

Michele, as per our recent telephone conversation, please attach this copy of my remarks to the record of the November 4th meeting of the Ellsworth Planning Board.

Thanks. I hope you're feeling better.

Annette Bassett

***MRS. BASSETT ASKED TO HAVE HER NOV. 4, 2015 REMARKS ENTERED INTO THE RECORD POST-MEETING. THESE HAVE BEEN ATTACHED TO THE MINUTES AS A COURTESY. MS - City Planner**
Remarks delivered at meeting of the Ellsworth Planning Board, November 4, 2015 **P.S. NOTE THAT THESE ARE NOT OFFICIALLY PART OF THE MINUTES.**

My name is Annette Bassett. I live at 2 Parcher Street.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Planning Board for this opportunity to voice my concerns and questions about the condominium proposal before you tonight.

Like my neighbors, I only become aware of this proposal within the last two weeks, and there are *many* points I would like to raise. However, in the interest of brevity, I will limit myself to two.

The first is a series of related questions for the developers.

1) I would like to know first of all, to whom exactly are the condominiums proposed for 10 Parcher Street expected to appeal? Was a needs assessment for this kind of housing in Ellsworth conducted before the plan was drawn up? I ask this because anyone who drives through the failed Tinker Hill development on the Bayside Road is well aware that similar condo units, built and marketed with great fanfare only a few years ago, proved impossible to sell. There was no market for condos in Ellsworth then. Do you have any data or other reason to believe that the situation is different now?

2) My second question follows logically from the first. What is the back-up plan in case that, as with Tinker Hill, buyers do not materialize to purchase these 10 units? If they do not sell as condos, won't they become rental units instead, with all the transience and turnover which that implies? Given the past lack of appeal of condominium housing in Ellsworth, it's very hard not to think that such a rental fall-back is quite likely, and indeed may have been part of the plan to begin with.

3) My third question has to do with financing. I've seen the letter from the Bangor Savings Bank confirming the availability of \$600,000 to the developer, in the banks' words, "to complete the proposed project." Realistically, isn't it likely that the site work alone would cost at least that much, never mind the construction of ten well built housing units? The remainder of the financing plan

has not been presented, so the question is, what happens if the funds available for this project prove to be inadequate to see it to completion? Where is the assurance that adequate funding is truly in place to guarantee that this project might not be abandoned as a half-finished eyesore in the neighborhood?

Whether sold as condos or turned into rentals, this proposal would graft ten new housing units with space for 15 additional cars onto a stable and otherwise fully built-up block of 12 single-family homes. This one project could come close to doubling the population of our block and thus placing double the demands on our already aging infrastructure. Parcher Street was first developed over 40 years ago, and none of the infrastructure put in place at that time was ever intended to accommodate any such density as this project involves.

In terms of infrastructure, you've already heard (or will hear) from other residents regarding our shared concerns about storm water runoff, adequacy of the sewer system, insufficient water pressure, increased traffic on our very narrow road, and lack of adequate parking spaces for the condominium residents and their guests. I'd like to conclude my remarks with a few observations regarding the last two items.

As regards traffic, at most times of the day our street is a very quiet one. Current residents themselves own 15 cars, a number which would at least double if this development were to be built and marketed successfully. I want to call particular attention to the fact that Parcher Street is only 21 feet wide. There are *no* curbs, *no* shoulders, and *no* sidewalks. We who live there have no way to leave our houses and walk anywhere *except* in the narrow street itself.

I might add that on my walks I can't help noting the contrast between our 21 foot-wide street with no shoulders, and American Avenue, just up the path in the Maddocks development, where the street itself is 24 feet wide, with a 5-foot shoulder on either side. Of course, the Maddocks development was planned recently, with

21st century infrastructure needs in mind. Parcher Street, developed nearly half a century earlier, reflects the planning and infrastructure of that earlier time.

Since I take daily walks with my dog in all weather, I am very well aware of the issues which arise when pedestrians encounter cars on my narrow street. At the present, one car traveling on Parcher Street typically doesn't meet an on-coming one, so the narrowness of the street is usually not a problem. It essentially functions as a one-way street. However, when two cars *do* meet, any pedestrian, dog walker, cyclist, runner, jogger, or anyone with a child in a stroller **MUST move completely off the street for the two to pass one another. (Remember, there are no shoulders, and no sidewalks.) On one or two occasions I have been forced to step into a drainage ditch alongside the street to get out of the way. There was simply nowhere else for me to go. When plowed snow is banked along the road, or when people have parked on the road itself, the situation if two cars meet and try to pass each other of course becomes practically impossible.**

The narrowness of Parcher Street causes me to be especially concerned that I don't see any provision for visitor parking in the condominium proposal. If all the 15 parking spaces shown on the plans are allocated to the condo owners or the renters, it seems inevitable that any guests they might have would be parking along one or both sides of Parcher Street itself. For the reasons I've just outlined, this would create a very serious safety issue for pedestrians and other users of the street whenever a car comes along.

And so I urge the Planning Board to look closely at the traffic and safety implications of both of these: the extra traffic brought about by doubling the number of cars on the block and the on-street parking that would result from the inadequacy of parking spaces within in the development itself.

Thank you very much for listening to my questions and concerns.