



The Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited

March 21, 2021
Wareham Planning Board
54 Marion Road
Wareham, MA 02571

Attn: Planning Board

Re: Proposed zoning change to create a Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District
(Economic Opportunity Overlay)

Dear Planning Board members:

The Board of Directors of the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited is again 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. We ask that this letter and our February 15, 2021 letter be entered into the record for all proceedings related to this matter.

In particular, we ask that this letter be included as part of the record for the public hearing of the Planning Board on April 5, 2021 for the new warrant article issued by the town-selectman reducing the size of the proposed area covered by the zoning change from 963 acres to some 700 plus acres brought about by eliminating the Red Brook Wildlife Management Area from the new Hospitality Zone.

Our concern is that the zoning by-law change being proposed by the Notos Group poses a threat to both Wareham's municipal water supply and the water quality and quantity of Red Brook, thereby threatening Red Brook's unique salter brook trout, an important regional coldwater resource. If the type of development allowed by this zoning change were to take place, it would also adversely impact the water quality of Buttermilk Bay.

Additionally, we feel strongly that the new warrant to be voted on by the Planning Board on April 5 can be easily misunderstood by your voters because it creates the appearance that the developers and the town have initiated some sort of pre-emptive adjustment or compromise to better protect groundwater and the Red Brook ecosystem when, in fact, nothing has changed. We maintain that it is inappropriate, unfair to voters and contrary to the spirit if not the letter of the law, to change or introduce a new warrant only five days before a town hall meeting that has been called for a decision of what will likely amount to the equivalent of a 700 plus acre urban zone placed squarely within highly valued forested resource that supports fish and wildlife both within and well beyond its borders.

The combined water demands of hotels, multiple family dwellings, and other large buildings and facilities of this urban zone would pose a grave threat to the aquifer that sustains Red Brook, its coldwater dependent brook trout, and its significant runs of river herring and American eels. The proposed change that creates the potential for this 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.

Before closing, we are compelled to point out once again 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 of Reservations, 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.

Approximately \$4 million in state, federal and nonprofit funds have been spent, not to mention Trout Unlimited's 30 plus years of stewardship and volunteer contributions of time and labor, to protect and restore Red Brook and its fisheries. This is an effort that is ongoing through TU's management partnership with the Trustees and MassWildlife.

We thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Respectfully,



Matthew R. Hoagland, President
Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited

cc. Wareham Board of Selectmen

Attachment: February 15 letter from Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited