

**From:** [Amanda Ahn](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, November 4, 2024 3:29:07 PM

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You don't often get email from amanda.ahn@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear City Planning Board,

Thank you for welcoming our group of concerned abutters from 579 Sagamore Avenue to your monthly meetings. I regret that I am unable to attend tomorrow's meeting in person, but I would like to share some important information regarding our concerns about the proposed development at 635 Sagamore Avenue.

I have created a Dropbox link containing photos, videos, and a map that illustrate the storm runoff we experience between the structures housing units 48-47-46 and 45-44-43 during normal rainfall conditions. This information highlights the significant volume of water that flows through our area, and I am concerned that the addition of four new structures will exacerbate this issue.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/7va67rg2rtrt8yko7e8n8/ABhf8tMEfLfgTPoL5P92uZs?rlkey=qaziz7q3d2k95ztecoc67zxpt&st=0khtlg8h&dl=0>

Additionally, we have noted several changes to the proposed project since its approval by the ZBA, including:

- Visibility and siting of the houses
- Drainage considerations
- Positioning of retaining walls

We also believe that the project overcrowds the site, and the current design of the driveway will lead to safety issues due to the blind approach for vehicles entering from Sagamore Avenue.

I urge you to take these concerns into account during your discussions. If you encounter any issues accessing the Dropbox files, please let me know, and I am happy to provide the information on physical media.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

Amanda Ahn  
579 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 47

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AA

**From:** [Jane Reynolds](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Sunday, November 3, 2024 5:44:01 PM

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You don't often get email from [jprattreynolds@gmail.com](mailto:jprattreynolds@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

With regard to your next meeting on November 5, there are still many abutters who are very upset about the status of this project!

I certainly hope that those who are making decisions have explored this lot on foot and examined the revised size of the buildings with deeper foundations and paved driveways for this area! Please notice that the size of the trees indicate an extensive ledge with a major drop-off into the property of 579 Sagamore Ave. That area at 635 is all rock and is not appropriate for this residential project.

I will reiterate what I stated at the very beginning. That property should only be allowed two buildings in the same area as the existing buildings.

Please stop putting bandaids on each problem and send it back to the Planning Board. We need to take better care of our environment!

Sincerely,  
Jane Pratt Reynolds  
579 Sagamore Ave.  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

**From:** [Rodney Burdette](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave project  
**Date:** Friday, November 1, 2024 8:24:58 AM

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[You don't often get email from rebtrispport@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies,

I'm very opposed to the 635 project as it will have significant problems for our Tidewatch community. Drainage,line of site, emergency vehicles access,blasting,dangerous traffic issues are just a few of the major problems with this project. Please consider asking the developer to redesign this project to address these issues. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Rod Burdette Tidewatch unit 46  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Tim McNamara](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave Luster Cluster  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 9:50:29 AM

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To TAC Members,

I reviewed the most recent package submitted for the meeting on the 5th.

In your minutes there were two items that might need to be changed. One, Peter Britz did attend the meeting on Oct 1st and page two para one - it was Mr Garrepy, not Mr. Coronati that requested the project be prematurely moved to the Planning Board.

Regarding the plan;

- The retaining walls have grown again imposing more of the development into the neighbors view. Which is in conflict with the approval attributes the ZBA stated.
- Again as stated by Mr. Coronati the pond which is now right on the edge of the property line has gotten bigger. Again, very close to the neighbors property.
- A meeting or two back someone on TAC stated they should do final line of sight calculations after the new pavement was put down. Was that done?
- Last meeting Eric Eby stated the speed feedback sign batteries keep dying because so many people are speeding up the hill which causes the device to turn on. Are the speed calculations correct for line of sight stopping distance? He also stated that a new solar sign be put up to help cars know to reduce speed to 25 MPH. It is currently 30 MPH. Are we planning on reducing the speed limit to 25MPH?
- Can the developer show the new reduced tree cut line compared to the old one based on TAC's direction?
- In items 7 and 8 in the developers response to Altus - did the elevation of the basement floor or the drainage pipe move up or down and if so by how much?
- Overcrowding of this granite lot with 4 units will logically cause dangerous conditions for motorists, residents, cyclists and pedestrians.

The surrounding abutters still look for TAC to give the developer the appropriate feedback which is to reduce the number of units proposed on that lot to a safe number along with running more water the the city storm water system. And have the project go back to the ZBA for reapproval of the project based on how significant the changes are.

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Tim McNamara  
617 413 4884

**From:** [Von Hemert, Susan S., RN](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan von Hemert](#)  
**Subject:** TAC Meeting 11/5  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 11:50:26 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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You don't often get email from [svonhemert@mgb.org](mailto:svonhemert@mgb.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

We are abutters on the Sagamore Avenue project 625 and have real concerns about the viability of this plan and it's effect on our complex:

1. The original plan submitted to ZBA last year is entirely different from the one presented now; the units have increased in scope and size with walk-out basements that will require even more blasting the rock ledge on the property.
2. The four units proposed is over engineered for the site; it is only 2 acres where the specs for the area require at least one acre per unit. The ZBA erroneously cited Tidewatch as having 127 units on 64 acres yet we only have 47 buildings, some smaller than the homes proposed on the site.
3. The amount of vehicles for this lot size will also lead to overcrowding. There is also the issue of how emergency vehicles will be able to access the site in such a small area.
4. The water drainage system is still a huge problem with the runoff caused by the removal of so many trees will cause downhill flooding and impact the existing trees.

We have had serious concerns about this project from the beginning with more housing being compressed into a small site causing disruption to the landscape, runoff to our area and runoff to Sagamore Creek. At the very least, this project should go back to the ZBA since this is NOT the project they approved.

Respectfully.

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**Susan von Hemert, MSN.Ed., RN**

She/her/hers

Mass General Brigham Wentworth Douglass Hospital

Diabetes Education

729 Central Avenue

Dover, NH 03820

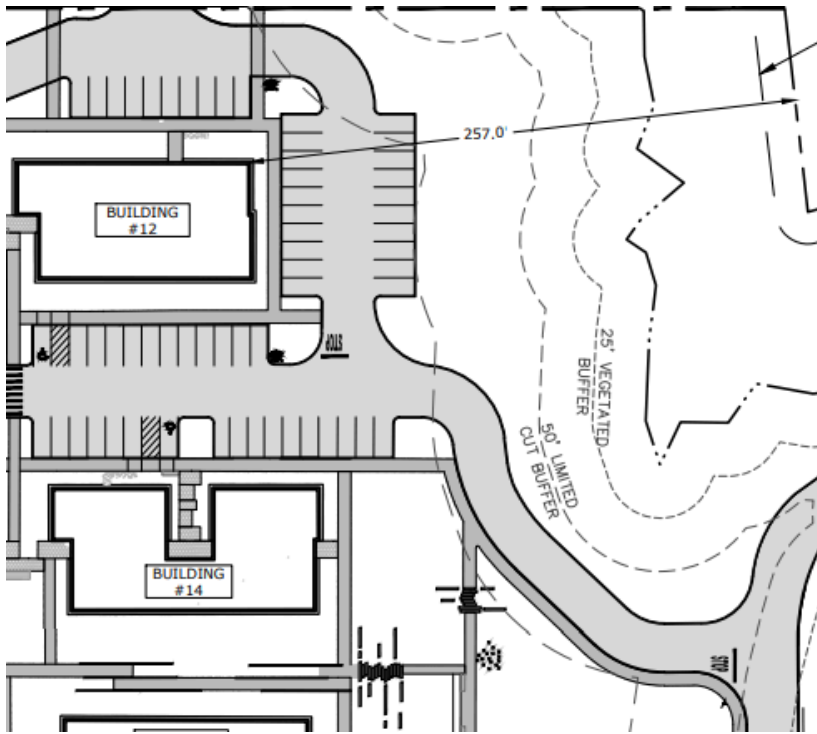
603.740.3208

[svonhemert@mgb.org](mailto:svonhemert@mgb.org)



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**Drainage:**

It was nice to see the Storm Water Studies included Coastal and Great Bay Precipitation Increases. A question of curiosity is where are the rain gardens draining to.

