



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

22 Dodge Road
Amherst, NH 03031
Tel. (603) 673-2317

To: Amherst Planning Board
From: Eric Slosek, Director, Department of Public Works
Date: June 10, 2025

Subject: Request for Clarification and Direction on Scope of Off-Site Improvements Review
– Jacobson Development, 17 Christian Hill Road (Map 5 Lot 100)

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I write to respectfully request your guidance and clarification regarding the appropriate scope of a third-party engineering review related to the proposed Jacobson development located at 17 Christian Hill Road (Map 5 Lot 100). As you are aware, the Department of Public Works (DPW) has taken steps to engage our on-call engineering consultant, Hoyle Tanner & Associates (HTA), to conduct an independent assessment of potential off-site roadway and infrastructure impacts stemming from the proposed project.

Background

Pursuant to the discussion held during your December 4, 2024, meeting, the DPW requested that HTA prepare a scope and fee proposal to evaluate the off-site improvements potentially necessitated by this development. HTA submitted their proposal on March 7, 2025, and it was subsequently shared with Mr. Foisie of Meridian Land Services.

The proposed scope included the following items:

1. Evaluation of pavement condition impacts on Christian Hill Road.
2. Assessment of drainage impacts along Christian Hill Road.
3. Opinion on the feasibility and need for pedestrian accommodations along Christian Hill Road.
4. Analysis of intersection improvements at:

- Foundry Street / Boston Post Road
- Christian Hill Road / Foundry Street / Davis Lane
- Davis Lane / Main Street

Applicant Response and DPW Reply

On April 28, 2025, Mr. Foisie responded to our request for the applicant to place funds in escrow to support the independent review. He expressed concerns regarding potential redundancy with drainage analyses already performed by Keach Nordstrom & Associates, questioned the Town's authority to require pedestrian infrastructure, and noted that prior traffic studies had already been conducted.

In our response dated April 29, 2025, we affirmed that the proposed scope aligns with the Planning Board's direction and expressed our willingness to revise the scope to exclude drainage items already reviewed by Keach Nordstrom. However, we emphasized our professional assessment that Christian Hill Road is not currently suitable for pedestrian use. Given the site's proximity to Amherst Village, we believe it is reasonable to anticipate increased pedestrian activity along this corridor as a result of the development.

Furthermore, we cited the relevant authority under *Article 2 – Plat Requirements, Section 215 – Pedestrian Walks* of the Amherst Subdivision Regulations, which grants the Planning Board discretion to require pedestrian facilities where warranted.

Further Developments and Request for Clarification

On June 3, 2025, Mr. Foisie requested that the third-party review be strictly limited to the scope outlined in **Conditions Precedent #8** of the Planning Board's approval. This condition focuses specifically on potential impacts to traffic delay, capacity, and queuing at key intersections, and permits the DPW to secure engineering support—at the applicant's expense—for evaluating road, drainage, sewer, and water upgrades.

While Conditions Precedent #8 outlines certain focal points for off-site improvements, the broader motion passed by the Planning Board at the time of Conditional Use Permit approval does not appear to restrict future review to only those elements. The motion explicitly anticipates further determinations during the subdivision and site plan review process, including but not limited to road design, drainage constraints, septic capabilities, and water resources.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Given the ongoing questions regarding the extent of permissible and appropriate review activities, I respectfully request that the Planning Board provide formal direction on the following:

- Whether the DPW may proceed with an independent engineering review that includes pedestrian considerations and other off-site impacts beyond those listed in Conditions Precedent #8.
- Whether the Planning Board supports the inclusion of additional evaluation items (e.g., pavement condition, pedestrian safety) based on professional judgment and site context.

It is my professional opinion that this development may necessitate improvements to support pedestrian safety and connectivity, particularly due to its proximity to Amherst Village. I believe a broader scope of review, conducted by an independent third-party, is warranted to ensure that public infrastructure impacts are comprehensively addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your guidance on how best to proceed in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric M. Slosek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Slosek
Director of Public Works
Town of Amherst

CC: Community Development; Town Administrator

