

25 April 2024

CAPT Conrad J Donahue, USN (Ret)
18 Pages Way
Portsmouth, RI

From: Conrad J Donahue

To: Town of Middletown Planning Board

Charles Vaillancourt

William J Nash

Michael Fenton,

Joseph Pierick

Betty Jane Owen

Arthur Weber

Leon Amarant

Subject: **Testimony with regards to Prescott Point, LLC, Development Plan Review on Meeting 5/8/24**

Town of Middletown Planning Board Members,

I am a resident of the Beech Hill Condominium community at Prescott Point and have been expressing my concerns with regards to the plans for the Pool & Clubhouse amenities for the past six years to both the developer and the Middletown Planning/Zoning offices. I have attached a few documents and images that I hope will convey the gravity of the issues related primarily to lack of accessibility due to inadequate land area being assigned to host the pool and clubhouse.

The clubhouse/pool complex is shoe-horned into a roughly triangular shaped parcel at the intersection of the two main roads servicing the Phase II community on the west side of the property. This parcel is restricted in growth to the east by wetlands and to the west by a community sewage leaching field and residential lots. The result is that the amount of space available for parking allows for only 12 spaces, on the other side of the intersection of the roads. In the currently planned configuration, the pool is located on the front-side of the clubhouse leaving no room to construct a driveway for vehicles to drop off passengers and materials for clubhouse events. Overflow parking is located at two locations – the tennis courts and the Wastewater Treatment Plant at distances of about 200 and 400 yards respectively. Pedestrians using these parking areas will be forced to use main artery, Freedom Trail, for the long hike since there are no sidewalks/walkways planned. Since much of Freedom Trail in this area is

constructed on a berm with steep banks with a 10-20 foot drop on the north side, the wise pedestrian will use the lane on the south side. The hazards of this long walk will increase significantly at night since no street lighting will be available. It should be noted that in a Planning Board Notice of Recommendation to the Zoning Board dated 21 DEC 2016, subsequent to a prior hearing on this proposed development, then-Chairman Weber included a recommendation that “prior to issuance of the Special Use Permit the plans must be revised to include a sidewalk along one side of Freedom Trail and proposed roadway B. Proposed street lighting must also be added to the plans.” This has not been done.

Several years ago I proposed that the developer consider relocating the Clubhouse to the area currently hosting 2 tennis courts where more plentiful clubhouse parking is available. This would also allow for a small increase parking spaces for the pool in its current location and provide space for a picnic area. My suggestion was rejected due to concerns that the engineering study for storm water runoff was complete and it wasn't worth the time/expense to repeat.

This leaves one other option to resolve this accessibility problem. At least one, preferably two, of the residential lots bounding the pool/clubhouse property could be incorporated into this recreational area. The side of the home planned adjacent to the pool/clubhouse is located a mere 20 feet from the water's edge. The drawings don't seem to show the concrete deck around the perimeter of the pool which will increase its area from 24X36 ft (pool only) to 44X56 (pool + deck) assuming that a 10ft peripheral seating area is adequate. When this is considered, the pool area with its security fence will expand to the roadside and leave no buffer with the adjacent home. Also, placement of the pool with its large security fence in front of the clubhouse negatively impacts the aesthetics of this attractive structure. Incorporating the adjacent lot into the recreational area will allow the pool to be relocated to the rear (west side) of the clubhouse and provide plenty of room for a driveway to the entrance and perhaps a dozen more parking spots. This won't completely resolve the accessibility issue, especially when clubhouse events occur when the pool is in use, but it should alleviate it enough that the clubhouse will be able to support large enough groups to justify its maintenance expense.

I thank you all for taking your limited time to digest this information and look forward to presenting these serious concerns with you all during the hearing on 8 May.

Respectfully,

Conrad Donahue

February 20, 2021

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Portsmouth, RI 02871

RE: Zoning Board of Review Decision and Findings of Fact in Re: Petition of Prescott Point LLC dated March 6, 2017

Honorable Town of **Middletown** Zoning Board of Review Members:

I am a resident of Prescott Point and serve as a member of the Master Association Executive Board. As such, I have been privy to the Declarant's plans for the Phase II development of property in both Portsmouth and Middletown and recently gathered copies of the Development Agreements between the Towns with Prescott Point Investors, LLC to familiarize myself with the contractual obligations going forward.

An area of concern that I have extensively discussed with the Developer relates to one of the amenities of this Planned Resort Development – the Clubhouse & Pool complex. This facility is planned for construction in Middletown, adjacent to the boundary with Portsmouth. **I am very concerned about significant accessibility issues.** The current plans shared by the Developer include a small 12 car parking area across the street from the facility that will likely have an estimated capacity of about 60 (clubhouse) and 80 (pool). Since this recreational site will be up to a half mile walk on non-level terrain from most homes, a larger parking area of at least 40 spots should be specified. Additionally, the Town of Middletown Planning Board Recommendation to the Zoning Board of December 21, 2016 stated that “prior to issuance of the Special Use Permit the plans must be revised to include a sidewalk along one side of ‘proposed roadway B’ and Freedom Trail. Proposed street lighting must also be added to the plans.” **The current plans do not include these sidewalks** and as far as is known, street lighting is only planned at intersections. Additionally, the currently planned layout does not provide for a driveway to the entrance of the clubhouse. It should be mandatory that a drop off point near the entrance be available for elderly and handicapped members. With the current plan, wheelchair bound members may have a 200 yard transit to the clubhouse along the side of a busy road from the overflow parking area.


The residents of the existing “Phase I” section of Prescott Point are almost all retirees with an average age over 70 years. A large proportion of them would not be able to make the long uphill walk to the clubhouse/pool. The current marketing plan for the “Phase II” land units addressed by this Decision is for rental communities that will likely be inhabited by transient military families with young children. This raises the importance for well-lighted avenues for off-street pedestrian and bicycle traffic, especially since the road in question is the major thoroughfare for the community.

It should be noted that the Town of Portsmouth Planning Board Development Agreement for this Planned Resort includes the following statement in regards to the clubhouse: “...the building

design and interior layouts thereof, the adjacent lighting and landscaping plans, the nature, character and extent of the uses allowed in the said building and the **parking requirements** shall be governed by the Town of Middletown. There is a similar statement regarding the pool.

On the attached drawings you will note that the current plans provide 14 parking spots at the tennis court that are about 200 yards from the pool/clubhouse. During daylight hours in under good weather conditions, these overflow spots would help alleviate the shortage of parking at the recreation complex for those younger, healthier residents. As the drawings show, there is no walkway other than the relatively narrow busy street. I have suggested that the developer consider moving the pool and clubhouse to the more spacious area at which tennis courts are currently planned but that idea was rejected.

On behalf of the existing residents and those future unit owners/renters in the undeveloped land units, I request that the Middletown Zoning Board provide Prescott Point LLC with expanded construction specifications to ensure adequate parking, a drive-up drop-off point near the entrance and routes for safe pedestrian travel to/from the pool/clubhouse complex.

Sincerely, 

Clubhouse-Pool Complex Design Functional Concerns

Issue: The currently planned layout of the Prescott Point Clubhouse and Pool have several flaws that will certainly be significantly problematic for users unless corrective design action is taken.

Specific Problems:

1. There is no driveway in front of the clubhouse to allow for car passenger drop-off
2. There is a grossly inadequate number of parking spaces for clubhouse/pool users
3. There needs to be sidewalks/off-road paths to this recreational area along what will be a highly-trafficked Freedom Trail Drive for Phase I/II pedestrians
4. There must be adequate roadside/parking lot lighting for safe pedestrian traffic at night

Scenario that demonstrates these problems:

A group of 20 couples reserve the clubhouse meeting room for a pot-luck dinner party on a winter evening. All intend to drive. One attendee is wheelchair bound and the average age of the group is 70 years.

The first 12 to arrive park in the available spots across the street from the clubhouse. The husbands walk their wives to the entrance and then return to their car to pick up the pot luck dishes/coolers since there is no way to drop them off at the entrance. The next 8 folks see the full parking lot so drive up to the only available spots at the WWTF building. Among these attendees is the wheelchair bound person. The walk to the clubhouse is over 700 feet on a fairly steep downhill incline. Again, several of the group must make the long walk up the hill and back down with the food/beverages that they brought. There are a couple of close encounters between the wheelchair and other pedestrians with Freedom Trail automotive traffic since there are no sidewalks and inadequate street lighting. The wheelchair ramp is on the far side of the entry-side deck so the attendant has to push it between the pool fence and deck adding the strain of the walk.

During the party, much of the discussion is about the incredible hassle involved in accessing the party room and this puts a damper on the festivities. Nasty emails are sent to the Master Board members ☹

Potential Solutions/Mitigations:

1. Add an additional row or two of parking spots to provide an absolute minimum of 25.
2. Change the arrangement such that the Clubhouse is located in the western corner and the pool is located behind it. This will allow for a driveway installation in front of the building for drop-off/pick-up. It also results in the eyesore of the pool with high chain-link fence being

placed just feet from the front of the architecturally attractive clubhouse front side. This action will also provide for greater privacy for pool users.

3. Ensure plans include installation of a sidewalk along relatively narrow Freedom Trail to allow for safe pedestrian transit (including walkers/wheelchairs) from both the Phase I and Phase II communities. This will be especially important for the Phase II communities which will include many young children and stroller traffic.

4. Review the plans to ensure that the street/clubhouse-pool/parking lot lighting is adequate for safety and security.

