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Land Use Agencies
Town of Woodbridge

January 31, 2022

Dear Chairman Blythe and Members of the Inland Wetlands Commission,

This Letter is regarding the application for the subdivision at Merritt Avenue containing fourteen TWO family THREE bedroom rental properties 28 Apartments- in a relatively small area. We ask the commission to please consider several facts regarding this development. The development is in the T-3 Sub-Urban Zone which "consists of Low-density residential areas adjacent to higher zones that have some mixed use". This is stated in our zoning regulations. Merritt Avenue residents do not consider this development Low-density. This development is in a flood prone area. The March 2012 study by Cardinal Engineering confirms this on page 3. Also, "properties on Merritt Avenue in the area adjacent to the Route 15 embankment and West River experience high ground water and flooding during rain events." Another study, Army Corps of Engineers April 2013 regarding flooding, states "To make matters worse, floodplain development, both residential and commercial, has been extensive over the years in Woodbridge Flats".

Some folks are claiming the removal of the Pond Lily Dam has eliminated flooding. Cardinal Engineering study from 2009 stated "Removal of the Pond Lily Dam does not have an appreciable effect on upstream flooding". Next to none of flood mitigation recommendations in these studies have been implemented. Are we going to continue to ignore these studies and continue new construction to the detriment of existing structures? Isn't it time to limit the extensive development in this flood plain area until the existing problems are corrected?

Storm water drainage is a constant concern. The DOT drains the tunnel as well as the Route 15 embankment into the West River adjacent to the proposed development. Deficiencies in this drainage system have never been corrected. "The 18-inch end wall at the base of the embankment must be restored in its function of draining the low-lying areas behind Merritt Avenue". (Cardinal Engineering Study 2012.) This end wall has never been replaced. Improving the DOT drainage system was discussed at the last public Hero's tunnel meeting with the DOT and CDM Smith Engineers. DOT indicated an improved drainage system would be included in the Hero's tunnel project. The DOT future Exit 59 plan entails removing many existing homes and businesses to relieve traffic congestion. They plan on expanding both Route 69 (Litchfield Turnpike) and Route 15 (Merritt Parkway). The extent of the changes in the Exit 59 plan speaks to the deficit in the current infrastructure. This includes both drainage and traffic.

The residents residing in the Woodbridge flats have been inundated by flooding and traffic for many years. The impact of 28 three bedroom apartments and 60 cars draining into the existing high-water table can only aggravate the flooding problems.

Members of the commission, please consider the traffic congestion another 60 autos would add to Merritt Avenue. Please consider existing residents who have seen more flooding following

more development. Since at least 1982 a long list of flood studies has been done with no implementation of their recommendations. We feel this development should not be approved until both drainage and traffic infrastructure improvements are made. We ask the members of the commission to consider the sentiments of the people of Merritt Avenue as well as the commercial interest of the developer.

Sincerely, 

Frank DeLeo, Chairman

Woodbridge West River Flood Mitigation and Restoration Committee