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December 23, 2015

Topsfield Planning Board
Town Hall
8 West Common Street
Topsfield, MA 01983

RE: Preliminary Subdivision Plan
116 and 120 Hill Street, Topsfield, MA

Dear Planning Board Members:

As you are aware, we have met with the Planning Board on three occasions during your regular meeting sessions to discuss the Preliminary Conventional Subdivision Plan and the Preliminary Open Space Development Subdivision Plan submitted by New Meadows Development, LLC for the properties located at 116-120 Hill Street; we also held a neighborhood meeting to seek comment and input. In addition, the Planning Board conducted a Site View on December 8, 2015, at which 4 of the 5 Board members were present, during which the Board members walked the entire site with both the Conventional Subdivision Plan and the Open Space Development Subdivision Plan available for on-site reference.

During the course of the Preliminary Subdivision review process, the Applicant's engineer has revised both the Conventional Subdivision Plan and the Open Space Development Plan based upon information gathered; this is the intent and purpose of the Preliminary Subdivision Plan, with the goal being the development of a Preliminary Subdivision Plan from which the Applicant can proceed to prepare a detailed, finely tuned Definitive Subdivision Plan.

Based upon the most recent comments received, the Applicant has revised its Open Space Development Plan to provide a *continuous* open space trail network around the entire site, with existing and/or proposed new connection trails being located outside of the building lots and entirely within the dedicated Open Space Area. A parking area for those using the trail network with access from the subdivision roadway has been added. I am enclosing for your consideration six (6) copies of this revised Open Space Development Plan.

Much engineering work, beyond a typical preliminary subdivision layout, has been completed on both the Conventional Subdivision Plan and the Open Space Development Plan. Based on this design work, the Applicant strongly believes that the Open Space Development Plan is a superior development plan for this site, preserving open space, allowing greater flexibility in the development and meeting each and every goal and requirement of the Open Space Development Bylaw:

- Allowing greater flexibility of design;
- Encouraging, for conservation and recreation purposes, the permanent preservation of over 34 acres open space which includes woodlands and wetlands;
- Encouraging less sprawling and more efficient development that consumes less open land and conforms to existing topographic and natural features;
- Minimizing the total amount of disturbance;
- Facilitating the construction and maintenance of housing, streets and utilities in a more economic and efficient manner while protecting open space.

The Open Space Development Plan also meets the goals and furthers the objectives of the Topsfield Open Space and Recreation Plan by:

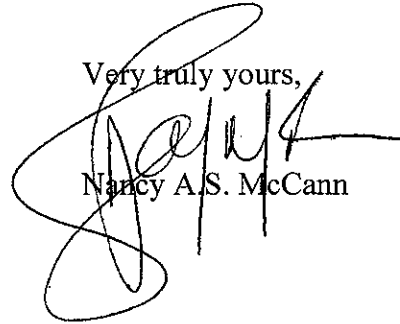
- Preserving the rural and historic character of the Town by maintaining the rural streetscape and the estate home;
- Keeping open space open and available to recreation;
- Enhancing and expanding trails;
- Protecting wetland resources.

It is time for the Applicant and its development team to move onto a Definitive Subdivision Plan for this property. Pursuant to Section 4.09.C of the Zoning Bylaw, we request approval of the Open Space Development Plan at your meeting of January 19, 2016, allowing us to proceed forward with the design of the Definitive Open Space Development Plan. It is not realistic to expect an Applicant to prepare a fully engineered Definitive Plan under both Open Space *and* Conventional scenarios; that is not required under Section 4.09 of the Zoning Bylaw, nor is it reasonable to request such an undertaking. If the Board is in favor of an Open Space Development Plan, and the preservation in perpetuity of over half of this 66 acre parcel and the expansion of the trail network, now is the time to give the Applicant that direction by approving the Preliminary Open Space Development Plan, failing which we will proceed forward with the Definitive Subdivision Plan based on the Preliminary Conventional Subdivision Plan.

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We look forward to meeting with you on January 19, 2016; thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NASM', with a large, looping flourish underneath.

Nancy A.S. McCann

NASM/kjl