

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
HOUSING APPEALS COMMITTEE

SURFSIDE CROSSING, LLC,

Appellant,

v.

NANTUCKET ZONING BOARD OF
APPEALS,

Appellee.

Case #: 2019-07

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER MEREDITH

I, Christopher Meredith, depose and state:

1. My name is Christopher Meredith. I am competent to give this testimony and have personal knowledge of all facts contained herein, except for those facts stated upon information and belief, which facts I am informed and believe are true and accurate.
2. My wife Linda Meredith and I live at and own the land and house at 1 Wherowhero Lane in Nantucket, Massachusetts (“Property”).
3. Our Property has been our primary residence for the past 29 years.
4. Our Property directly abuts on two sides the site of the 156-unit development proposed by the Applicant in this proceeding (“Project”) (“Project Site”). The Project Site abuts us both to the north and the northeast.
5. At its closest point, our house lies about 40 feet from the southern boundary of the Project Site.
6. Our pool and gardens are just ten (10) feet from its southern boundary.
7. The only water supply for our Property is provided by our private, on-site well.

8. Our well is in active use and there has never been any problem with the quantity or quality of the water it provides.
9. I have reviewed the Pre-filed Testimony of Bruce Perry.
10. The soil is sandy on our Property and, I understand, on the Project Site and throughout our neighborhood.
11. The flow of groundwater on our Property and, I understand, in the neighborhood generally, is from north to south.
12. Because our Property directly abuts the Project Site and due to the groundwater flow direction and the high permeability of the sandy soils, any contamination on or released from the Project Site or into its groundwater would likely flow onto our Property and contaminate our well.
13. For those reasons, our Property and well stand to be contaminated by a release of contaminants at or from the proposed development.
14. I have reviewed the Pre-filed Testimony of Daniel E. Sheahan.
15. As shown on the Project plans and Town records, a 20-inch sewer force main extends through the Project Site and then south to and through another property in our subdivision identified as 11R Southside Road, owned by Jack Weinhold and Marybeth Splaine, which directly abuts our Property to the east.
16. Due to the force main's location on our neighbors' property, its size and age, and its vulnerability to impacts of construction and utility installation work for the proposed development (as established by Mr. Sheahan's Pre-filed Testimony), our Property and well would be jeopardized by a rupture in the sewer main at or near the Project Site (or from a failure of a sewer pump station which the developer proposes to locate on the Project Site).
17. I have reviewed the Pre-filed Testimony of Stephen A. Murphy.
18. About 60% of the vegetation on our Property is comprised of pitch pine scrub oak.
19. I understand that the predominant vegetation on the Project Site and in the surrounding area is pitch pine scrub oak which is very combustible.
20. The only means of egress from our Property and out of the neighborhood in case of a fire would be north on South Shore Road since South Shore Road is a dead end to the south.

21. Because we directly abut the Project Site on two sides and our house is so close to it, our Property would be especially endangered by any fire at the proposed development. This risk is even greater for us because four (4) of the development's proposed 18 multi-family buildings would line the perimeter of our backyard.
22. From the Fire Chief's testimony, I understand that due to its size and design, the proposed Project presents very serious fire-fighting access problems for his Department and because of that and Nantucket's windy conditions and the neighborhood's flammable vegetation, he and Mr. Perry are of the opinion that the Project "create[s] a serious public safety concern." I therefore am extremely concerned about the significant risk that any fire at the proposed development would pose - to a heightened degree - for our Property and family.
23. The Project's impact on existing traffic congestion would compound that risk. During summer months especially, vehicles already back up significantly at the outlet of our only access road, South Shore Road, with Surfside Road. The Project proposes a single entrance/exit driveway for its 291 resident vehicles, visitors' vehicles, and inevitable additional delivery and service vehicles, and that driveway would lie just south of that intersection. That would compound the delays and congestion in that part of South Shore Road, which is the chokepoint for access to and from our Property and our immediate neighbors.
24. I therefore am very concerned about the impact of the proposed development in slowing or impeding access by emergency vehicles in the event of a fire or health emergency.
25. In addition to concerns with well contamination, fire, and emergency access problems, I am concerned about adverse light and noise impacts. Not only does our Property directly abut the Project Site on two sides and is our house so close to it, but proposed buildings 11, 12, 13, and 14 - that is, four of the proposed 18 multi-family buildings and therefore potentially 35 of its 156 housing units - would lie just a few dozen feet from our northerly and northeasterly property lines. Lights shing from those four 32-foot buildings and from the headlights of cars that would drive and park near them and the adjacent parking areas that serve them would shine into our backyard and house.
26. Likewise, the noise generated by residents of those four buildings or 35 apartments, and from the related parking and other activities near them, would virtually surround our backyard and house. Noise impacts would be especially disturbing in warmer months when windows are open, and we make considerable use of our backyard and our pool and garden just 10 feet south of the Project Site.
27. These light and noise impacts would very greatly and permanently diminish the use and enjoyment of our Property.

28. Nor would any visual screening for car headlights and parking areas at the proposed development – assuming that could be required and would be imposed – significantly alleviate those light and noise impacts on us. Light and noise from the proposed multi-story apartment buildings 25 to 44 feet from our yard, and noise from vehicle activity near those buildings, would not be blocked by vegetative or other screening for cars.


29. I have reviewed the Pre-filed Testimony of Diane Coombs.

30. Finally, I am concerned about the incongruous appearance of the proposed buildings. Unlike our home and those in our South Shore Road neighborhood, and unlike even those in the Sachem’s Path development just north of the Project Site, the proposed Project would comprise 18 densely-packed, large, and repetitious buildings. As Ms. Coombs testifies, the massing of those structures, each 32 feet tall, on a mostly clearcut site, would be grossly inconsistent with the scale, architectural style, and rural feel of our immediate neighborhood.

31. With no less than four such buildings looming behind our Property, their appearance would be especially impactful. The proposed development would substantially and irretrievably change the character and feel of our Property and the immediately surrounding neighborhood.

32. In light of these many and permanent impacts of the proposed Project on my family’s Property and lives, I sincerely ask this tribunal to not countenance a development of this scale, density, and design in this location.

SIGNED UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THIS 14th DAY OF JANUARY, 2022.

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Christopher Meredith