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December 10, 2008

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME: Pine Knoll/Hemlock Estates (f/k/a Pine Knoll Senior Living Community)
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Northbridge
PROJECT WATERSHED: Blackstone
EEA NUMBER: 12618
PROJECT PROPONENT: J&F Marinella Development Corporation
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: November 10, 2008

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M. G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted on this project and hereby determine that the project **does not require** the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Previously Reviewed Project

The project commenced MEPA review in the form of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) on October 10, 2001. The project consisted of 102 condominiums under the Northbridge Senior Living Bylaw. The Secretary's Certificate on the ENF, issued on November 9, 2001, determined that the project did not require the preparation of an EIR.

The NPC filed on August 11, 2004 described a project consisting of the construction of a 102-unit age-restricted residential subdivision. The NPC modified the original proposal,

resulting in minor increases in land alteration and impervious area, and an increase in alteration of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and Bank, for a project total of 10,725 square feet (sf) of BVW alteration and 845 linear feet of Bank alteration. Alteration of land within the 49.5-acre project site totaled 17.4 acres, with 9.82 acres of impervious area. Water usage and wastewater generation were estimated at 15,300 gallons per day (gpd) each. To mitigate for potential wetlands alterations, the NPC proposed wetland compensation areas of approximately 17,500 sf of BVW and 950 linear feet of Bank. The Secretary's Certificate on the NPC, issued on September 10, 2004, determined that the modified project did not require the preparation of an EIR.

Project Change Description

The project change consists of constructing 31 single family homes in lieu of 81 age-restricted condominiums. The original project included the construction of 102 age-restricted units; 21 of these age-restricted units have already been constructed. Due to changing market conditions, the Proponent is seeking to construct 31 single family homes utilizing the previously approved roadway layout.

Environmental impacts associated with the currently proposed project in comparison to the 2004 NPC include a decrease of 5.1 acres of land alteration, a decrease of 3.47 acres of impervious area, a decrease in housing units by 50, a slight increase of 13 additional vehicle trips per day, and a 1,490 gpd increase in both water usage and wastewater generation each. Additionally, according to the NPC, a portion of the project site was designated as Priority Habitat by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) in 2006. The Proponent has corresponded with NHESP in conjunction with this filing. The NPC contained correspondence from NHESP stating that the project has met certain permitting milestones described in the "Interim Guidance" document prior to being mapped as Priority Habitat. The NHESP has therefore determined that no further review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) is required.

Jurisdiction

The project was previously subject to MEPA review pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(b)(2) of the MEPA regulations, because it required a State permit and resulted in the creation of five or more acres of impervious area. The project received a Sewer Extension Permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) associated with the project in November 2004. The project has received an amended Order of Conditions from the Northbridge Conservation Commission for wetland impacts associated with the modified project. The project must continue to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for stormwater discharges.

Review of the NPC


The NPC provided a description of the previously reviewed project, a discussion of material changes, and a narrative of the significance of the proposed changes. The project generally results in fewer environmental impacts, with the exception of slight increases in water usage and wastewater generation. Utilizing the previously approved roadway layout, grades and stormwater infrastructure has further limited the introduction of potential new environmental impacts.

The proposed sewers and associated pump station for this project were previously approved under a Sewer Extension Permit issued by MassDEP in November 2004. In connection with this permit, the Proponent conducted sewer repairs to reduce inflow and infiltration (I/I) at a 10:1 ratio in the municipal sewer system. This ratio of treatment was provided in excess of the 4:1 ratio that was required under the Town of Northbridge's Administrative Consent Order (ACO-CE-01-1010), which has been closed since February 2007. The NPC has presented information from the Northbridge Department of Public Works stating that the presently proposed project will result in a minor (1,490 gallons per day) increase in the daily design flow to the sanitary sewer system. The NPC indicates that the existing sewer pump station as designed has adequate capacity to handle the increased flows.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the information provided in the NPC, and after consultation with the relevant public agencies, I find that the project as outlined in the NPC does not warrant the preparation of an EIR. No further MEPA review is required at this time and the project may proceed to permitting.

December 10, 2008
Date



Ian A. Bowles

Comments Received:

11/25/2008 **Massachusetts** Department of Environmental Protection - CERO

IAB/HSJ/hsj