**Retaining Wall:**

A retaining wall which was shown in the wetlands in earlier plan sets, no longer can be found on the plans. Has that been removed from the plans?

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and thoughts.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Bratter

159 McDonough St, Property Owner

**From:** [JOHN ADAMS](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [tmcnamara58@gmail.com](mailto:tmcnamara58@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Proposed Luster King Development  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 3, 2024 8:45:35 AM

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Dear Mr. Chairman,

I would hope that the city's Conservation Commission has been consulted concerning the proposed Luster King development on Sagamore Avenue. Aside from the two Luster King buildings, the property in question is green wooded space which, according to the city's Open Space Plan, would seem to support the concept of environmental preservation.

I am abutter to this property having lived at 579 Sagamore Avenue for almost 30 years I can attest to the fact that the property serves as a wildlife corridor for numerous deer, turkey, racoons, and other wildlife. In addition, the state's wild flower, the Lady Slipper, a species of special concern, which reportedly blooms there from late May through much of June.

Clearly, the proposed construction of four large homes on this site would have a negative environmental impact on one of the few remaining green spaces on Sagamore Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration of this important concern.

Sincerely,

John H. Adams

579 Sagamore Avenue Unit 57

Portsmouth, N.H..



**From:** [Melissa Alden](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Luster King project  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 4:03:26 PM

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Dear Mr. Britz,

In regard to the Luster King project on Sagamore Ave. I don't know how the city measures traffic flow, but I live on Sagamore Ave, and the traffic is already quite heavy. Spring through fall it is a heavily travelled route to the beach and tourists exploring the seacoast. All year long in the mornings and evenings it is the commuter route for those living in Rye, North Hampton, etc. It is presently a constant stream of cars on what is actually a small road. Add in Amazon, Fed Ex and UPS delivery vans, and there is never a pause in traffic. Right where Luster King is situated, there is a rise in the street. Turning in and out into traffic doesn't seem to me to very safe with the potential of even higher volume.

I think safety is a huge priority to all. Developers don't live on the sight. They build, sell and leave. I think the city has to use long range foresight for everyone's sake and safety.

Thank you for your time.

Melissa Alden

**From:** [Suzan Harding](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Luster King  
**Date:** Sunday, September 1, 2024 1:55:28 PM

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Dear, Mr. Britz,

I am taking the time to communicate with you and the Planning Board to voice the concerns of the neighbors of 635 Sagamore Ave (Luster King) or as the developer's consultant called the "Luster Cluster" in the last TAC meeting. (Are cluster developments allowed in SRA zone?) In addition, I would like to make you aware of our opinion of the process thus far and ways the ZBA may be able to work more effectively with the planning board and TAC on behalf of all Portsmouth residents.

Here are the concerns related to the current state of the project. Based on the amount of time this project has been in process it is clear it is too complicated in its current configuration for this lot. We believe it is the responsibility of the planning board to give guidance to and in this case corrective action related to this project.

Based on the original approval the ZBA granted there are several areas of significant concern. See comments in green below:

## **Section 10.233 Variance Evaluation**

### **Criteria**

### **Finding**

(Meets

Criteria)

### **Relevant Facts**

10.233.21 Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.

#### **YES**

- Having more conforming structures on the parcel is much better than the existing condition.

*No one would argue this statement.*

10.233.22 Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance.

#### **YES**

- The SRA zone limits one dwelling unit per acre, and the applicant is

asking for four units on nearly two acres, which would be directly across the street, the SRB zone.

- Comparing the four dwelling units at 21,200 square feet per unit to Tidewatch's 122 units at 19,300 square feet per unit, the project would be less dense.

This is not accurate as the lot is not fully usable because it is a granite cap and severe perimeter slope. Not more than 2/3 of the 1.94 acres can be developed and therefore the calculation of the lot size of 21,200 sq ft. is inaccurate. It is more like 15,000 sq ft. Practical density is considerably less than their comparison to Tidewatch (TW), which is still an inappropriate comparison.

10.233.23 Granting the variance would do substantial justice.

**YES**

- The project would have no effect on anything across the street or at Tidewatch because one wouldn't even see the properties.

The justification to approve was inaccurate in the original approval and is now even less justifiable. One simply needs to walk the site to understand that the statement "because one wouldn't even see the properties." is completely inaccurate. This objection is created by the significant modifications the developer made based on traffic line of site requirements. The units are clearly visible from both across the street and the TW road. Further, the developer took additional liberty in adding walk out basements to the two units that backup to TW in this new proposal.

There is no substantial justice especially for the TW residents and taxpayers. These residents will bear the inequitable risk of watershed problems, and the potential of significant water runoff as evidenced by the substantial engineering and drainage designs. From what I read of the independent engineering review; the engineer had concerns about the project.

Based on these facts the whole project should go back to the ZBA for reconsideration and be denied in its current form.

10.233.24 Granting the variance would not diminish the values of surrounding properties.

**YES**

- The project would have no effect on anything across the street or at Tidewatch because one wouldn't

even see the properties.

- The project would not alter the essential characteristics of the neighborhood because the large lot could not reasonably be subdivided based on its irregular shape and street frontage.

Based on the significant change to the unit layout and roads this criterion can no longer be justified. The units can clearly be seen from Sagamore Ave and the TW road. The second bullet above is not relevant to this criterion. As that second bullet states, the lot cannot reasonably be subdivided. It is not only because of its shape but also it is a 1.94 acre granite hilltop abutting watershed areas and neighbors below.

Based on this fact the whole project should go back to the ZBA for reconsideration and be denied in its current form.

10.233.25 Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship.

(a)The property has special Conditions that distinguish it from other properties in the area.

AND

(b)Owing to these special conditions, a fair and substantial relationship does not exist between the general public purposes of the Ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and the proposed use is a reasonable one.

OR

Owing to these special conditions, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

**YES**

- The property has special conditions of being an oversized lot for the area as well as an angled and elevated one, and only so much of it is usable.
- Limiting the lot to a single-family home would be a hardship and four single-family units on nearly two acres was a more than reasonable use and a huge improvement to the existing

property.

The hardship criteria again are not met. An irregular lot is not a reason for hardship. Additionally, the fact that the developer purchased the property knowing the lot is a granite top, irregular in shape and not approved for more than one dwelling per acre should not make a unit count an issue for the ZBA to consider and justify as hardship.

### **Stipulations**

1. *The design and location of the dwellings may change as a result of Planning Board review and approval.*

*Regarding this stipulation, the Planning Board did not give the developer direct feedback on how the road and the units were completely reconfigured. In the new plan the developer took liberty (not from a suggestion from TAC or planning board) to add walk out basements which were not in the original plan and will further affect the view from TW.*

*Based on such a material change to the approved plan it seems fair that the project goes back to the ZBA for reconsideration, or the planning board requires modifications to be more compliant with the usable space available on the lot. An example would be for the developer to come back with 2 or 3 units instead of 4 or a 3-unit condominium that is acceptable to the ZBA and the abutters.*

After reviewing the current package of information from the developer the above concerns remain. Importantly, the line of sight and stopping distance requirements are still not met. In Mr. Eby's email dialogue with the engineering firm it further confirms the fact that the distance requirements are not met and some of the calculations may not be accurate including Mr. Eby's reference to the distance calculation being line of sight of a car waiting to enter the driveway as opposed to the current calculation of the intersection of the driveway. I would be very concerned about the city's liability if the city did approve distances that do not meet or exceed the minimum distances required (Mr. Eby's suggestion). One other major issue regarding line of sight; on diagram H1, it shows the calculation is measured from the intersection – not where a typical car would be stopped waiting to enter the driveway. The notes on that page state; "Where only a lesser sight distance is obtainable, no more than one accessway per single parcel shall be allowed." This lot in its original state and SRA zone with one dwelling per parcel could potentially be considered for lesser line of sight distances. In its current configuration – 4 units on a single parcel - it is way outside what would be the normal consideration of obtaining a lesser line of sight approval. Again, something the ZBA could not have considered with their limited time, experience, and knowledge of such matters. It is clear they were expecting TAC and the planning board to consider and suggest modifications accordingly as evidenced in their meeting.

