

104 Woodland Street
Sherborn, MA

February 5, 2025

To the members of the Sherborn Zoning Board of Appeals:

This letter is to express my sincere concern and objection to the Sherborn Board of Health's recommendation to allow five variances, to our Sherborn Board of Health Regulations for the Brush Hill Homes proposed project, "as a compromise" which, according to hired experts, will endanger public health in the Town of Sherborn.

As a practicing physician, a resident of Sherborn and an elected member of the Sherborn Board of Health, I cannot support a project that has the potential to endanger public health. This letter is to reiterate to you, the Zoning Board of Appeals, why I disagree with the BOH's decision on this matter, and to express my hope that the ZBA will take public health into consideration when you evaluate this project.

My vote was the dissenting vote, and I was voted down 4:1 on each requested variance by this applicant for Brush Hill Homes, a project filed under the Chapter 40B statute, which will include construction of one Affordable unit, and three market value homes, whose future residents' private drinking water supplies will all be at risk. Not only will the project have the potential to endanger the private drinking water supplies of its own future residents, it will also endanger the established wells of existing landowners who abut this project, as well as the shared aquifer that serves other nearby homes, due to local geologic conditions (wetlands, glacial til, ledge etc).

In Chapter 40B there is no compromise for Public Health. Even if variances might be allowed, those variances must not risk the health and wellbeing of Town residents; and nothing obviates the BOH's responsibility to ensure safe drinking water with private water supplies, especially with potentially vulnerable populations (Elderly and Affordable housing). Since this is new construction the project can and should be designed, and sized, to fit the geology of the site (using established methods such as EHIR, mounding analysis, historical data etc) to guide the plan and design.

The scientists hired by abutters of this project have identified multiple design flaws where there is potential to fail and thus endanger the function of nearby existing septic systems, which will in turn endanger nearby private wells. It is my opinion that our local regulations should be enforced to protect drinking water when there is no other option for water.

We all agree that Sherborn needs to build more Affordable Housing, however, drinking water must be safe in every circumstance.

Board of Health, the regulatory body protecting drinking water in Sherborn, should not promote development which has the potential to endanger public health, in my opinion. In the absence of sewer infrastructure, with private well systems which lack enforcement of drinking water standards at the state or federal level, it is imperative that the Sherborn Board of Health enforce our regulations for every home and private water supply. I sincerely hope that the ZBA will join me in my desire to promote safe drinking water in all larger projects, with shared systems, with increased health risks, and with significant potential liabilities, especially those which fall under the Chapter 40B statute.

Together we should be working to prevent problems, to protect the interests of every Sherborn resident, our shared natural resources, the environment, our property values and our private drinking water resources; there is no back-up plan.

Thank you for your attention to these important considerations.

Very sincerely,

Rebecca Hunnewell, M.D., F.A.A.D., F.A.C.M.S.