

**EXTRA INFORMATION**

3/31/08  
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OLD NORTH BRIDGE

**TOWN OF CONCORD**  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S OFFICE  
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March 31, 2008

Lauren Rosenzweig  
Peter Berry  
And Steve Ledoux  
c/o Acton Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
472 Main Street  
Acton, MA

**Re: Alexan Concord - 48 Old Powder Mill Road**

Dear Lauren, Peter, and Steve,

Thank you for taking the time to meet last week with Dinny, Chris and me concerning the Alexan-Concord project. We acknowledge that this is a large project which will have some impact on Acton. I understand the Acton Selectmen will be meeting tonight and will be discussing your recommendation to the Acton Board of Appeals concerning this project.

I would like to once again reiterate some of the points that we raised during both our December and March meetings with Acton representatives in the hope that Acton could find a way to support this project.

Credit Acton for Units in Concord. As you know, with 5% of our housing in the affordable category, Concord is half-way toward the 10% goal. We need 315 units to meet the 10% figure, based on the 2000 housing census. We also know that the housing totals will change with the 2010 census, so that even with 350 units of the Alexan project fully counted, we will be about 35 units **below** the 10% goal two years from now. We will continue to promote affordable housing in Concord in the years to come, focusing our efforts on smaller projects in "smart growth" areas. This includes a 5-unit project we expect to fund through CPA at this year's Town Meeting.

Crediting Acton for units built in Concord and for which Concord will provide all necessary services, including educating school children, is politically untenable for us. West Concord residents already feel overwhelmed by traffic traveling from towns west of us in the morning and returning in the evening.

We understand that Acton's housing advocates have spoken out strongly for Acton to share in the allocation of these units. Coming from housing supporters, this has surprised us.

Concord has offered to provide Acton residents equal preference with Concord residents for access to the affordable housing. This means that Acton's "empty-nesters", new families, and town employees will have an excellent opportunity to reside in the Acton area at an affordable price. We would find it stunning that housing advocates would prefer to see this project denied than to see all of the housing credited to the Town in which the units are located and which must bear the cost of servicing the units.

The Concord Selectmen and the Concord Housing Development Corporation are willing to meet with representatives of the Acton Board of Selectmen and the Acton Housing Development Corporation to discuss this important affordable housing initiative and other regional affordable housing issues. Concord and Acton have to work cooperatively on many issues in the future and we feel that Acton's request to be compensated by Concord with valuable affordable housing units in response to traffic concerns is a poor precedent and not productive.

Traffic Burden for Acton. We recognize that Sudbury Road will bear all of the day-to-day traffic from this large project. However, the developer has agreed to improve the road, which is in serious need of repair and up-grading. Concord Selectmen support Acton's request for whatever safety measures are required to make the roadway safe for motorists and pedestrians.

We note that Sudbury Road was zoned for industrial activity. Therefore, the traffic from this project will travel past largely commercial and industrial properties, before entering onto Route 62. In Concord, Route 62 is largely residential, so the traffic will be traveling through several of our neighborhoods to get to Route 2 and points east and west.

One of Acton's industrial streets will bear a heavy traffic load for a very short stretch, before that traffic disappears largely into neighboring towns. Concord has experienced the traffic impact of development and land uses supported by the communities adjoining Concord. We consider that part of being a good neighbor. We have not opposed projects in towns along our border, even when it has meant a large volume of truck and car traffic passing through our community. Most recently, a 197-unit affordable housing project was approved in Lincoln, with an outlet to Sandy Pond Road in Concord, near Crosby's corner. We did not oppose the project, nor did we request "credit" for any of the units now under construction in Lincoln.

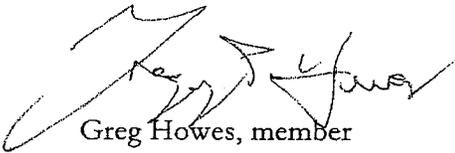
Access. We would have preferred both primary and emergency access to take place via Concord streets. We have repeatedly urged the developers of Alexan Concord to contact the owners of the private Forest Ridge Road to work out an agreement. Despite our many efforts, those discussions have not been successful and it is clear the Town is not in a position to force the owners of a private street to grant access to others. We believe the access of Sudbury Road in Acton is adequate. We don't support the use of Border Road, a residential area with many winding roads, to be a suitable primary means of access. We expect the developer will identify Border Road as the emergency access, but we expect Concord's emergency vehicles to respond to incidents at Alexan via Forest Ridge Road. We believe the Town has rights to use Forest Ridge Road; but also believe we cannot transfer those rights to others, such as Alexan.

Mitigation. It is commonplace for developers of large projects to be asked to mitigate the impact of development on communities. So we support Acton's request for traffic and safety improvements that would properly address those needs. We don't think the mitigation should be provided by the neighboring community but rather the developer. We understand this did occur in one instance, via an out-of-court settlement, but we don't think this should be a model for how neighboring communities deal with development along their shared borders.

Past History and Future Projects. Acton and Concord have a long history of collaboration and cooperation. The Acton Board of Appeals is certainly in a position to deny, or deny jurisdiction over, this project. We urge Acton officials **not** to do this. We have worked cooperatively on matters involving MCI Concord and agricultural land, and the planning of the Route 2 Rotary Improvements. And it is foreseeable that additional development in Acton near the border with Concord will be occurring in the future. We favor a collaborative approach to development discussions.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to meet with us. You seemed to understand the importance to us of having this project approved. We ask for your cooperation on this, recognizing there will be a traffic impact, much as Acton developments have impacted Concord with traffic. We look forward to continued cooperation in the future for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Howes", written over a horizontal line.

Greg Howes, member

Concord Board of Selectmen

cc: Board of Selectmen