Peter, that brings me to my feedback about the process overall, not just for this project. While I appreciate the ZBA members' time and effort on this front and as

well intentioned as they are, the process puts them in an untenable position. They make these considerations without training (new members), as evidenced in this case with two new members who did not know the process no less what the nuances of the criteria for variance approval or denial are. If you take the time to review the meeting recording, you will see what I am talking about. Multiple members of the ZBA were considering telling the developer to come back with fewer units in the project but either got bullied out of their position or did not think it was in their jurisdiction to make such a request. Further, if you look at the recording you will see how many times, they said that is up to TAC and the planning board (blasting, tree cut line, layout, drainage, traffic, etc.). In my estimation that puts abutters, developer, and the city in a tough place after all this time and money has been exhausted in the project to this point. It is my recommendation that the planning board help the new members of the ZBA better understand the process and requirements of the role and provide better active oversight in the ZBA meetings.

One other recommendation is to have the planning board assist in the appeal process. It is my understanding that when we appealed their decision, they were the ones that reviewed the appeal. In my experience, it is rare that any board would self-evaluate and come up with a different conclusion.

In closing, the abutters that have allowed me to speak on their behalf ask that the planning board put this project back to the ZBA for reconsideration and approval or denial of its current configuration. Another option is for the planning board to deny this project in its current configuration for the safety of the community and the equitable consideration of the abutters.

Thank you and your colleagues for all your work in keeping Portsmouth's development positive, productive and reasonable.

Kind regards,  
Tim McNamara

I have thoroughly read and agree 100%. I could compose my own objections but Tim has covered it.

I will add that I am vehemently against blasting for basements and deeply concerned regarding traffic safety.

Suzan Harding  
594 Sagamore

Cc: Peter Stith  
Stefanie Casella  
Greg Mahanna

**From:** [Nancy Jaffe](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 3, 2024 9:47:57 AM

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Dear Mr. Britz and the Planning Board,

As a neighbor of 635 Sagamore Ave, I have concerns regarding the new construction project.

The Grading and Drainage notes #16 states that erosion control measures will be maintained after each rain event of .25" or greater in a 24 hour period and at least once a week. How will this get accomplished?

As a Tidewatch resident, I am very concerned about the drainage onto our private road. Would a retaining wall help? This road is the only entrance/exit for our 117 condominiums.

My other big concern is the driveway for the new houses. Drivers often drive above the speed limit. Sight lines are very important for the safety of drivers, walkers and cyclists.

Thank you,

Nancy Jaffe

**From:** [Suzan Harding](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Luster King  
**Date:** Sunday, September 1, 2024 1:55:28 PM

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Suzan Harding  
594 Sagamore

Cc: Peter Stith  
Stefanie Casella  
Greg Mahanna

**From:** [Michael Lannon](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Luster King  
**Date:** Sunday, August 25, 2024 11:46:07 AM

---

Dear Sirs/Madam,

I am a resident of Tidewatch at 579 Sagamore Avenue, unit 30 here in Portsmouth.

I am unable to attend your meeting on 9/03/2024. meeting.

Here are my concerns:

1. Location at the top of that blind hill for exiting traffic.
2. Water drainage onto our property as a result of tree removal
3. Actual tree removal necessary for this project that not only impacts drainage and excess water as mentioned above.but loss of habitat and new construction visibility.
- 4.Walk out basements far more visible than the original plan.

Please would you consider these issues and refer back to ZBA if indicated.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Lannon.

**From:** [ROBERT LEWIS](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue Luster King Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 3, 2024 9:15:45 AM

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As residents of Tidewatch, we are abutters to the above captioned project which is on the agenda for the Technical Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for September 3, 2024. We are concerned about the new plan (the addition of walk out basements) and how much the houses have moved towards Tidewatch and the visibility of drainage holding ponds and retaining walls that were not in any plans the Zoning Board of Adjustment saw when they approved the original plan. Another issue to focus on is the actual stopping distance required for the project.

For these reasons, we are requesting that the project go back in front of the Zoning Board of Adjustment to review and reevaluate these plans which are significantly different from the original proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Bob and Kathe Lewis  
579 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 74  
Portsmouth, NH

**From:** [Kenneth Murphy](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave Project Luster King  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 28, 2024 10:29:45 AM

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Planning Board  
I reside at Unit 40 579 Sagamore Ave

I am writing to oppose this project and also to request that the project be sent back to the ZONING BOARD since the plan has substantially changed since initially submitted

There are now walk out basements and the units are much more visible to where I reside  
In addition the new plans show retaining ponds which were not on the approved plan

Please take my request into consideration

Kenneth D Murphy  
Rainboth Murphy and Lown PA  
439 Middle Street  
Portsmouth N.H. 03801  
603-431-1993  
[Kmurphy@nhtrialattorneys.com](mailto:Kmurphy@nhtrialattorneys.com)

Sent from iPad

**From:** [Katherine O'Brien](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave Development  
**Date:** Sunday, September 1, 2024 1:47:09 PM

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I am writing to point out a major flaw in the reasoning that the ZBA used to approve this project. The board used the comparison of the units at Tidewatch to argue that there is precedent for this development. However, there are NO single family homes in Tidewatch--all units are duplexes, triplexes or quadraplexes. If the developer was to propose a quadraplex on this site it would have much less negative impact on the surrounding areas in terms of drainage, number of trees removed, and the extent of blasting required.

Thank you,  
Katherine O'Brien  
579 Sagamore Ave, Unit 70  
Portsmouth, NH 03801



**From:** [Jane Reynolds](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue Proposal  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 7:59:08 PM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Portsmouth taxpayer, an abutter to 635 Sagamore and I strongly feel this project has evolved into something very different from what was originally presented to the ZBA! They have changed the entire footprint, the depth of basements, the location of the driveway on Sagamore Avenue and probably more.

Due to all the changes, it is my opinion that the developer should be directed back to the ZBA and start over again! I hope you consider this strongly. Thank you for your hard work and your protection of our town!

Sincerely,

Jane Pratt Reynolds  
579 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth, NH 03801

**From:** [nhseastones](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Jerry Stow](#)  
**Subject:** Development of 635 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth, NH.  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 7:53:58 PM

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Dear Mr. Britz and Planning Board Members,

As a resident of Tidewatch, a direct abutter of the subject, I have been an active participant in the development process as it moves through the ZBA and the TAC boards.

I have coordinated with Mr. Tim McNamara,

A resident of Tidewatch and totally agree with all his observations and comments on this project in a recent letter to you and the Planning Board. Therefore, I will not bore you with similar concerns with the exception of three areas:

1) The ZBA used incorrect information when they based the 117 Units in Tidewatch on 59+ acres as a comparison to the 4 Houses proposed on 1.94 acres of the present Luster King while comparing density per acre. I explained to the ZBA at the public meeting, twice, that while there are 117 Units in Tidewatch, they are housed in 46 Buildings which is more than one acre per building vs the less the 1/4 acre per building as proposed by the developer.

2) During the Public Meeting it appeared that Robert's Rules were not followed as required. This may be a minor point but in my experience the following would be considered irregular. There was a Motion to approve followed by a Second. A discussion followed and then the Chair Person called for a vote. At least one vote was a "No" and then a second vote was rendered. At that point the Chair began another discussion and the first "No" reverted to a "Yes" with no clarification. Perhaps this is normal procedure, but I was later told by an official in the Planning Department that Robert's Rules were the norm for all meetings.

3) The line of sight is a major problem that has been exemplified by the current construction on Sagamore Ave. Vehicles turning left into the proposed entrance to "Luster Cluster" stop short of the center of the driveway, not the center.

If one or two cars, or more are stopped behind the turning vehicle they are in extreme danger of being rear ended by a vehicle coming over the hill behind them.

This seems to be one of the most dangerous, if not the most dangerous, hill in Portsmouth involving a complex mix of vehicles, bicycles, joggers, and walkers. It

Seems to present a major liability issue for the City.

In closing I would like to thank you, your staff, and all the resident Board volunteers for your time, and efforts in the service of Portsmouth. It is not an easy task, but much appreciated.

Respectfully,  
Jerry Stow

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Phil von Hemert](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan von Hemert](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave (Luster King) Development  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 8:06:18 PM

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To The City of Portsmouth Planning Board

I and my wife, Susan, own and reside in Unit 42, Tidewatch and I am writing to voice continued objection to approval of the subject development as currently configured. Clearly, it is not the same design as was approved by the Zoning board. Clearly, it does not conform for a variety of reasons which have been enumerated in detail by other Tidewatch owners.

As configured, it will negatively affect the value of our unit. That will occur during construction. That will occur after construction when the units are clearly visible from Tidewatch. That will get worse when the water runoff abatement scheme fails because it relies on four homeowners performing certain protocols regularly and for as long as those dwellings exist. Nothing guarantees the four owners will continue to fund a reserve account to maintain and repair the system.

In the end, I am urging you to represent concerned abutters who collectively, have at least as much investment and who deserve as much right to protection as the investor/developer.

Respectfully,

Phil von Hemert  
579 Sagamore Ave., Unit 42  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

**From:** [Peter M. Wissel](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 3:40:28 PM

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To SRTAC,

Unfortunately, I will be out of the country and unable to zoom in to the meeting on Tuesday, September 3. I have submitted comments to the committee regarding the most recent iteration of the proposed development similar to comments made prior to every other meeting that has considered the application for the development of 635 Sagamore Ave. My focus has been on stopping sight distance and the unsustainability of the storm water management system. To date, I have seen no indication that the committee has required the developer to respond to any of my comments or those of any other abutter. Why not? Have you dismissed them as frivolous? Are they beyond the scope of your committee's responsibilities? Are you so focused on the precise regulatory requirements for the development that you have lost sight of the real world impacts of the development on public safety and abutting properties? Should I be communicating my concerns to some other authority? As a concerned citizen I am finding the seeming unresponsiveness of the committee to be very frustrating and bordering on disrespectful.

Respectfully yours,  
Peter Wissel  
635 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 75

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

**From:** [Phil von Hemert](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan von Hemert](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave (Luster King) Development  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 8:06:18 PM

---

To The City of Portsmouth Planning Board

I and my wife, Susan, own and reside in Unit 42, Tidewatch and I am writing to voice continued objection to approval of the subject development as currently configured. Clearly, it is not the same design as was approved by the Zoning board. Clearly, it does not conform for a variety of reasons which have been enumerated in detail by other Tidewatch owners.

As configured, it will negatively affect the value of our unit. That will occur during construction. That will occur after construction when the units are clearly visible from Tidewatch. That will get worse when the water runoff abatement scheme fails because it relies on four homeowners performing certain protocols regularly and for as long as those dwellings exist. Nothing guarantees the four owners will continue to fund a reserve account to maintain and repair the system.

In the end, I am urging you to represent concerned abutters who collectively, have at least as much investment and who deserve as much right to protection as the investor/developer.

Respectfully,

Phil von Hemert  
579 Sagamore Ave., Unit 42  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

**From:** [Peter M. Wissel](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Eric B. Eby](#); [Matthew Glenn](#); [Timothy McNamara](#)  
**Subject:** SRTAC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 9/3/24 - comments regarding 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Thursday, August 29, 2024 4:55:33 PM

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To the Site Review Technical Advisory Committee

635 Sagamore Avenue is not a suitable site to build four residential units.

It is time for SRTAC to seriously address the issues raised by those who regularly use Sagamore Avenue as motorists, cyclists and abutters. Scores of pages of computer generated data and graphics alone do not come anywhere close to considering the full impact of the proposed 4 unit development.

The two issues that lead me to that conclusion are the northbound stopping sight distance and the storm water management system.

The stopping sight distance required is not met. It appears that SRTAC is contemplating a waiver of this requirement. That would be a mistake. Consider the private driveway that would service the four proposed units. It is 20 feet wide or 240 inches. A Subaru Outback, a mid-size crossover that is ubiquitous in Portsmouth, measures 80 inches from mirror to mirror. Two Outbacks parked across from each other will leave 80 inches of clearance between the two making it impossible for a Portsmouth fire engine which measures 102 inches in width to pass. Therefore there needs to be no parking signs on one side of the private driveway to allow access for a fire engine or any other emergency vehicle for that matter. Parking can also not be permitted opposite the driveways of units 3 & 4 to allow for large trucks such as the Portsmouth fire engine, to complete a turn around maneuver. The consequence of these parking constraints is that anytime the occupants of one or more of the proposed units hosts a family gathering such as a summer barbecue, child's birthday party, a baby shower, a holiday dinner (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Seder, etc.), a yard sale, or open house, vehicles will need to park in the shoulder of Sagamore Avenue. That will obstruct the view of both a northbound motorist and a driver exiting the private driveway resulting in an effective reduction in the stopping site distance. Furthermore, a driver seeking to turn left out of the private driveway will have to move well into Sagamore Avenue to look for northbound vehicles which will also reduce the stopping site distance.

With the shoulder occupied by parked vehicles, southbound cyclists will be forced into the middle of the road to avoid the possibility of doors opening in their path and southbound cars and trucks will be forced near the lane divider - all this

happening within the obscured stopping site distance. There would be no room for a northbound vehicle to avoid a collision with either a vehicle exiting the driveway of a home along the northbound lane or northbound cyclists using the full lane to avoid a parked vehicle in the northbound shoulder or debris in the shoulder.

Cyclists, cars and trucks are not the only vehicles using Sagamore Avenue. Especially during the summer it is not uncommon to see people using class 1, 2 & 3 e-bikes, mopeds, mini bikes, and even electric scooters on Sagamore Avenue. Most of these vehicles cannot stop as quickly and safely as a car and the consequences of a collision for the operator of one of these vehicles is far more severe than a collision between two cars.

The issue of cars parked on Sagamore Avenue at number 635 was not an issue for Luster King, which had a massive paved area for parking vehicles visiting the property. The developers of 635 Sagamore Avenue can avoid the parking problem by building a single residential unit with ample parking for guests visiting the unit. The stopping site distance requirement would still not be met, but an exception might be justified because the stopping site distance would not be impaired by parked cars along Sagamore Avenue.

The calculations for stopping site distance do not seem to anticipate typical weather conditions on the NH seacoast such as morning fog and snow or ice covered roads which lengthen stopping distances in the real physical world.

Finally, a substantial portion of the safety benefits of the project currently being undertaken to widen Sagamore Avenue will be negated if the shoulders of Sagamore Avenue are occupied by parked cars.

The proposed water management system is not passive. The Stormwater Management Operation and Maintenance Manual amply documents an extensive maintenance and inspection regimen required to be performed by a four unit condominium association with no incentive to maintain the system. This is unrealistic and unsustainable. After all, water runs downhill and away from the proposed development. Compelling evidence that such a system is unsustainable is in the Jones & Beach letter to Peter Smith, Altus comment #27. "Altus notes that the Tidewatch closed drainage system does not operate properly. Stormwater bypasses the culverts as the roadway and drainage system is not properly maintained." Tidewatch is a well managed 122 unit condominium association that has every incentive to assure the proper operation of their drainage system. They are at the bottom of the hill.

