

February 21, 2024

Owen Corcoran, Land Use Administrative Assistant  
Town of Kensington  
95 Amesbury Road  
Kensington, NH 03833

Dear Members of The Zoning Board, Planning Board, Select Board, Owen Corcoran, and Kathy Felch,

The Kensington Conservation Commission met on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, and was joined by Barry Gier, PE of Jones & Beach Engineers, Inc. and two representatives of the Gove Environmental Group. Mr Gier presented to the Conservation Commission the plans for a three-lot subdivision at 23 Moulton Ridge Road, Kensington. The reason for the presentation to the KCC was that one of the proposed lots requires a Special Exception permit as the proposed driveway will pass through two wetlands and require proposed culverts through the existing Hobbs Creek.

It is the opinion of the KCC that this request of the special exception should be denied. We came to this conclusion for many reasons as explained in detail below.

The exceptionally long driveway will require significant destruction of two wetland areas and will impact a creek that flows with a significant amount of water throughout the year. Wetland lines as shown on plans are an indication of an area that is unsuitable for development because of their unusually important environmental significance. Wetlands are important for so many reasons. Specific and rare plant varieties that can exist only in particular conditions that are found in wetlands. Many forms of wildlife rely on these specific areas for food supplies and particular water conditions necessary for reproduction. While no long-term vernal pools were specifically noted by the Environmental scientists who identified the wetlands on site, small temporary puddles and pools in areas such as those found on this property support special wildlife species like salamanders and frogs. Some of these animals can only reproduce in exactly these environments. The destruction of the habitat of these animals will have obvious impacts.

Wetlands are also important because our aquifers are recharged in these low-lying areas. Allowing grading and the addition of paved asphalt areas within the wetland impacts the hydrology and diminishes the area where aquifer recharge occurs. As development continues throughout the seacoast, and as more people require potable water, we must be vigilant about protecting our water supplies. Maintaining the size of and protecting the integrity of our wetland areas by are important parts of protecting our aquifers.

During the winter months, the driveway will require the use of salt and particulates which will run into the wetland. These pollutants will impact vegetation, wildlife, and water quality. This is an exceptionally long driveway.

The proposed driveway will require significant grading in wooded areas which will also displace and impact wildlife that is not specific to wetlands.

Another significant concern with the proposed plan is the addition of culverts to Hobbs Creek. The stormwater management infrastructure around Moulton Ridge Road has been found recently to be insufficient to manage the stormwater flow due to extreme rainfall events, blockage of culverts, and possibly even issues resulting from the beavers and beaver dams that can be found upstream on the Hodge's Conservation Land. It is reasonable to be concerned that restricting and potentially blocking Hobbs Creek with culverts could contribute to the flooding issues that occur on Moulton Ridge Road and the flooding that has been reported on the properties south of the proposed lot.

In order to manage the pace and amount of development in Kensington, we must utilize the existing regulations that we, the people of Kensington, have voted into existence. Setting a precedent by granting a special exception opens the door for development in the Town of Kensington that is in opposition to the intent of the regulations and in opposition to the desire of our residents. Our residents consistently maintain that the rural character, interesting wildlife, and natural beauty is extremely important and one of the reasons the Town of Kensington is a special and desirable place to live.

We kindly request that the Boards consider the significant concerns of the Conservation Commission presented in this letter.

Please do not hesitate to request additional information or ask any questions concerning our opinion of the special exception that has been requested. Many thanks to the Board volunteers that help to manage the affairs of the Town of Kensington.

Kindly,  
Pam Holland  
KCC Chair