

This subdivision will irrevocably destroy a rare, irreplaceable scenic view.

It is a singular site, incredibly rare — there are no other blueberry fields that go down to the Salt Water anywhere in the area. (at least not viewable from a major road.)

Once destroyed it is destroyed for good. You could spend millions and never be able to recreate this landscape. It is priceless and irreplaceable.

The highest and best use for this site will preserve this irreplaceable rare landscape. I believe the committee should ask the developer to present alternate plans that do more to preserve this vital community resource.

It's not just my personal opinion that the site is beautiful and worth preservation. The site was one of only a dozen scenic sites identified in the entire Blue Hill Bay Area as part of the Downeast Coastal Scenic Inventory in 2010- other sites in the inventory were iconic place like Blue Hill Mountain, Jordan Pond, and Eagle Lake in Acadia National Park. I have a copy of the Downeast Coastal Inventory as well as the notes about this site on hand if the committee wants them.

Additionally, when the site was first listed for sale. I spoke briefly to the director of the Blue Hill Heritage Trust about it. I was not the only one to reach out to them about it— he told me that within a week of it being listed several people had reached out to him out of concern for the site and with the desire that it be preserved. He also told me that the Heritage Trust had had discussions with the sellers about the site, but that their non-profit could not pay so much above the appraised value to acquire it.

Clearly this demonstrates that the fact that this site is of rare and special scenic value-- this recognition is widely held and has persisted for over a decade.

If the developer was proposing just one house, obviously we wouldn't be here tonight. But he's proposing a subdivision and a road to accommodate 9 houses and 9 septic systems.

Looking through the proposal it's difficult for me as a layperson to dispute any technical aspects. But included in the proposal it is clear that a) the road itself will

require significant grading. This is clear in the road diagram and also in the amount of erosion mitigation that the new portion of the road requires. This will require significant amounts of fill that will irrevocably alter the contours and character of the landscape, before anything but the road is built.

The septic system opinion letter notes that significant fill will be needed for most of the septic systems on the site. A 20 by 75 ft septic field that is entirely fill on a steep slope that will require more fill to hold everything in place— these measures will have clear visible effects on this landscape forever altering it— and that's not even including the houses themselves!

Again the quantities of fill here will irrevocably alter the contours and character of the landscape as well as introduce additional possibilities for erosion and water pollution as the slope here is very steep and so much of the site is ledge with a D grade of permeability.

Besides the fact that changing the contours of the site will irrevocably alter this scenic landscape, they can also present water quality concerns not adequately addressed in the application.

Much of the existing soil is held in place by the unique nature of the blueberry roots, and the studies presented here on stormwater and pollution do not address what will happen when the blueberry roots are disrupted. And the stormwater studies in the report don't address any changes to the site beyond the road itself.

These water quality concerns aren't just empty whining.

For in fact, while the application says that farmland issues are not applicable, the Salt Pond is farmland. The oyster farmers on the salt pond have invested a lot into their operations there. It was only in 2021 that the Salt Pond got fully approved for year round shellfish harvesting—before 2021 it only had conditional approval because of water quality issues originating from this portion of the Salt Pond watershed. The water quality has only been high enough for full approval for 3 years. That success could be quickly reversed by additional pollution from development on this site-- which could disrupt the incomes and operations of the oyster farmers that have invested in their livelihoods on the Salt Pond. I have that letter as it relates to the water quality on hand if the committee would like to see it.

While the application did do a stormwater management study the study didn't seem to take any specific water quality concerns into account. The application seems to state that since all the water is ending up in the Atlantic Ocean eventually anyway, that it doesn't matter. But the water

quality needs in regard to shellfish harvesting, clearly make it evident that water quality issues, stormwater issues etc merit heightened concern and more diligent study on this site.

Furthermore, while this application may only be for the subdivision and the road it would be unethical to try to sell the subdivision lots if they were not in fact buildable because of these issues.

Again, because of the increased need at this site for careful consideration of not only scenic concerns but for the water quality of this specific part of the Salt Pond— I believe that the developer should come back with alternate proposals that minimize development on the TYPE D soil parts of the site where runoff and erosion will always be a concern and maximize retention of the most scenic part of the site. Additionally, this alternate plan could provide a larger buffer to the Tidal Waterfowl Wading Habitat that was identified by the wildlife management expert cited in their application. This habitat is a “Significant Wildlife Habitat under Maine’s Natural Resources Protection Act” and “Based on the location of the search area in relation to this habitat, we recommend that you design your project to provide as much undisturbed buffer as possible to protect this habitat.” (Quotes from the wildlife analysis in their application. )

I want to thank you all for your time and your participation in this group. I’m sure it can be difficult at times. My father is a developer and my mother is a landscape architect who primarily designs public parks so they have attended meetings like this, and presented their proposals at them throughout their 50 year careers. But despite a lifetime of often difficult community meetings, they remain committed now more than ever to genuine community engagement. They know, after a lifetime of this, that listening makes projects better and that in the end this benefits everyone.