Respectfully yours,  
Peter M Wissel  
579 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 75

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)



August 26, 2024

Peter Britz, Principal Planner  
City of Portsmouth  
1 Junkins Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear, Mr. Britz,

I am taking the time to communicate with you and the Planning Board to voice the concerns of the neighbors of 635 Sagamore Ave (Luster King) or as the developer's consultant called the "Luster Cluster" in the last TAC meeting. (Are cluster developments allowed in SRA zone?) In addition, I would like to make you aware of our opinion of the process thus far and ways the ZBA may be able to work more effectively with the planning board and TAC on behalf of all Portsmouth residents.

Here are the concerns related to the current state of the project. Based on the amount of time this project has been in process it is clear it is too complicated in its current configuration for this lot. We believe it is the responsibility of the planning board to give guidance to and in this case corrective action related to this project. Based on the original approval the ZBA granted there are several areas of significant concern. See comments in green below:

### **Section 10.233 Variance Evaluation**

#### **Criteria**

#### **Finding**

(Meets  
Criteria)

#### **Relevant Facts**

10.233.21 Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.

#### **YES**

- Having more conforming structures on the parcel is much better than the existing condition.

No one would argue this statement.

10.233.22 Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance.

**YES**

- The SRA zone limits one dwelling unit per acre, and the applicant is asking for four units on nearly two acres, which would be directly across the street, the SRB zone.
- Comparing the four dwelling units at 21,200 square feet per unit to Tidewatch's 122 units at 19,300 square feet per unit, the project would be less dense.

This is not accurate as the lot is not fully usable because it is a granite cap and severe perimeter slope. Not more than 2/3 of the 1.94 acres can be developed and therefore the calculation of the lot size of 21,200 sq ft. is inaccurate. It is more like 15,000 sq ft. Practical density is considerably less than their comparison to Tidewatch (TW), which is still an inappropriate comparison.

10.233.23 Granting the variance would do substantial justice.

**YES**

- The project would have no effect on anything across the street or at Tidewatch because one wouldn't even see the properties.

The justification to approve was inaccurate in the original approval and is now even less justifiable. One simply needs to walk the site to understand that the statement "because one wouldn't even see the properties." is completely inaccurate. This objection is created by the significant modifications the developer made based on traffic line of site requirements. The units are clearly visible from both across the street and the TW road. Further, the developer took additional liberty in adding walk out basements to the two units that backup to TW in this new proposal.

There is no substantial justice especially for the TW residents and taxpayers. These residents will bear the inequitable risk of watershed problems, and the potential of significant water runoff as evidenced by the substantial engineering and drainage designs. From what I read of the independent engineering review; the engineer had concerns about the project.

Based on these facts the whole project should go back to the ZBA for reconsideration and be denied in its current form.

10.233.24 Granting the variance would not diminish the values of surrounding properties.

**YES**

- The project would have no effect on anything across the street or at Tidewatch because one wouldn't even see the properties.
- The project would not alter the essential characteristics of the

neighborhood because the large lot could not reasonably be subdivided based on its irregular shape and street frontage.

Based on the significant change to the unit layout and roads this criterion can no longer be justified. The units can clearly be seen from Sagamore Ave and the TW road. The second bullet above is not relevant to this criterion. As that second bullet states, the lot cannot reasonably be sub-divided. It is not only because of its shape but also it is a 1.94 acre granite hilltop abutting watershed areas and neighbors below.

Based on this fact the whole project should go back to the ZBA for reconsideration and be denied in its current form.

10.233.25 Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship.

(a)The property has special Conditions that distinguish it from other properties in the area.

AND

(b)Owing to these special conditions, a fair and substantial relationship does not exist between the general public purposes of the Ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and the proposed use is a reasonable one.

OR

Owing to these special conditions, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

**YES**

- The property has special conditions of being an oversized lot for the area as well as an angled and elevated one, and only so much of it is usable.
- Limiting the lot to a single-family home would be a hardship and four single-family units on nearly two acres was a more than reasonable use and a huge improvement to the existing property.

The hardship criteria again are not met. An irregular lot is not a reason for hardship. Additionally, the fact that the developer purchased the property knowing the lot is a granite top, irregular in shape and not approved for more than one dwelling per acre should not make a unit count an issue for the ZBA to consider and justify as hardship.

## **Stipulations**

1. *The design and location of the dwellings may change as a result of Planning Board review and approval.*

Regarding this stipulation, the Planning Board did not give the developer direct feedback on how the road and the units were completely reconfigured. In the new plan the developer took liberty (not from a suggestion from TAC or planning board) to add walk out basements which were not in the original plan and will further affect the view from TW.

Based on such a material change to the approved plan it seems fair that the project goes back to the ZBA for reconsideration, or the planning board requires modifications to be more compliant with the usable space available on the lot. An example would be for the developer to come back with 2 or 3 units instead of 4 or a 3-unit condominium that is acceptable to the ZBA and the abutters.

After reviewing the current package of information from the developer the above concerns remain. Importantly, the line of sight and stopping distance requirements are still not met. In Mr. Eby's email dialogue with the engineering firm it further confirms the fact that the distance requirements are not met and some of the calculations may not be accurate including Mr. Eby's reference to the distance calculation being line of sight of a car waiting to enter the driveway as opposed to the current calculation of the intersection of the driveway. I would be very concerned about the city's liability if the city did approve distances that do not meet or exceed the minimum distances required (Mr. Eby's suggestion). One other major issue regarding line of sight; on diagram H1, it shows the calculation is measured from the intersection – not where a typical car would be stopped waiting to enter the driveway. The notes on that page state; "Where only a lesser sight distance is obtainable, no more than one accessway per single parcel shall be allowed." This lot in its original state and SRA zone with one dwelling per parcel could potentially be considered for lesser line of sight distances. In its current configuration – 4 units on a single parcel - it is way outside what would be the normal consideration of obtaining a lesser line of sight approval. Again, something the ZBA could not have considered with their limited time, experience, and knowledge of such matters. It is clear they were expecting TAC and the planning board to consider and suggest modifications accordingly as evidenced in their meeting.

Peter, that brings me to my feedback about the process overall, not just for this project. While I appreciate the ZBA members' time and effort on this front and as well intentioned as they are, the process puts them in an untenable position. They make these considerations without training (new members), as evidenced in this case with two new

members who did not know the process no less what the nuances of the criteria for variance approval or denial are. If you take the time to review the meeting recording, you will see what I am talking about. Multiple members of the ZBA were considering telling the developer to come back with fewer units in the project but either got bullied out of their position or did not think it was in their jurisdiction to make such a request. Further, if you look at the recording you will see how many times, they said that is up to TAC and the planning board (blasting, tree cut line, layout, drainage, traffic, etc.). In my estimation that puts abutters, developer, and the city in a tough place after all this time and money has been exhausted in the project to this point. It is my recommendation that the planning board help the new members of the ZBA better understand the process and requirements of the role and provide better active oversight in the ZBA meetings. One other recommendation is to have the planning board assist in the appeal process. It is my understanding that when we appealed their decision, they were the ones that reviewed the appeal. In my experience, it is rare that any board would self-evaluate and come up with a different conclusion.

In closing, the abutters that have allowed me to speak on their behalf ask that the planning board put this project back to the ZBA for reconsideration and approval or denial of its current configuration. Another option is for the planning board to deny this project in its current configuration for the safety of the community and the equitable consideration of the abutters.

Thank you and your colleagues for all your work in keeping Portsmouth's development positive, productive and reasonable.

