



The Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited

February 15, 2021

Wareham Board of Selectmen

54 Marion Road

Wareham, MA 02571

Attn: Peter Teitlebaum, Esq., Chair

Re: Proposed zoning change to create a Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District

Dear Chairmen Teitelbaum and Wareham Board of Selectmen:

The Board of Directors of the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited is writing to you to express our opposition to the proposed zoning change to create a Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District, in Wareham, east of Glen Charlie Road near the western perimeter of the Red Brook Wildlife Management Area.

Because the 963 acres comprising the site chosen for the proposed zoning change appears to sit on top of the aquifer that feeds both Red Brook and the town of Wareham's water supply, we believe that a comprehensive hydrological study of the site needs to be done before the people of Wareham are asked to vote on the proposed change in the site's zoning.

The public has a right to know what impacts, if any, the type of dense development encouraged by this zoning change might have on the safety of their water supply, and on Red Brook, before they are forced to decide whether or not to adopt the proposed changing of the site's zoning from single family residential to the multiple use, high density development being proposed. Furthermore, after having reviewed the proposed bylaw changes, as dictated to the Planning Board in a document presented by the law firm of Drohan Tocchio & Morgan, we feel strongly that **a thorough environmental review** of the proposal should be completed before the town of Wareham commits to the requested zoning change. Taking this precaution before deciding on the proposed changes will reduce the risk to all concerned of having to engage in costly lawsuits to protect natural resources that might be adversely impacted by any future development allowed under the proposed change.

We feel compelled to point out that the Red Brook WMA and the Theodore Lyman Reserve (collectively the Red Brook Reserve) were created, at considerable effort and expense to MassWildlife and its partners, Trout Unlimited and The Trustees, to protect rare natural habitat features that support threatened and endangered species, including Red Brook's native, sea-run brook trout, a species of significant conservation concern.

In stark contrast, the type of development engendered by the proposed zoning change is characterized by large tracts of impervious surfaces consisting of roadways, roof tops, and parking lots. The list of allowed development includes, but is not limited to, hotels, motels, conference centers, indoor and outdoor commercial recreational facilities, retail outlets, commercial offices, parking garages, stables (race track?), multiple family dwellings and waste water treatment facilities that, once the site is fully built out, will amount to a 900 acre city. The amount of impervious surface created by this type of urbanized development could potentially diminish the health of the aquifer that supports Red Brook and Wareham's water supply by reducing the ground infiltration of precipitation while generating flows of polluted and heated storm drainage.

These features when combined with the water demands of hotels, multiple family dwellings, and other large buildings and facilities, appear to pose a threat to the aquifer that sustains Red Brook, its coldwater dependent brook trout, and its significant runs of river herring and American eels. This, seemingly, inappropriate urbanization also severely disrupts the habitat and migration routes of threatened and endangered species, pine barren dependent species that the Red Brook Reserve was created to help protect.

To summarize: we believe that the proposed zoning change, and the type of development that it is designed to engender, requires a thorough environmental review, including a comprehensive hydrological study, for the purpose of fully informing the people of Wareham before they are asked to vote on the proposed change. This is the only way to ensure that the sensitive natural resources referenced above - resources that have been protected after great expense and effort – will remain fully protected into the future.

We thank you for viewing our comments.

Respectfully,

Larry Cook, President, SE MA Chapter of TU