

Letters with Questions and Concerns – Batch 1

For the purposes of consolidating digitized materials the following is a summary list of correspondences followed by the actual documents received.

Item #	Name (Title)	Date
1-a	David Bright	January 28, 2024
1-b	Gail Gregg	February 7, 2024
1-c	A. Cassidy	February 13, 2024
1-d	Linda & Donna Stefanisko	February 14, 2024

Date Created: February 20, 2024

From: David Bright <davidevanbright@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2024 2:11 PM
To: Land Use <landuse@salisburyct.us>; Michael Klemens <mklemens@salisburyct.us>
Subject: Dresser Woods "Plan Set" Feedback

January 28, 2023

To:
Planning & Zoning Commissioners
Town of Salisbury

Purpose

This provides feedback to the Dresser Woods "Plan-Set" reviewed during the January 16, 2023 P&Z Meeting.

Point of View

The proposed Dresser Wood site plan is the result of input from a range of thoughtful constituencies, including a neighbors' group. I suggest, however, that the Commission build on this work and discuss how the site plan can be enhanced to contribute better to the quality of life of the Dresser Woods residents as well as good planning in Salisbury in general.

This note focuses on three areas worth considering to enhance the plan. I expect that these improvements will contribute to attracting and retaining residents with long term commitments to and appreciation for the new neighborhood.

Parking Plaza. Regrettably, the proposed parking "plaza" resembles a "strip mall lot" with cars parked too close to the buildings. The proposed plan deserves an alternate approach. *See: January 16, 2024 QA+M Site View 2.*

I encourage the Commission to explore how vehicle circulation, parking spaces and landscaping for this area can be reassessed. One approach might be to consider landscaped borders between the "4' bituminous concrete sidewalk" and the parking space, screening vehicles in the center of the area. *See: Revised January 10, 2024 Drawing 05 2.* We've all experienced this type alternate parking plan scheme executed successfully at corporate campus parking lots. The result for Dresser Woods: a more pleasing view scape for residents from their homes. Does anyone really want to sit on a porch or look out of a window and look directly at cars? Another benefit: the right trees/bushes would create summer shade.

With respect to EV chargers, the "future" charger site(s?) noted on the proposed plan should be revised to mandate a charger(s?) at occupancy.

Garages. Granted, not every home (in Salisbury) has a garage. However, in planning a new community of this type in Northwest CT, garages seem like a practical idea. What is perhaps an unnecessary "amenity" to some, a vehicle free of ice and snow on a dark, cold morning is a big help to a family trying to get work and/or drop children at school.

Dedicated Outdoor Spaces. It appears that many of the Dresser Woods homes could accommodate screened porches. Again, why not provide this simple amenity to enhance the quality of life of residents? Also: Why not plan the shared outdoor space and designate specific flagstone areas for seating and barbeque equipment adjacent to each residence?

Next Step

I hope that this note offers food for thought. Please feel free to share it with the Salisbury Housing Committee; no e-mail address is provided on it web page at:

<https://www.salisburycthousing.org/about-salisbury-housing-committee>.

David Bright

David E. Bright
davidevanbright@gmail.com
646 344-0791

February 7, 2024

Dear Salisbury Planning and Zoning Commissioners,

This letter should stand as my testimony at the Feb. 20 hearing for preliminary approval of the Dresser Woods Project.

1) I should start by saying that we are not opposed to affordable housing but have concerns we hope will be considered during the application process. We believe that addressing these questions and concerns would result in a better outcome both for the existing neighborhood and for the Dresser Woods Project itself.

2) Community Input -- The Planning and Zoning Commission appears to be operating under the mistaken impression that area residents and businesses have been part of the planning process. This is not the case. The initial vote on the Rail Trail extension, in July 2022, was not disclosed to the neighborhood (via a newspaper article about Jim Dresser) until immediately before the hearings on granting egress via the Rail Trail. SAHC established a community advisory group after the meeting, and named Sally Spillane chair. The group Sally selected includes two other residents from the neighborhood, as well as other members from the greater Salisbury community. But her committee works directly with SAHC and does not formally consult with area residents. Last August, the SAHC shared its completed plans with the neighborhood – but we had not been asked for input until then. At that meeting, many of us expressed concern about such issues as the density of the project and the lack of parking at the property (see below). However, these concerns were not incorporated into the plans now before the Commission. **The Commission should understand that Railroad Street/Fowler Street residents and businesses have not been part of this process.**

3) Density — It is critical that we remind the Planning and Zoning Commission that the Dresser Woods Project is **uniquely dense**. The Affordable Housing Committee consistently describes it as a 5-acre site — but, in fact, it's a **2.5-acre** site, given that half of the property consists of protected wetlands. This means that as many as 58 residents could be crowded into nine multiple family homes on 2.5 acres. (By contrast, the Town currently requires that single family homes be built on lots of .9 or 1.1 acres or more, depending on the location.) This density does not allow for communal green space, playgrounds, etc. By comparison, the 23 homes proposed for the Pope Project are situated on a 59-acre site, and Sarum Village is set on 16 acres.