Kind regards,

Tim McNamara

Cc: Peter Stith

Stefanie Casella

Greg Mahanna

**From:** [Peter M. Wissel](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Re: 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, September 2, 2024 11:53:04 PM

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Correction

My address is 579 Sagamore Ave., Unit 75.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

On Monday, September 2, 2024, 21:40, Peter M. Wissel <[pmwissel@yahoo.com](mailto:pmwissel@yahoo.com)> wrote:

To SRTAC,

Unfortunately, I will be out of the country and unable to zoom in to the meeting on Tuesday, September 3. I have submitted comments to the committee regarding the most recent iteration of the proposed development similar to comments made prior to every other meeting that has considered the application for the development of 635 Sagamore Ave. My focus has been on stopping sight distance and the unsustainability of the storm water management system. To date, I have seen no indication that the committee has required the developer to respond to any of my comments or those of any other abutter. Why not? Have you dismissed them as frivolous? Are they beyond the scope of your committee's responsibilities? Are you so focused on the precise regulatory requirements for the development that you have lost sight of the real world impacts of the development on public safety and abutting properties? Should I be communicating my concerns to some other authority? As a concerned citizen I am finding the seeming unresponsiveness of the committee to be very frustrating and bordering on disrespectful.

Respectfully yours,  
Peter Wissel  
635 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 75

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

**From:** [Marie Wolfe](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Development at 365 Sagamore Ave. ( Luster King )  
**Date:** Sunday, September 22, 2024 8:44:29 AM

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I am writing to express concerns related to the changes made to the original plan submitted to the ZBA for this property.

The plan has been changed significantly from what the ZBA originally approved. Given the new changes made by the developer the majority of risk is now landing on surrounding neighbors, especially the Tidewatch Community. As noted in prior review the lot is a granite top approved for 1 dwelling per acre. The proposed 4 dwellings far exceed the capacity of the lot.

Changes made since the ZBA approved the plan include:

- 2 units are now larger and closer to property line at neighbor Evan on the corner lot and Tidewatch Community.
- The larger units now include walk out basements.
- Watershed problems and runoff are major issues which the developers' Engineers noted in their report.

In closing I respect the work committee members engage in when reviewing

proposals. Since this proposal has been changed

significantly since the initial ZBA review, I request it be sent back to the ZBA for reconsideration and approval or denial of the current changed configuration.

Thank you for your work  
on behalf of Portsmouth  
citizens.

Marie Wolfe  
579 Sagamore Avenue  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Susan von Hemert](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Sagamore development  
**Date:** Thursday, September 19, 2024 4:39:06 PM

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I am a resident of Tidewatch condos and attended the ZB meeting many months ago. It was approved even though the member who voted to deny it ultimately voted for the project. Now the developers have come back to the TAC committee with a completely different set of plans that further impacts the granite ledge as well as a significant loss of trees. Those trees are absolutely necessary for prevent erosion and to contain the runoff that will ultimately come into our development.

The developers have also not proposed a real plan for them to address this matter. It is only stated at the homeowners will be responsible which may or may not happen; again ultimately affecting our property values and increase soil erosion to Sagamore Creek.

I urge you to send this back to the zoning board to address the new plans and to have a concrete, fiscally responsible plan to address the drainage issues that will certainly happen. Additionally, they need to address the issue of placing four unit on a 2 acre parcel where more than one acre per dwelling is required.

Susan and Phil von Hemert,  
Tidewatch condo #42

Sent from my iPad



**From:** [Michael Lannon](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Thursday, September 19, 2024 3:42:52 PM

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Dear Committee members,

As a Tidewatch resident I have been closely following developments regarding this property.

Please would you consider sending this back to the ZBA for their reconsideration.

1. There is significant concern re the water run off onto Tidewatch.
2. The project appears to be oversized for this lot, particularly the latest build out which comes even closer to our boundary, given the number of larger homes being squeezed onto this property.
3. The traffic situation remains of major concern despite the new positioning of the driveway. There is bound to be an accident given the current abnormal speed of significant numbers of motorists approaching that blind rise.

I thank you for your consideration,  
Michael Lannon Unit 30 Tidewatch Condo Association.tion

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Jane Reynolds](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Luster King Proposal!  
**Date:** Monday, September 30, 2024 11:40:57 AM

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I am very concerned about all the changes that have been made since the Planning Board made some approvals for the 635 Sagamore Project!

It is my opinion that this project should go back to the drawing board for approval!

I am most concerned about the drainage on that property due to lots of granite which is obvious when one looks at the ledge and small trees. Now the project has made foundations deeper for basements and the footprint has changed dramatically with larger buildings and the driveways in a different location. This has gotten out of hand and needs to be reevaluated and that includes traffic concerns. Making a left hand turn into 579 Sagamore is bad enough, 635 will be more challenging!

There are too many issues that should not be ignored. Please don't let this slip by.

Sincerely,  
Jane Reynolds  
579 Sagamore Avenue  
Portsmouth

**From:** [Lynn](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, September 30, 2024 12:17:34 PM

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Dear Planning Board:

As a 34-year resident at Tidewatch (579 Sagamore Avenue), I am very concerned about a number of issues raised by the proposed development at 635 Sagamore Ave., especially as the plan keeps changing from what was originally approved by the ZBA.

- Two of the units are now larger than approved, including walkout basements.
- These units are now closer to our property line.
- The placement of the drainage retention pond has been changed.
- There is a newly proposed overflow well at the corner of Sagamore Avenue and our driveway.

The blasting involved for the project, especially with these changes, as well as the storm water flowing our way, will likely have a negative impact on our property. And, of course, the issues of traffic safety that Tidewatch and other neighbors have raised, remains unaddressed. (I'm sure that the people who have been directed traffic around the sewer/sidewalk construction for the past year, would be able to provide an interesting perspective on this.)

In addition, it still bothers me that in their presentation to the ZBA, the developers misrepresented the density of Tidewatch—the number of buildings with respect to the acreage here, as well as the number of units ultimately built here, rather than the number proposed.

I hope you will reject this proposal and send it back to ZBA for reevaluation.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Schweikart  
Tidewatch Unit 119

*Lynn K Schweikart*  
*UNH Marine Docent*  
*Author | [Peaceful Places Boston](#)*

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [dc10noiz@aol.com](mailto:dc10noiz@aol.com)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Development of 635 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth, NH  
**Date:** Monday, September 30, 2024 3:42:43 PM

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Dear Mr. Britz and Planning Board Members,

As a resident of Tidewatch and direct abutter to the subject I'm expressing my deep concern over the direction this development has taken.

Since approval of the ZBA based on questionable data there have been significant changes to the original plan as it progresses through the approval process.

The location of the proposed buildings has changed along with approval of walkout basements which will require additional blasting affecting the direct neighbors and impact the safety of the Tidewatch community.

Traffic safety and particularly line of sight for Northbound traffic going over the Hill just prior to the proposed driveways. With any sort of vehicular backup from vehicles attempting to make a left turn into the proposed development the waiting vehicles could easily be rear ended with traffic coming over the Hill. This is a definite hazard!

Drainage is another significant issue that affects the Tidewatch community. The placement of a drainage retention pond and overflow well at the junction of Sagamore Ave, and the Tidewatch Driveway will require blasting and increase the potential risk of storm water being directed into Tidewatch.

In summary, it is obvious that there have been numerous changes to the original proposal approved by the ZBA that affect Tidewatch and our adjacent neighbors in the areas of traffic safety, building size and levels, driveway width and location, blasting closer to Tidewatch roadways, and newly proposed blasting to accommodate the agreed to planting barriers.

The changes are so numerous and significant that the proposed project should be returned to the ZBA for reevaluation.

With thanks and appreciation for your efforts,

Jerry Stow  
579 Sagamore Ave.

**From:** [nhseastones](mailto:nhseastones)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Development of 635 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth, NH.  
**Date:** Monday, September 30, 2024 3:48:54 PM

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Dear Mr. Britz,

The concerns I expressed in my recent communication to the Planning Board have not changed so I'm resubmitting my correspondence. Please include it with my correspondence of Sept 30, 2024.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jerry Stow.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** nhseastones <nhseastones@aol.com>  
**Date:** September 2, 2024 at 7:51:38 PM EDT  
**To:** [planning@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:planning@cityofportsmouth.com)  
**Cc:** Jerry Stow <dc10noiz@aol.com>  
**Subject:** **Development of 635 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth, NH.**

Dear Mr. Britz and Planning Board Members,

As a resident of Tidewatch, a direct abutter of the subject, I have been an active participant in the development process as it moves through the ZBA and the TAC boards.

