



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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February 24, 2006

## CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Woodside at Northbridge  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Northbridge  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Blackstone River  
EOEA NUMBER : 13716  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Newbridge Land Development, LLC  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : January 25, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project consists of the construction of a 67-unit single-family subdivision on a 108-acre site on Hill Street and Fowler Road in Northbridge. The project includes associated access drives (from Hill Street and Fowler Road), driveways and infrastructure. The site, known as Kroll Farm, has been used for agricultural activity over the past seventy years and includes 46.74 acres of land with prime agricultural soils. The site is bordered by residential uses and includes areas of bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW). According to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species (NHESP) program, the site is mapped as Priority and Estimated Habitat for the wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*), a species of special concern. The site includes a small historic cemetery, a house and a barn.

The project is undergoing MEPA review pursuant to Section 11.03 (1)(b)(2) and 5(b)(3)(c) because it requires a state permit and will create more than 5 acres of impervious area and construct a new sewer main ½ or more miles in length. The project requires a Sewer Connection Permit and a Distribution System Modification Permit from the Department of Environmental

Protection (DEP) and it may require a Conservation and Management Permit from NHESP. Also, it requires an Order of Conditions from the Northbridge Conservation Commission (and hence a Superseding Order of Conditions in the event the local Order is appealed). Because the proponent is not seeking funding from the Commonwealth, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to the subject matter of the required permits. These include wastewater, drinking water and wetlands.

The project will alter 48 acres of land and create 7.2 acres of impervious area. To avoid and mitigate impacts to land and to rare species, the proponent will preserve a portion of the site as open space (including the cemetery). The proponent has consulted with NHESP regarding the project and is conducting rare species surveys. NHESP has indicated that, based upon its review of the surveys, it will determine whether or not the project will result in a "take" and require a Conservation and Management Permit.

No direct wetlands alterations are proposed and the proponent has indicated that its stormwater management system will be developed consistent with DEP Stormwater Guidelines. An Order of Conditions will be filed with and reviewed by the Northbridge Conservation Commission. Some of the lots include BVW and several of the lots and detention basins are located within the buffer zone to wetlands. This Certificate assumes that there will be no direct wetland impacts from siting of the individual houses. Placement of deed restrictions on the lots or wetlands markers could minimize the potential for wetlands alterations by individual homeowners and avoid the filing of a Notice of Project Change (NPC) if wetlands impacts were increased by a significant amount. In addition, the proponent should take care to minimize indirect impacts to wetlands including stormwater runoff.

As noted previously and described in the ENF, the project site has been used for agriculture and contains 46.74 acres of land with prime agricultural soils that will be converted to non-agricultural use. The Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) has expressed interest in sharing with the proponent opportunities for minimizing and mitigating the loss of this soil. I encourage the proponent to consult with DAR.

The project will use approximately 32,248 gallons per day of water and generate 29,480 gpd of wastewater. To mitigate wastewater impacts, the proponent has indicated that it will remove extraneous flow from the wastewater system (Inflow/Infiltration (I/I)) on a 4:1 basis. DEP has reviewed the project and indicated that any outstanding issues related to wastewater or drinking water can be addressed during permitting. DEP has indicated that additional information will be required during permitting including confirmation that the Town has adequate hydraulic capacity to support the project.

The review of the ENF has served to adequately disclose the potential impacts and mitigation associated with this project. Based on the information in the ENF and after consultation with relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of the project are not significant enough to warrant the preparation of an EIR. Any outstanding issues can be addressed during project permitting. No further MEPA review is required.

February 24, 2006  
Date

  
Stephen R. Pritchard

Comments received:

- 2/9/06 Department of Environmental Protection Central Regional Office (DEP CERO)
- 2/10/06 Department of Fish and Game (DFG)/Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
- 2/22/06 Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)

SRP/CDB/cdb