4) Parking — Though the limited number of parking places designated for the site was of considerable concern at the neighborhood meeting late this summer, the Committee has stuck with its plan to allocate only 20 resident parking places for Dresser Woods, plus 10 “overflow” spots for visitors. This clearly is insufficient, as many dual wage-earner households in the 16-unit complex will need more than one car. According to the Committee's own filing, Sarum Village has 27 parking places for 24 homes; Kugeman Village has 23 spots for 18 homes; Sharon Ridge/Ridge Extension has 50 places for 23 homes; and the proposal for Pope project has 23 places for 22 -- plus another 100 for the public recreational areas. Neighborhood residents fear that the adjacent community could become a provisional parking lot for Dresser Woods.

5) The traffic study seems to suggest that the project will not affect traffic. But how could it not? If each new unit is fully occupied, 58 people could live at Dresser Woods — driving their own cars, receiving deliveries, traveling by school bus or ambulette. Trash trucks will need to empty dumpsters, etc. Further, egress is one-way only, which means that all residents must enter and exit onto Railroad Street. The traffic study suggests that because the development is so close to the commercial area, residents will walk rather than driving to buy groceries, etc. But how would a family of six cart groceries home on foot? (Or afford to shop at LaBonne's?) Also, the streets in this area are very narrow – more 1.5 lanes than 2 lanes wide. Because the current population is low, this doesn't

often present a problem. But that would change once the population in the area increases several-fold. Finally, in conjunction with the development of the Pope property, traffic in central Salisbury would increase considerably.

6) Landscaping — The current plans seem to indicate clear-cutting of Dresser Woods, except for 14 mature trees. Many of us feel the plan should be revised to preserve the natural setting and minimize the impact on adjacent neighbors. Planting saplings or bushes (as indicated in the plan) will not mitigate against the planned destruction of hundreds of trees. Nor will the 6' privacy fence protect neighbors from traffic noise and light pollution generated by the complex. (The fence does not even encompass the entire project.) Of note is that in its original 2018 documents describing why the site's suitability for affordable housing, the Town stated, "*It is a level building site with excellent soils and mature trees....Buildings will not be visible from Railroad Street and landscaping will screen views from the Rail Trail.*"

7) Ongoing maintenance – Missing from the Committee's submission is any mention of the surrounding neighborhood. Residents wonder how the development will be maintained and monitored. For instance, if Dresser Woods residents park on other nearby streets, how will that be handled? How will trash be collected? Bears are common in the area, and love neglected trash facilities. And perhaps this is the moment to campaign for more careful maintenance of area streets. Currently, Railroad Street, Fowler Street, Library Street and Academy Street are dotted with potholes. An unpaved driveway at the entrance to LaBonne's employee parking lot creates huge puddles of water, ice or mud that residents must traverse in order to get to their homes. This has been brought to the attention of the Town repeatedly, but the area remains neglected.

8) Global effects on Salisbury – How will the Dresser Woods, Pope and Holley Place projects affect the town's mill rate? Among other changes, the number of school children served by Salisbury schools likely will increase; town water and sewer viability could be affected; the quiet, wooded Rail Trail experience will be altered considerably.

8) Outreach during construction -- How does the Committee plan to work with the existing neighborhood during the demolition/construction phase? The Committee has stated that construction will take a year. This seems unlikely – even miraculous! It should be obvious that life for the neighborhood will be quite unpleasant during this period, with significant construction and landscaping noise, heavy truck traffic and debris. This should be addressed now, rather than after problems and issues occur.

Thank you,

Gail Gregg

Gail Gregg
12 Fowler Street

Planning & Zoning Commission
Town Hall
Salisbury CT 06068
February 13th, 2024

Attn: M. Klemens Chairman

Copies to:

A. Conroy Land Use Manager
C. Rand First Selectman

Subject : Dresser Woods Development / Hesketh Traffic Study

Dear Mr Klemens,

I am writing on my own and on the behalf of a group of concerned residents and business owners in the village center concerning the Dresser Woods Housing development project submitted for preliminary approval by the Salisbury Housing Committee (SHC) for your consideration at the meeting scheduled for February 20th at 5:45PM.

As a part of their application SHC have commissioned Hesketh & Assoc to conduct a traffic study(link below) .

Conclusion from the report :

“Based on the observed background traffic volumes, the projected site volumes and the analysis as outlined in the this report, it is our professional opinion that the traffic volumes associated with the proposed development can readily be accommodated by the existing roadway network without significant impact to current operations.”