I have coordinated with Mr. Tim McNamara,

A resident of Tidewatch and totally agree with all his observations and comments on this project in a recent letter to you and the Planning Board. Therefore, I will not bore you with similar concerns with the exception of three areas:

1) The ZBA used incorrect information when they based the 117 Units in Tidewatch on 59+ acres as a comparison to the 4 Houses proposed on 1.94 acres of the present Luster King while comparing density per acre. I explained to the ZBA at the public meeting, twice, that while there are 117 Units in Tidewatch, they are housed in 46 Buildings which is more than one acre per building vs the less the 1/4 acre per building as proposed by the developer.

2) During the Public Meeting it appeared that Robert's Rules were not followed as required. This may be a minor point but in my experience the following would be considered irregular. There was a Motion to approve followed by a Second. A discussion followed and then the Chair Person called for a vote. At least one vote was a "No" and then a second vote was rendered. At that point the Chair began another discussion and the first "No" reverted to a "Yes" with no clarification. Perhaps this is normal procedure, but I was later told by an official in the Planning Department that Robert's Rules were the norm for all meetings.

3) The line of sight is a major problem that has been exemplified by the current construction on Sagamore Ave.

Vehicles turning left into the proposed entrance to “Luster Cluster” stop short of the center of the driveway, not the center.

If one or two cars, or more are stopped behind the turning vehicle they are in extreme danger of being rear ended by a vehicle coming over the hill behind them.

This seems to be one of the most dangerous, if not the most dangerous, hill in Portsmouth involving a complex mix of vehicles, bicycles, joggers, and walkers. It seems to present a major liability issue for the City.

In closing I would like to thank you, your staff, and all the resident Board volunteers for your time, and efforts in the service of Portsmouth. It is not an easy task, but much appreciated.

Respectfully,  
Jerry Stow

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Katherine Tobin](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Monday, September 30, 2024 12:12:03 PM

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I live in Tidewatch Condominiums and am writing concerning the development proposals for 635 Sagamore Avenue.

The placement of the drainage retention pond and the proposed overflow well will not only require blasting, but will result in the possible risk of storm water flowing into Tidewatch. The developers need a more reasonable plan for managing drainage.

The current plan is significantly different from the original plan submitted to the ZBA (two houses are larger, full walk out basements ,etc), in addition to the new faulty drainage proposal, this is nothing like what the ZBA originally approved. The plans should go back to the ZBA for review.

Katherine Tobin MD  
579 Sagamore Avenue  
Unit 60



**From:** [Peter M. Wissel](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Eric B. Eby](#); [Matthew Glenn](#); [Timothy McNamara](#)  
**Subject:** Re: SRTAC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 10/1/24 - comments regarding 635 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Friday, September 27, 2024 10:23:27 AM

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To The Site Review Technical Advisory Committee

The comments I made for the September meeting are still relevant with respect to the application submitted for approval at the October 1 meeting.

As parking has been prohibited in the project's driveway, visitors, service vehicles and delivery vans will be tempted to park on the shoulder of Sagamore Avenue, which is also intended to be a bike lane as part of the extensive improvements to Sagamore Avenue from Little Harbor Road to the Sagamore Ave. bridge. Large parked vehicles such as landscape service company trucks and trailers will obscure the vision of vehicle operators along the line of sight braking distance. Unless the site plan is changed to safely accommodate parking on site it should not be approved. The safety of all those who use Sagamore Avenue on all manner of vehicles should take priority over this nonconforming development .

The latest plan for stormwater management has become even more complex. It is totally unrealistic to assume that the Luster Cluster condominium association will be diligent in the execution of the maintenance requirements or to be able to compensate those who suffer any damage from the system's failure. Finally, the City of Portsmouth (taxpayers) should be compensated for the expense of reviewing the Operations and Maintenance report that is required to be submitted on a yearly basis to the Portsmouth Planning Department by December 31st as well as any additional costs associated with enforcing compliance if necessary. The report should be submitted along with a fee to be determined by the city.

Respectfully,  
Peter Wissel  
579 Sagamore Avenue

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

On Thursday, August 29, 2024, 22:53, Peter M. Wissel <[pmwissel@yahoo.com](mailto:pmwissel@yahoo.com)> wrote:

To the Site Review Technical Advisory Committee

635 Sagamore Avenue is not a suitable site to build four residential units.

It is time for SRTAC to seriously address the issues raised by those who regularly use Sagamore Avenue as motorists, cyclists and abutters. Scores of pages of computer generated data and graphics alone do not come anywhere close to considering the full impact of the proposed 4 unit development.

The two issues that lead me to that conclusion are the northbound stopping sight distance and the storm water management system.

The stopping sight distance required is not met. It appears that SRTAC is contemplating a waiver of this requirement. That would be a mistake. Consider the private driveway that would service the four proposed units. It is 20 feet wide or 240 inches. A Subaru Outback, a mid-size crossover that is ubiquitous in Portsmouth, measures 80 inches from mirror to mirror. Two Outbacks parked across from each other will leave 80 inches of clearance between the two making it impossible for a Portsmouth fire engine which measures 102 inches in width to pass. Therefore there needs to be no parking signs on one side of the private driveway to allow access for a fire engine or any other emergency vehicle for that matter. Parking can also not be permitted opposite the driveways of units 3 & 4 to allow for large trucks such as the Portsmouth fire engine, to complete a turn around maneuver. The consequence of these parking constraints is that anytime the occupants of one or more of the proposed units hosts a family gathering such as a summer barbecue, child's birthday party, a baby shower, a holiday dinner (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Seder, etc.), a yard sale, or open house, vehicles will need to park in the shoulder of Sagamore Avenue. That will obstruct the view of both a northbound motorist and a driver exiting the private driveway resulting in an effective reduction in the stopping site distance. Furthermore, a driver seeking to turn left out of the private driveway will have to move well into Sagamore Avenue to look for northbound vehicles which will also reduce the stopping site distance.

With the shoulder occupied by parked vehicles, southbound cyclists will be forced into the middle of the road to avoid the possibility of doors opening in their path and southbound cars and trucks will be forced near the lane divider - all this happening within the obscured stopping site distance. There would be no room for a northbound vehicle to avoid a collision with either a vehicle exiting the driveway of a home along the northbound lane or northbound cyclists using the full lane to avoid a

parked vehicle in the northbound shoulder or debris in the shoulder.

Cyclists, cars and trucks are not the only vehicles using Sagamore Avenue. Especially during the summer it is not uncommon to see people using class 1, 2 & 3 e-bikes, mopeds, mini bikes, and even electric scooters on Sagamore Avenue. Most of these vehicles cannot stop as quickly and safely as a car and the consequences of a collision for the operator of one of these vehicles is far more severe than a collision between two cars.

The issue of cars parked on Sagamore Avenue at number 635 was not an issue for Luster King, which had a massive paved area for parking vehicles visiting the property. The developers of 635 Sagamore Avenue can avoid the parking problem by building a single residential unit with ample parking for guests visiting the unit. The stopping site distance requirement would still not be met, but an exception might be justified because the stopping site distance would not be impaired by parked cars along Sagamore Avenue.

The calculations for stopping site distance do not seem to anticipate typical weather conditions on the NH seacoast such as morning fog and snow or ice covered roads which lengthen stopping distances in the real physical world.

Finally, a substantial portion of the safety benefits of the project currently being undertaken to widen Sagamore Avenue will be negated if the shoulders of Sagamore Avenue are occupied by parked cars.

