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F. Doré Hunter, Chairman
Board of Selectmen

December 31, 2007

Secretary Ian A. Bowles
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: Aisling Eglington
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2524

RE: EEA No. 14141, Alexan Concord, Concord, Massachusetts

Dear Secretary Bowles:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Notification Form for the Alexan Concord project in Concord and Acton, Massachusetts. This letter is submitted in consideration of the potential impacts that this project may have on the Town of Acton, its citizens, and its environment.

As you are aware, the Alexan Concord project includes 350 units of new housing on an approximately 30 acre site that includes or abuts four towns: Concord, Acton, Maynard and Sudbury. The project as proposed is being developed under MGL c.40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law. The proposed housing units for this project are to be constructed in Concord, while the entranceway and associated roadway improvements integral to the viability of this Project are located in Acton. As a result of the project being located in both Acton and Concord, it is or soon will be seeking Comprehensive Permits in both towns. .

Given the scale of this Project and its location on or abutting four towns, it is appropriate that it be given thorough review at both the state and local level. The Town of Acton looks forward to working with the Proponent and our neighboring Towns in the development of project that addresses local housing needs while insuring a livable community for these future community members and the existing community as a whole. We encourage MEPA to consider the multiple community aspects of this project in its consideration of the need for additional review under MEPA and associated state-wide planning initiatives and policies. Should MEPA determine that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report is appropriate for this project, we would ask that the following issues be addressed.

Wastewater.

The proposed groundwater discharge of 94,640 gallons per day is not insignificant and is just shy of the volume where a mandatory Environmental Impact Report would be required. We appreciate the level of treatment being proposed by the Proponent and will monitor the

groundwater discharge permit process to insure the protection of down-gradient resources in the Town of Acton, including the Assabet River.

Passive Recreation

The proposed development has limited open space for passive recreational activities. We would note that the property abuts lands along the Assabet River upon which the Town of Acton holds a Conservation Restriction. Preliminary conversations with the Proponent suggest a willingness to consider a similar form of protection for portions of the project site, and the potential to explore joint opportunities to expand passive recreational opportunities along the river. Again, should an Environmental Impact Report be deemed appropriate, we would ask that these opportunities be addressed therein.

Archeological Resources

The Town of Acton Wastewater Treatment Facility lies on the bluffs overlooking the Assabet River opposite the Alexan Concord site. During the approval process for the treatment plant archeological investigations were undertaken which revealed and fully documented over seven thousand years of Native American habitation of these bluffs. This site, now referred to as the Pine Hawk site, is one of the most significant archeological sites in this region of the state (see <http://www.actonmemoriallibrary.org/pinehawk/home.html>).

Although anecdotal in nature, it is worth noting that during the excavation of the Pine Hawk site, reference was made to the likelihood that the bluffs opposite the Pine Hawk site were as likely to contain significant archeological resources as the Pine Hawk site. Given the proximity of the Alexan Concord site to the highly recognized Pine Hawk site, and the fact that much of the Alexan Concord site has experienced only minor land disturbance, investigation as to the presence of archeological resources at the Alexan Concord site may be warranted prior to the construction of the structures and leaching fields.

Traffic/Transportation

The Alexan Concord development will require significant roadway improvements to Old Powder Mill Road, Sudbury Road and Powder Mill Road (Route 62). Traffic impacts will likely extend to Maynard Center, South Acton and West Concord. Preliminary review conducted in July of 2007 by the Acton Engineering Department identified the following concerns:

1. Presently Sudbury road carries 3990 vehicles per day (vpd). The proposed project will increase the traffic by 2254 vpd. This is a 56% increase.
2. The 2254 cars will be entering and leaving Sudbury Road/Old Powder Mill Road at a point where there is limited sight distance. This is at the point where Sudbury Road leaves Acton and becomes Powder Mill Road in Maynard. The Proponent's consultant has recognized these limitations and has proposed changes to the intersection. The changes include realigning the entrance with Sudbury Road, realigning and widening Sudbury Road in Acton and Powder Mill Road in Maynard, and construction of sidewalks. To accomplish these changes it appears that land takings in both Acton and Maynard will be necessary. The ability for the Proponent to obtain the necessary land for the improvements is paramount for the necessary improvements.

3. The report shows the proposed changes in item 2 in a general manner. Acton will be very interested in the details of the design. Presently the intersection only works due to the relatively light volume of traffic entering at this location, and the fact that the present geometry of the intersection forces most vehicles to use caution. Improving the geometry of the roadway even slightly may reduce the caution exercised today, causing more accidents, especially when the entering traffic is increased from its current levels of perhaps 200 vpd to over 2254 vpd. The existing 85% speed was determined to be 28mph. With improvements this speed will rise. This will be of great concern especially during winter icing conditions. The design must take this into account.
4. The report has determined that the intersection of Sudbury Road with Route 62 presently operates at a level-of-service (LOS) "F" in the evening peak hour and LOS "D" in the morning. With the project built, both morning and afternoon peak hours will be at LOS "F." The morning queue will be 26 cars which will block Westside Drive. The afternoon queue was not calculated; however it conceivable that it will extend into Maynard. With this being the predicted condition, this project should move forward only if the proper mitigation (i.e. traffic signals) are provided. The Proponent appears to be offering to design the traffic signal, and then rely on the state for the necessary funding. Acton believes that the funding for this necessary mitigation should be secured prior to building the project.
5. The report found that the signalized intersection at High and Route 62 will operate at an acceptable level (LOS "C" or Better) with some minor changes in signal timing etc., which should be provided by the Proponent.
6. The intersection of Parker and High has been studied in regard to this proposed project. It has been suggested that there will be only a minimal impact on this intersection, however the traffic counts relied upon do not concur with recent counts on High Street taken by the Town of Acton. We believe the Proponent should review their data with the Town of Acton's and make appropriate adjustments to their findings and recommendations for this critical area.
7. With the complexity of the traffic issues associated with this project Acton recommends that the Proponent supply funds for the Town of Acton to hire a Traffic consultant for peer review.

Traffic/Transportation Conclusion

The Proponent's consultant has determined that Sudbury Road and its intersection with Route 62 are severely inadequate for the intended use. The mitigation measures needed will be extensive and expensive, and in some cases impossible to achieve without obtaining land from other parties. It is Acton's strong recommendation that the Proponent be advised to explore alternative means of access for their project.

We thank you the opportunity for the Town of Acton to comment on the ENF for the Alexan Concord project, and for your consideration of the above comments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Doré Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "F" and a long, sweeping underline.

F. Doré Hunter
Chairman, Board Of Selectman

cc West Concord Development LLC
160 Gould Street Suite 121
Needham, MA 02494