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Ms. Judith Whiteside
Wareham Board of Selectman
54 Marion Road
Wareham, MA 02571

RE: Fearing Hill Conservation Area

May 30, 2021

Dear Chairman Whiteside,

The Wareham Land Trust (WLT) Board of Directors would like you to be aware that we have concerns regarding proposals (Planning Board #18-21 and #21-21) on property that abuts the Town owned Fearing Hill Conservation Area (FHCA). As you know, the WLT holds the Conservation Restriction on the FHCA. As such, it is the WLT's responsibility to ensure that the conservation values of the FHCA are preserved in perpetuity for the benefit of the general public.

These proposals, 91 & 101 Fearing Hill Road, include building a subdivision on Fearing Hill Road as well as a large scale solar installation in the interior of the property. The proposals are currently before the Planning Board (#21-21 on 6/28/21) and Conservation Commission (as NOI on 6/2/21).

There have been many attempts by the Town, Buzzards Bay Coalition (BBC) and the WLT to acquire the property to add to the 115 acre conserved corridor of FHCA and Westgate Conservation Area along the Weweantic River. For example, a 2015 MA LAND grant was submitted by the Town and numerous subsequent attempts by the BBC and WLT have been made to strike a conservation deal with the owners. Unfortunately, these attempts have not been met with success.

It is time for the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and the WLT to all work together to ensure that any proposal, should one come to fruition, have no negative impact on the surrounding fragile ecosystems.

We ask that you and all of the Boards do whatever is within the Town's power to condition any potential project to the fullest extent possible. This will ensure that the long term health of the environment is conserved. It will also convey a clear message to the Citizens of Wareham that you understand that the rich environmental resources of Wareham, including but not limited to, intact forested hills, wetlands, wildlife and riparian corridors, intermittent streams, rivers and bays all need active, protective involvement by the Town so as not to be destroyed forever.

Sincerely,

Robert Gleason
Vice-President and Land Acquisition Committee Chairman

cc: Ken Buckland, Planning Board, Conservation Commission