The proposed water management system is not passive. The Stormwater Management Operation and Maintenance Manual amply documents an extensive maintenance and inspection regimen required to be performed by a four unit condominium association with no incentive to maintain the system. This is unrealistic and unsustainable. After all, water runs downhill and away from the proposed development.

Compelling evidence that such a system is unsustainable is in the Jones & Beach letter to Peter Smith, Altus comment #27. "Altus notes that the Tidewatch closed drainage system does not operate properly. Stormwater bypasses the culverts as the roadway and drainage system is not properly maintained." Tidewatch is a well managed 122 unit condominium association that has every incentive to assure the proper operation of their drainage system. They are at the bottom of the hill.

Respectfully yours,

Peter M Wissel  
579 Sagamore Avenue, Unit 75

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

**From:** [Peter M. Wissel](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: 550 Sagamore Avenue  
**Date:** Friday, September 27, 2024 4:20:34 PM

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[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

Begin forwarded message:

On Friday, September 27, 2024, 20:36, Peter M. Wissel <[pmwissel@yahoo.com](mailto:pmwissel@yahoo.com)> wrote:

To the Site Review Technical Advisory Committee

The application to develop 550 Sagamore Ave. with three residential units should be denied. A Portsmouth firetruck cannot turn around in the proposed driveway if any vehicles are parked in the driveway. Visitors to the units would have to park on Sagamore Avenue. The recent project to widen Sagamore Avenue between Little Harbor Road and the Sagamore Creek bridge provides a wider shoulder to improve safety in general and for use as a bike lane. That improvement would be for naught if the shoulder/bike lane becomes a parking lot. The development of 550 Sagamore Ave. should require adequate parking for its residents, visitors, delivery vehicles, landscaping trucks and trailers, etc. Adequate parking can easily be accommodated by conforming with the current single unit zoning.

Respectfully,  
Peter Wissel  
579 Sagamore Avenue

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

**From:** [Rodney Burdette](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave project  
**Date:** Friday, November 1, 2024 8:24:58 AM

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[You don't often get email from rebtrispport@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies,

I'm very opposed to the 635 project as it will have significant problems for our Tidewatch community. Drainage,line of site, emergency vehicles access,blasting,dangerous traffic issues are just a few of the major problems with this project. Please consider asking the developer to redesign this project to address these issues. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Rod Burdette Tidewatch unit 46  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Tim McNamara](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Subject:** 635 Sagamore Ave Luster Cluster  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 9:50:29 AM

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To TAC Members,

I reviewed the most recent package submitted for the meeting on the 5th.

In your minutes there were two items that might need to be changed. One, Peter Britz did attend the meeting on Oct 1st and page two para one - it was Mr Garrepy, not Mr. Coronati that requested the project be prematurely moved to the Planning Board.

Regarding the plan;

- The retaining walls have grown again imposing more of the development into the neighbors view. Which is in conflict with the approval attributes the ZBA stated.
- Again as stated by Mr. Coronati the pond which is now right on the edge of the property line has gotten bigger. Again, very close to the neighbors property.
- A meeting or two back someone on TAC stated they should do final line of sight calculations after the new pavement was put down. Was that done?
- Last meeting Eric Eby stated the speed feedback sign batteries keep dying because so many people are speeding up the hill which causes the device to turn on. Are the speed calculations correct for line of sight stopping distance? He also stated that a new solar sign be put up to help cars know to reduce speed to 25 MPH. It is currently 30 MPH. Are we planning on reducing the speed limit to 25MPH?
- Can the developer show the new reduced tree cut line compared to the old one based on TAC's direction?
- In items 7 and 8 in the developers response to Altus - did the elevation of the basement floor or the drainage pipe move up or down and if so by how much?
- Overcrowding of this granite lot with 4 units will logically cause dangerous conditions for motorists, residents, cyclists and pedestrians.

The surrounding abutters still look for TAC to give the developer the appropriate feedback which is to reduce the number of units proposed on that lot to a safe number along with running more water the the city storm water system. And have the project go back to the ZBA for reapproval of the project based on how significant the changes are.

--

Tim McNamara  
617 413 4884

**From:** [Von Hemert, Susan S.,RN](#)  
**To:** [Planning - Info - Shr](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan von Hemert](#)  
**Subject:** TAC Meeting 11/5  
**Date:** Thursday, October 31, 2024 11:50:26 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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You don't often get email from [svonhemert@mgb.org](mailto:svonhemert@mgb.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

We are abutters on the Sagamore Avenue project 625 and have real concerns about the viability of this plan and it's effect on our complex:

1. The original plan submitted to ZBA last year is entirely different from the one presented now; the units have increased in scope and size with walk-out basements that will require even more blasting the rock ledge on the property.
2. The four units proposed is over engineered for the site; it is only 2 acres where the specs for the area require at least one acre per unit. The ZBA erroneously cited Tidewatch as having 127 units on 64 acres yet we only have 47 buildings, some smaller than the homes proposed on the site.
3. The amount of vehicles for this lot size will also lead to overcrowding. There is also the issue of how emergency vehicles will be able to access the site in such a small area.
4. The water drainage system is still a huge problem with the runoff caused by the removal of so many trees will cause downhill flooding and impact the existing trees.

We have had serious concerns about this project from the beginning with more housing being compressed into a small site causing disruption to the landscape, runoff to our area and runoff to Sagamore Creek. At the very least, this project should go back to the ZBA since this is NOT the project they approved.

Respectfully.

---

**Susan von Hemert, MSN.Ed., RN**

She/her/hers

Mass General Brigham Wentworth Douglass Hospital

Diabetes Education

729 Central Avenue

Dover, NH 03820

603.740.3208

[svonhemert@mgb.org](mailto:svonhemert@mgb.org)



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**Meeting: TAC**

**Date: August 5, 2024**

**RE: 100 Durgin Lane**

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

August 3, 2024

**Noise:**

It states in the Noise Report that the park on the southern end (TAC Packet page 534) of the complex near Rt 4 will require noise abatement. However, the park on the northern end which sits closer to Rt 4 is not mentioned at all. Please review page 13 in the TAC Packet. It clearly shows both parks and how much closer the northern park is to the Spaulding. Please ask this issue be addressed.

Part of page 13:



**Traffic Study:**

Please compare page 402 to page 472 of the TAC Packet. These estimated numbers seem quite low and don't include addressing the Motel 6 parking lot issues. The Motel 6 to Home Depot shortcut is used quite regularly by locals. It can be assumed that once people live at 100 Durgin it will be used by them as well. *The roadway between 100 Durgin and Home Depot does not appear to have been looked at, yet it is the fastest way to get to Pease as well as to travel North on the Spaulding.* Table 4 on page 317 seems to really show how many cars will be moving but how they move will be hard to tell. It will be based on where they work or don't work. This report may need to be more carefully studied before final decisions on possible changes to traffic patterns be considered. Motel 6 and the area between 100 Durgin and Home Depot may need more data review.

**Conservation Commission July 10:**

Based on the opening letter these plans were updated July 24, 2024. It seems that suggestions made by the Conservation Commission were not added to the plan sets. They may be planned to be discussed at TAC.

It was suggested the "park" on the northern end be turned into a "natural" area with viewing but no access for humans or pets (see above). *Doing this would remove the need for noise abatement on the northern end of the complex.* Some conservation suggestions could assist Fire/EMS. The idea of slightly changing the configuration of the road/driveway (see below) parallel to the northern park area to a more "L" shape (coming from Motel 6 shortcut and taking a right past the rain garden and buildings 14 and 17). This could remove the road completely from the 100' buffer and allow for easier access by Fire and Emergency vehicles. To make it even easier the road could attach to the driveway by Building 12 by removing 3 parking spaces (see below). Light dimming was suggested which is currently not shown on the lighting table and solar was discussed. Other issues were discussed as well, perhaps the minutes could be presented to TAC for review.