

Land Use & Planning I

From:
Sent: - - - - - Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:58 PM
To: Land Use & Planning Board
Subject: Questions from walk thru for proposed mill pond development 3/23/2025

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1. How far over the banking will the proposed retaining wall go on the pond side? Will there be a banking on any other wetland areas?
2. Who determines where the test pits are dug? And why wasn't there test pits dug where the oil barrels were, in or around the old foundations, or any other questionable areas?
3. After entering mill pond lane- how far along the left side of the road are trees needing to be cut?
4. Will trees remain on the left side past where the gate is now?
5. If the street light/pole is deemed to be taken out and replaced with underground electric wires; will a new street light and or street lights for the road/ sidewalk accessibility be put in?
6. How can you have a 50 foot right of way for the 26 foot road when there is barely enough room for the road?
7. Where is the proposed culvert that was mentioned at a past meeting? How will it not drain from one side to the other especially from the swamp to the pond? And will there be something in place to hinder curious kids etc. accessing it?
8. How will the wet lands be protected around the proposed cul de sac for the habitat houses?

If I think of any more- I will submit them.

Thank you,
Sheila Grinley

Land Use & Planning Board

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 1:15 PM
To: Land Use & Planning Board
Subject: Mill Pond walkthrough questions

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Planning Board,

My questions from the Mill Pond walkthrough are as follows:

- Is there sufficient water in the tower to fight a fire? I am concerned that our water system isn't sufficient to fight multiple fires.
- Who will pay to rebuild the road if the river undermines it? The current RR shows signs of being undermined by the river.
- Where is the sidewalk? I there doesn't seemed to be enough room.

Thank you for this opportunity to answer my questions.

Matt Angell

8 Memory Ln.

Sent from my iPhone

Land Use & Planning Board

From: _____ om>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:19 PM
To: Land Use & Planning Board
Subject: Questions from concerned citizen
Attachments: board questions.docx

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I have attached a document containing all my concerns and questions about the Mill Pond Development. Thank you for taking the time to read this and I look forward to these and other questions being addressed at the meeting on Thursday 😊

Questions for the Planning Board about/ for Mill Pond Development:

How long will this entire project take from start to finish?

How long will it take to rip up the road, to redo the underground water, sewer lines and add underground power lines?

How long will the town be out of power while redoing the wires/putting new poles in?

Based on our recent incident with the town losing power and needing to install new power substations. What makes anyone think that without the upgrades, which could take years, how will the power supply be able to handle what would be needed to run a 76-condo unit with streetlights, laundry mat and community center? Are they going to pay for additional upgrades to the substation?

Who's paying for all these upgrades to the sewer, water and power lines? Is the developer paying for all of this, including the extra cost to run all of these in the future?

While Mill Pond Lane is under construction, how are the current property owners supposed to access their homes? They don't have back yard parking or any other way to get to their homes.

How will this development effect the property values for the current houses on Mill Pond Road? I assume they'll go down because there will be a huge concrete wall from the view of their homes. Also, is there something that will protect them from any and all liability if something happens during construction or after it's built?

How tall will the concrete barriers be along the edge of the extended road?

Are there any concerns about the effects this development will have on the wildlife in the area? Literally, while doing the site tour, we encountered a beaver who's clearly lived there for years. How is it right for us to destroy his home and other animals in the area?

Will there be extra fencing put up around the dam to protect children from playing in that dangerous area? The current fence around it doesn't seem safe and should be extended or at least add another fence about 10' from current one as a precaution.

How will this development affect the schools, PD, FD, crime rates, taxes? Are the developers willing to build a new school and pay what it'll cost to pay more teachers, janitors, and supplies to cover the increased amount of students going into the system? The current school system is already in a tight situation, adding more students to the school would make things even worse.

Are the developers willing to pay the PD and FD the incomes to employ more people? With a huge increase in people, more cops and fire fighters will absolutely be needed.

Ashland taxpayers can barely afford to pay their taxes as it is. Adding this condo will raise our taxes even more and people won't be able to pay their bills and must move. Unless developers plan to pay everyone in the town of Ashland's tax increase for the next 5 years, which they won't. Increasing our taxes to support this huge project is going to hurt every local that calls Ashland home.

When doing the site tour, they had markers up for where the center of the road would be, but there weren't any markers for the edge of the property line towards the ballpark side. Mr. Leonard was saying that the line was up to the bench areas in the softball field. If that really is where the line is, how will this development affect the 4th of July celebration that our town is known for? Will vendors still even be allowed to be at the ballpark for this celebration? July 4th is a huge money maker for this town and to not have that would be devastating for this town.

Will the developers be paying to install stop lights, either on Winter St, Industrial Road or both? Traffic getting out of both these locations is already difficult. Adding at least 150-200 more cars to the area is going to make it extremely worse and unsafe! This will also increase the number of car accidents, which we'll again need more police for to handle these situations.

