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March 24, 2006

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

PROJECT NAME	:Walnut Grove Adult Retirement Community
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY	:West Bridgewater
PROJECT WATERSHED	:Taunton
EOEA NUMBER	:13740
PROJECT PROPONENT	:Walnut Grove Realty Trust
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR	:February 22, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.03 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 proposed project involves the proposed construction of 88 age restricted (over 55 yr) detached single family houses, an onsite package wastewater treatment system, 45 surface parking spaces, 4,200 linear feet of internal roadway, and 2 stormwater detention basins on a 51.8-acre parcel of property located off Walnut Street in West Bridgewater.

The project's estimated water supply demand (13,200 gpd) will be served by the Town of West Bridgewater's municipal water supply system. The proponent has proposed to construct a private on-site package wastewater treatment plant in accordance with Massachusetts Title 5 regulations, to serve the project's wastewater flows (13,200 gpd). The proposed main site access will be located on Walnut Street. The project, as currently designed, includes two emergency site access drives extending west from the project's internal roadway ('Pecan Place') to Spring Street, an unimproved Town road bordering the project site's western boundary.

The project is undergoing review pursuant to Sections 11.03 (1)(b)(2), and (5)(b)(3)(c) of the MEPA regulations, because the project will result in the creation of five or more acres of impervious surface area (approximately 6.2 acres total), construction of one or more sewer mains ½ miles or more miles in length (1.5 miles total). The project will require a Groundwater Discharge Permit, a Water Quality Certificate, and a Water Treatment Plant Construction permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The project will also require Orders of Conditions from the West Bridgewater Conservation Commission (and hence Superseding Order(s) from DEP if any local Orders were appealed). The project may also require a 401 Water Quality Certification from DEP. The project must comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for stormwater discharges from a construction site of over one acre. The project will also require a Section 401 Water Quality Certificate from DEP. If blasting will be required during project construction, the proponent will need to prepare a blast design plan pursuant to the Board of Fire Protection Regulations (577 CMR 13.09) for the proposed construction of roads, houses and utilities within the project site. Blasting mixtures that include perchlorate have been identified as the source of contamination in many Massachusetts public water supplies and thus should be prohibited from use in the project watershed.

The proponent is not seeking financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the project. MEPA jurisdiction therefore extends to those aspects of the project that are within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits and that have the potential to produce significant Damage to the Environment. In this case, MEPA jurisdiction extends to issues of land alteration, water quality, water supply and wastewater.

Wetlands:

The project site contains an extensive system of wetlands resource areas located within the southern portion of the project site. Although the proposed project will not result in the alteration of bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW) resource areas, the proposed construction activities will result in the alteration of the 100-foot wetland buffer zone, and will include grading and roadway construction, buildings, houses, and stormwater management infrastructure. As depicted in the Walnut Grove site plan, significant portions of approximately 30 proposed new house lots, and proposed internal roadway, are located within the 100-foot wetland buffer zone. The project will result in the alteration of approximately 3 acres of wetland buffer area. I strongly encourage the proponent to examine methods of avoiding or minimizing encroachment into buffer zones including, but not limited to, reducing the total number of proposed residential units. The proponent should evaluate the use of deed restrictions as a method of avoiding future wetland impacts from homeowner activities, and as a method of minimizing water quality impacts associated with residential lawn care.

As noted in the ENF, approximately 28 acres of the project site (55%) will be left as dedicated Open Space ('Parcel A'). I ask the proponent to consider placing a Conservation Restriction (CR) on those portions of the project site that the proponent has proposed to maintain as Open Space to ensure for their permanent protection. The proponent should also consider placing deed restrictions on any residential properties that will be located within 600 feet of any vernal pools, or within the 100-foot wetlands buffer zone as a method for avoiding future impacts from homeowner activities.

Drainage/Water Quality:

As described in the ENF, the stormwater management plan for the proposed project has been designed as an open drainage system to meet DEP's Stormwater Management Policy guidelines, and will incorporate and the use of roadside water quality swales, sediment forebays, and infiltration basins.

Water:

The project's water supply needs (approximately 13,200 gallons per day (gpd)) will be served by the Town of West Bridgewater's municipal water supply system. The proponent has proposed to extend the municipal water main approximately 1 mile within the Walnut Street right-of-way to the project site. According to DEP, the proposed municipal water main extension will require a DEP Permit (BRP WS32). I anticipate that DEP's permitting process will require the proponent to demonstrate that the Town of West Bridgewater has sufficient capacity to meet the project's potable water supply needs.

