during a subdivision review. There are already zoning regulations and engineering best practices that control the acceptable slope of driveways. Adding language to establish a 20’ minimum (applicable to the R-7½ zone) should also temper any potential issue.

- 4) *If regulatory setbacks can be maintained with the current setback or a setback reduction less than 50% can be maintained, what criteria controls the establishment of such a reduction? The proposed setback reduction percentage seems to be based on a singular project and warrants further review.*

The Planning Board, with referral comments from other City departments, will determine appropriate setbacks and siting of buildings at the time of subdivision review. The proposed regulation is a tool to reduce impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and practical outdoor space. The regulation would be applicable to any eligible subdivision on a private road, not just a single project.

- 5) *Based on the varying alignments of watercourses, wetlands, steep slopes or "natural features," uniformity of setbacks is a concern, since front setbacks could differ from lot to lot based on which lots have the aforementioned constraints.*

The setback reduction is applicable to all lots in the subdivision, not just those directly impacted by the aforementioned constraints. However, there is no guarantee of uniformity on

any street, whether the setbacks are reduced or not. Setbacks are merely a minimum requirement. This again is a planning issue, which can be addressed during the subdivision review process. Furthermore, all such setback reductions would be internal to the subdivision only.

- 6) *"Other natural features" is a broad term and needs to be clarified to determine potential Engineering impacts as a result of the proposed amendment.*

This concern was addressed in the prior draft of the proposed regulation. The language now reads "other significant natural resources" which directly reflects the Open Space section of the Subdivision Regulations.

- 7) *The Engineering Bureau reserves the right to make additional comments.*

OK.

III. Email from Len D'Andrea to Vineeta Mathur dated 12/6/22.

The concern about the "other natural features" language was addressed in the prior draft of the text. The language now reads "other significant natural resources" which directly reflects the Open Space section of the Subdivision Regulations.

The other suggestion in the email was to apply the regulation to any lot with a qualifying environmental feature, instead of just subdivisions on private roads. Allowing the regulation to apply globally would have more potential impacts with less controls or board review. Limiting the reduced setback to new subdivisions ensures that any such reduction will be reviewed in a public hearing with input from other City departments. Limiting it to frontages along Private roads eliminates any potential impacts, aesthetic or otherwise, to other existing adjacent homes. The reduced setbacks only apply to the internal private road; and all external homes and properties can only benefit from the reduced setback. It also provides an incentive for new subdivisions to consider a Private road vs. a Public right-of-way. Private roads reduce the impact of new development on City infrastructure and services (road maintenance, trash and recycling pickup, snow plowing, leaf pickup, etc.).

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Zoning Board to create useful planning tools that can improve future development and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Redniss, FAICP

Enclosures

CC: R. Blessing
R. Clausi
W. Capelle
L. Casolo
F. Petise
L. D'Andrea

January 5, 2023

Willetta F. Capelle, P.E.
City of Stamford – Engineering Department
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901

**Re: 29 Intervale Road, 131 & 139 Turn of River Road
Planning Board Application No. 4046**

Dear Ms. Capelle,

We are in receipt of Engineering Bureau comments dated December 15, 2022, with respect to the pending Planning Board Application No. 4046 related to subdividing three parcels into eleven parcels located at 29 Intervale Road, 131 & 139 Turn of River Road in Stamford. Engineering Bureau comments related to Text Change Application 222-35 were addressed under separate cover, refer to attached January 3, 2023, letter to Ms. Mathur prepared by this office.

The following point-by-point responses are provided to address comments related to the subdivision plans and report:

- A. Refer to Sheet PP-1 for roadway profile and typical cross section.
- B. The required WQV calculation for 26S Bypass has been corrected along with the WQV summary table on page 6 of the Site Engineering Report. Footnote references on the WQV calculations have been corrected as well.
- C. Understood.
- D. A saturated hydraulic conductivity test using a Turf-Tec Infiltrometer was performed for Proposed Lot-6 (Infiltration System #9) as requested. Since the application rate of 2.5 in/hr. is greater than the default rates found within Table 5-1 of the Stormwater Drainage Manual to be conservative the Manual application rate was maintained.
- E. The pipe diameter from MMH#1 to DMH#1 was increased to 15 inches.
- F. Attached find a landscaping plan prepared by William Kenny Associates.
- G. Understood.
- H. Sanitary inverts at the buildings have been added.
- I. Sidewalks are not proposed nor required pursuant to the Zoning Regulations Section 12.K.4.c Exemptions. The sidewalk issue was raised by TT&P during a virtual call to discuss reducing the right-of-way width with Zoning, TT&P and Engineering Bureau staff. During that meeting it was agreed a sidewalk was not required. A typical asphalt driveway apron detail has been provided.
- J. Details have been corrected to reference State of CT DOT Form 818.
- K. The rim elevation on the Meter Manhole Detail has been corrected.
- L. The grading behind Lot-3 and Lot-4 have been revised to insure positive drainage away from the patios.
- M. The transformer callout was relocated as requested.
- N. Page 6 of the DMA was corrected to reference Mayor Caroline Simmons.
- O. Understood.

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In addition to the responses above, we have modified the Sediment & Erosion Control Plan to provide phasing information related to the proposed subdivision. The following documents are submitted for your consideration:

- Site Civil Plans (SE-1 dated October 28, 2022; SE-2, SE-3, SE-4A, SE-4B, SE-5, SE-6, SE-7, SE-8, SE-9, and PP-1 last dated January 5, 2023), prepared by Redniss & Mead, Inc
- Site Engineering Report last revised on January 5, 2023, prepared by Redniss & Mead, Inc.
- Planting Plan & Planting Notes and Details, last revised on January 5, 2023, prepared by William Kenny Associates.
- Letter to Ms. Mathur regarding Text Change Application 222-35, dated January 3, 2023, prepared by this office.

We trust the attached information satisfactorily addresses Engineering Bureau comments received. If you have any questions regarding the submitted documents, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Ted Milone, P.E., LEED AP BD+C

Enclosures

CC: L. Casolo (cover letter only)
R. Clausi (w/attachments)
F. Petise (w/attachments)
R. Blessing (cover letter only)
V. Mathur (w/attachments)