When reading the email from Kara Villone from DES, the Wetlands Permitting Specialist, she says the applicants must demonstrate that no unnecessary destruction to wetlands will occur and no adverse impacts will occur as a result of the work, including water quality to adjacent water bodies. Yet, when Mr. Leonard gave his presentation on Dec 4, he stated, the development WILL impact the wetlands on the property.

So why does the developer think that they'll be approved, when the wetlands will be affected?

According to Mr. Welch (Town Manager), there used to be two cemeteries and possible unrecorded bodies on the property. He suggests that no digging should be done until DES investigates the land further. After viewing the DES testing results, they identified 5 Recognizable Environmental Conditions (RECs):

Rec 1- Improper drum disposal throughout the property

Rec 2- Unidentified waste piles in western half of property

Rec 3- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances contamination from firefighting efforts at the property

Rec 4- Concentrations of heavy metals above regulatory standards in several wells across the property

Rec 5- Soil contamination in conjunction with observations of urban fill, coal tar and coal ash on the property

My question is, based on these results, what plans do the developers have to safely handle these issues?

Also, how long will it take to get the land deemed safe and non-hazardous?

If the land isn't even deemed safe to build on, and it could possibly take years to make safe, why are we even wasting the taxpayers time talking about an issue that nothing can even happen for years to come?

Currently, Mill Pond is not yet a public street and a waiver would be needed for the acceptance process. Mill Pond Lane needs to go through the process to make it a public road, which voters will have a say. What is this process exactly? Again, why aren't we going through this voting process first? If the town votes no, the whole project is over with. We should be doing this vote before wasting everyone's time on something that might not happen, due to a simple town vote. Why haven't we done this vote yet?

If hazardous waste is improperly disposed of and the future tenants get sick, who will be responsible if they want to sue someone?

Why is Mr. Zorwiski's concerns about the dam on the property he owns, being ignored? He's worried about heavy equipment getting through, connecting water and sewer lines near the dam, the removal plans of the existing easement and the extension plans for over the dam as well as access to the dam. It's his property and his concerns are 100% valid. Why are they being ignored?

He was told the access road would be made wider and be paved with a better easement. Yet, when on the site tour, the only extension discussed was to make the road 26' wide.

When Rich Greenly expressed his concerns (at a meeting) that Mill Pond Lane doesn't meet the required width and asked for clarification on how the sidewalks would be added. Mr. Leonard stated, there's a 50' wide strip, or easement, of land for road expansion. But on the tour, this 50' expansion was never shown to us. Where is exactly do they plan on adding the 50', when the road itself is only 20' and can barely make the extension to 26'?

The suggested distance from the center of the road to the center of the ditch is 18'. So, why were we only shown how far it would go when its 13' from the center and not 18'?

Matt Angel mentioned that the deed previously stated that no digging should occur due to overlaid waste. Kara LaSalle clarified that there is an activity use restriction in the deed. What exactly does that mean?

Finally, I just wanted to address concerns that have been previously mentioned, but never answered:

Currently, this is an animal sanctuary. How are you going to protect the eagles nesting, other birds, moose, deer, bear, as well as the fish that go back and forth under the road to the ponds?

Who will be responsible for maintaining infrastructure and buildings once it's built?

What is the maximum build out of units? Phase 1 is the condo units, Phase 2 the Habitat for Humanity homes, is there a Phase 3?

The ballpark is the emergency landing zone for medical helicopters. This means it needs to stay dark enough for helicopters can see to land. Lighting is going to be an issue. How will this be handled and will it even be able to still be used as an emergency landing zone after the development is built?

Are you bringing public transportation to Ashland? Or are you planning on increasing the services that the taxpayers pay for in Transportation Central and others?

What are you doing with the catch basin, water, and electricity that is currently in the ground at the ballpark?

What is the estimate of the time, labor, and materials cost to extend the water lines, sewage and power lines? Are they going to hire local companies to do all this work or bring

in their own people? If they want to build in our town, it should be locals doing the work and making the money from it. Not some random company from Mass or wherever they would subcontract from.

What are the planned property taxes to the town of Ashland in years 1-10 after occupancy?

Any chance of flooding the subdivision by the overflow from Mill Pond? Could this be a safety issue that needs to be addressed in the planning stages of the project?

Asking for clarification on how school buses and fire trucks would be able to turn around within the development. Mr. Leonard responded, there would be a loop for them to turn around but may require backing up. Backing up these vehicles is a HUGE safety hazard and should be avoided at all costs.

I think I've covered everything I'm concerned about but just want to make it known and on paper that this development would be a HUGE mistake and would not only burden the community with higher taxes but could destroy this quaint small town we have. Imagine having Ledgewood right in the middle of town, that's basically what it would be. We don't need this development, and it only hurts the people that truly love this town.