The proponent should consult with DEP to ensure that the final project design meets the Commonwealth's water conservation standards. The proponent should consider implementing a proposed Irrigation Management Plan (IMP) to further reduce the project's irrigation water demand. An IMP could involve the use of: amended soils and compost; the planting of native and drought-tolerant species of trees, shrubs, and turf grasses; an automated water efficient irrigation system; and a water management protocol for drought conditions. I encourage the proponent to incorporate water conservation and water use efficiency in the project design to optimize and comply with the March 1989 State Plumbing Code. The proponent should commit to employing efficient residential water conservation technologies for the project including: water saving devices; low flow toilets; and low flow appliances (dishwashers, washing machines) for all proposed new construction.

Wastewater:

The proponent is proposing to construct a 15,000 gpd on-site package wastewater treatment system to service the project's wastewater flows in accordance with Massachusetts Title 5 regulations. According to the additional information provided by the proponent during the March 7, 2006 MEPA Scoping Session held for this project, the proponent has proposed 3 alternatives for the off-site disposal of the project's treated wastewater. Alternatives 1 and 2 would pump treated wastewater from the project's on-site package wastewater treatment plant to 1 of 2 proponent-owned parcels of property located west of the project site at 351 Manley Street, and north of the project site on Walnut Street ('plot #17'), respectively. The 351 Manley Street disposal location will require the construction of approximately 3,000 lf of 4" force main within the Walnut Street and Manley Street right-of-ways. Use of the plot #17 disposal location will require the construction of approximately 1,600 lf of 4" force within the Walnut Street right-of-way north of the project site. Alternative #3 involves the construction of a sewer main, extending 4,000 lf north, within the Walnut Street right-of-way, to the City of Brockton's municipal sewer line. I strongly encourage the proponent to consult with DEP during final project design. I anticipate that DEP's permitting process will include a rigorous review of the proponent's proposed wastewater management system, including the preferred off-site wastewater disposal alternative. The proponent should provide a copy of the project's final wastewater management system design to the MEPA Office for the project file.

Stormwater:

According to the information provided in the ENF and supplemental information submitted to the MEPA Office in response to comments made at the MEPA site visit held for this project, the proponent's stormwater management plan incorporates both structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs) consistent with DEP's Stormwater Management Act Guidelines and the Wetlands Protection Act performance standards. The proposed stormwater management plan includes drainage swales, periodic road sweeping, deep sump hooded catch basins, and a total of two stormwater detention basins to service the project's stormwater flows for eventual discharge to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) abutting the project site's eastern boundary.

I encourage the proponent to evaluate sustainable design alternatives such as Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in site design and stormwater management plans. LID techniques incorporate stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and can reduce impacts to land and water resources by conserving natural systems and hydrologic functions. The primary tools of LID are landscaping features and naturally vegetated areas, which encourage detention, infiltration and filtration of stormwater on-site. Other tools include water conservation and use of pervious surfaces. Clustering of buildings is an example of how LID can preserve open space and minimize land disturbance.

LID can also protect natural resources by incorporating wetlands, stream buffers and mature forests as project design features. For more information on LID, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/lid/>. Other LID resources include the national LID manual (Low Impact Development Design Strategies: An Integrated Design Approach), which can be found on the EPA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/>.

Construction Period:

The proponent should analyze construction-period impacts, including temporary impacts to wetlands, and the extent of any blasting and/or regrading during construction. The proponent should consult with the Town of West Bridgewater, and DEP to ensure that the proponent will meet any performance standards associated with a federal NPDES permit for all proposed project construction activities.

Based on the information provided by the proponent and consultation with relevant public agencies, I conclude that no further MEPA review is required. The review of the ENF has served adequately to disclose potential impacts and mitigation, and to demonstrate that project impacts do not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. The proponent can resolve any remaining issues in the permitting process.

March 24, 2006

Date


Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary

Comments received:

03/14/06 Department of Environmental Protection - SERO
03/20/06 Old Colony Planning Council
03/09/06 Gallagher Engineering

SRP/NCZ/ncz
EOEA #13740