

I am writing to oppose the application for a RUE and variance for Soundview Lots 5 and 6 (PLN50850A RUE & PLN50850A VAR and PLN50850B RUE and PLN50850B VAR).

This is not the first time variances have been sought for these substandard lots. In the spring of 2004, for example, applications similar to the current ones were submitted. Obviously, that development did not happen.

Both lots 5 and 6 lie primarily in the wetland or wetland buffer. The wetland does not recognize borders of property lines, yet it has been chipped away at since the current sewer system made building on surrounding lots possible. Lots to the east of these lots were built on based on inaccurate wetland mapping, thus further degrading the wetlands and buffers. Lots directly south of lots 5 and 6 are being developed, with reduction of buffers. Allowing building on lots 5 and 6 will further degrade this wetland. The entire wetland is at risk of being destroyed bit by bit.

In their SEPA checklist, the current applicant implies that the boundaries of the wetland are due to the culvert being misplaced. Certainly, human activity has impacted the wetland! The roadbed through the wetland (Belfair trail) was put in by the military without regard to the wetland. Before that, the wetland ran continuously from approximately Parkview, north to Port Blakely. Before the current culvert was put in, the wetland was even larger. Here's what the wetland was like before the current culvert:



Replacing the current culvert will not "restore" the wetland, but reduce it's impact on the lots in question.

The southern section of Soundview Drive is not properly sited. The eastern edge of the road is actually where the middle of the road should be, thus giving the east side properties the illusion of a depth of approximately fifteen feet more. This essentially increases the usable yard of the eastern lots, while the western lots are left without the fifteen foot right of way. Additionally, misalignment of the road at the intersection of Belfair and Soundview creates a sharp turn and limits visibility. The trail that connects Soundview to Radio School Road is heavily used by children going to and from the school bus and by people accessing the park. As development on Soundview increases traffic, this becomes more and more dangerous.

The City of Bainbridge Island is currently reviewing the Critical Areas Ordinance. It is likely that changes to the ordinance could effect the wetland and these lots. Doesn't it make sense to wait to make a decision on these lots until the ordinance is adopted?

Also please find attached my letter to Christy Carr of COBI regarding the RUE VAR for the lots to the south of lots 5 and 6. All of these issues remain, although maybe even more severely due to the proximity of the lots to the wetland, road, and intersection, as well as the smaller size of the lots. At the hearing for that application, the hearing examiner stated that he believed these lots should not be developed, but felt his hands were tied. Perhaps, since lots 5 and 6 are even more encumbered by the wetlands than those to the south, there is a way to protect them.

Most sincerely,

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