We would like to contend that this conclusion is at best premature for the following reasons:

1. This study, appears to have considered the impact on traffic with respect to the Dresser Woods development in complete isolation. As you are aware, development plans for the neighboring Pope Property are well under way. Regardless of whether the specifics of those plans have been presented to your commission for review, it would seem only prudent for the commission to factor that any traffic studies should be considered as an aggregate effect on the village center. Assessing the impact of one access road/ housing project alone completely ignores the cumulative effect on traffic that these two neighboring developments will undoubtedly present. Adding the proposed 20+ units and 60+ multi family units at the two sites is a very significant increase in resident population and the vehicles that inevitably come with them. I would urge the commission to please pause on green lighting this development in isolation until a more global study on the true traffic impact to the residents and business owners of the village center has been understood.
2. It is my understanding that attendant to these housing development proposals the Town of Salisbury has also commissioned a study by Colliers Engineering to consider changes/ improvements to the village center (link below). Incorporated into the study are many

suggestions/ assertions concerning vehicle/ pedestrian access, parking, stoplights, intersections, crossings etc. Again, I would contend that green lighting a single project before incorporating any of the changes Colliers posits is the definition of putting the cart before the horse. As you are well aware changes/improvements to the Library/Academy/ Railroad/LaBonnes corridor are going to be critical to the two housing developments bookending the village. Whilst we appreciate the complexity this presents for the individual applicants whilst chaperoning their own projects through the process, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that the Planning and Zoning Commission has a duty to serve all taxpayers in the town of Salisbury equally with regards to sustainable development and urban planning. Vehicle access is a critical part of that and we trust that the commission will give it the fulsome review that this demands, rather than granting piecemeal approval to any of these individual submissions as if they exist in a vacuum. They do not.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Cassidy

15 Library St
9 Academy St

https://www.salisburyct.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/240105_Salisbury-Village-Center-Plan-02012024-2.pdf

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ug2v21aixmv5cx0rggqkn/h?dl=0&e=1&preview=Dresser-Woods-Traffic-Study-Final.pdf&rlkey=tt8pq766cusq5ak5ksfv141hr>

From: Linda Stefanisko <lindastefanisko@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 1:55 PM
To: Land Use <landuse@salisburyct.us>
Subject: Dresser Woods

Good Day Abby,

I am writing this letter along with my sister Donna. We are expressing our concerns regarding Dresser Woods. We live at 33 & 35 Fowler Street. We are 50 year residents of Salisbury. Our Mom bought the house on 35 Fowler Street in 1978 when Village Housing (East Meadow Homeowner's Association) was completed. The land for these homes was donated to build affordable houses for mixed income Salisbury residents. The intention was lost as we now have New Yorkers buying these as 2nd homes. We are 14 homes (2 are a part of Sarum Village) and The Faith House apartment building on 13 acres. All the open space is available for common use. We both understand the need for affordable and low-income housing. I lived at Sarum Village when my son was four, he is soon to be 34. Donna also struggled working 2 jobs to raise her son while living with our mom at 35 Fowler Street.

We are not against affordable housing. We are against the 20 units proposed for Dresser Woods. Our reasons are density, environmental, (how do you save protected land and the vernal pool with so much construction going on right near it) as well as rural natural beauty.

We already have traffic issues on Railroad, Academy and Library Streets, contrary to the traffic study results. LaBonne's itself creates volumes of traffic with shoppers and deliveries. Library Street gets all the traffic from the Congregational Church, the Town Garage and Scoville Memorial Library. On Railroad Street we have the Auto Shop, Brazzale's Landscaping, The Frame Shop, Zen Massage, the commercial building that houses the Chore Service, Riga Yoga, Montage and Karen Lesage. Academy Street has Honey Church Home, Johnny Cake Books, 9 Academy Guest House, Casa Marcela, Ackerly Brown Law Offices and a Hair Salon. Indian Cave Road has become increasingly busy with the new construction, trucks and deliveries. Although the ski jump doesn't often have events, there are more cars using that road for those just curious about the ski jump area. All these streets including Fowler are used by the residents of this community as well!

Some days we can't even take a left onto 44 from Library or Academy Streets!
(We take a right and make a U-turn)

How dense does Salisbury need to become? We have East Meadow Homeowners Association, Sarum Village 1, 2 and 3, Lion's Head, Noble Horizons the proposed Dresser Woods and the potential development of the Pope Property. We are looking at 80 new units on this side of Salisbury!!! That's a minimum of 80 cars!!! The streets will become unmanageable and unsafe. The scope of the projects is too large for this well occupied section of town.

The unnecessary destruction of the wooded Dresser property will adversely affect the quality of life for all Salisbury residents. This heartbreaking loss of natural beauty within Salisbury's village center significantly alters the town's rural nature forever. In the rush to accommodate people we are destroying trees, plants and wildlife (birds, animals and insects) that can never be replaced. We fear for the future of Salisbury's quiet, safe and untouched beauty which is the major reason people choose to live here.

We urge you to reconsider the Dresser Woods project.

Respectfully,
Linda & Donna Stefanisko