

Robert D. and Barbara Bruce Williams
9 Foundry Street
Amherst, NH 03031

Arnold Rosenblatt, Chair
Planning Board
Town of Amherst
Town Hall, Amherst, NH 03031

Re: TransFarmations, Inc. (Applicant), 17 Christian Hill Road, Conditional Use Permits. Cases
#: PZ17123-032323 and PZ17124-032323

Mr. Rosenblatt:

We reside at 9 Foundry Street. We have watched the above-captioned applications for developments on Christian Hill Road with interest, given both our proximity to the developments' site and due to our concerns about the impact that the developments would have on the entire town, and the Historic Village, in particular.

We request that you include this letter in the formal Planning Board record relative to these two applications. Please let us know if we are proceeding correctly in sending the letter to you or whether we should submit it in another way.

We have three points to make (there are quite a few more, but we will address just three) and three questions to raise. We will raise the questions first:

Questions.

1). Has the Planning Board made a determination as to whether the applications pertain to "developments of regional impact" under RSA 36:54? (Perhaps the applications are not "complete" at this juncture and it is premature to do so.) As residents of Foundry Street, which is a direct continuation of Christian Hill Road, we are acutely aware, based on day in/day out experience, that much of the traffic that travels Christian Hill Road and Foundry Street originates in towns to the west and northwest of Amherst: e.g., Milford, Lyndeborough, Mont Vernon, Wilton. Much of that traffic uses these "back roads" to avoid more heavily trafficked roads to pick up Routes 122, 101A, and, ultimately, 3. Additional traffic from the developments of the size contemplated by these two applications could very well constitute an impediment to these commuters and other drivers. This additional traffic may have a "bottleneck" impact on traffic for these other towns and their residents.

2). What assurances has the applicant provided as to being able to assure the integrity on wells near to the proposed developments? In the last review of these applications, an abutter to the

proposed Jacobson project politely raised her concern that her well water might be contaminated by septic systems that are planned to be installed some 80 feet from her well. Only one Planning Board member responded to her. He advised her that she should test her well water before the project commenced and that if it becomes contaminated after the project is built, then she would have a lawsuit against the developer! This is a callous disregard of the responsibility of the Board which is to ensure that this kind of adverse impact is not experienced by abutters. Has the developer augmented the record on this very valid concern or addressed it in any way? It is a concern not only for abutters with wells but for the entire Town and its concern and responsibility for the quality of its water.

3). Has the Planning Board or any Town official contacted other towns where the applicant had development projects (ie., Northampton and Sudbury, MA) and learned what those towns experienced in dealing with this applicant and if there was any aftermath impact on the towns?

Points

1). Wetlands. We could not attend the recent site walk, but we did attend the site walk on October 25, 2019. One PB member (now no longer serving) told all participants as he stood at the height of where the old ski lift was located on the south side of Christian Hill Road and looking north to the "corn field", that "back in the day", only grass could be grown there, and equipment couldn't be driven over the field because, as a wetland, it was just too wet. It is incumbent upon the applicant to show that this wetland condition has changed, if it has, and also that it is safe to do the construction and to satisfactorily address all related issues stemming from the wetland issue.

2). Traffic Safety. All of the proposed Jacobson developments' roads pour onto Christian Hill Road at or near the considerable angle on that road just to the east of the existing farmhouse. That is inherently unsafe as sight lines in both directions for in-the-road and entering-the-road traffic are seriously compromised given that angle. This is a prevailing condition and is not fixable. Nor, to our knowledge, has the applicant addressed this issue. To us, it is the absolute controlling issue.

The possibility of serious accidents at this location is very real and serious. (At the October 25, 2019 site walk, the then Chair of the Planning Board was almost struck by a passing car at almost exactly that blind spot as the driver was speeding - a very common occurrence on Christian Hill Road - and he/she couldn't see him because of the sight line issues created by the angle of the road. We have come to refer to it as "Bloody Angle".)

A traffic light might well have to be installed (with installation, maintenance and policing costs falling to the Town as a result - also not addressed by the applicant.) A traffic light would significantly impact traffic flow on this rural road. (See Question 1 above.) Many people would be up in arms and complaining. Almost as many as if a serious accident harmed or killed someone. Realize: it isn't just the traffic of the developments' residents but all of the "support"

vehicles that will daily enter and exit the residences that will have an impact: Amazon, Fed Ex, UPS, DHL, USPS, Comcast, appliance and other maintenance trucks, visitors, etc. Another 30-40 vehicular entries and exits a day in addition to the residents? 50-100? No one knows.

3). Impact on the Historic Village and the Town. The applicant's two developments will have a very real and great negative impact on the Village. We haven't heard one word as to the impact on the Village and the Town from the applicant. Our precious Historic Village will be squeezed on the west and, if projects like the Prew project are built, on the north and east. It is an understatement that if both of the applicant's projects are approved and built, the stress on the Village will be very considerable.

We moved to Foundry Street in May 2017 from Concord, MA - where we had lived for 41 years. The primary reason we left Concord was because Metro West Boston and Concord itself had gotten very overcrowded and traffic had become a nightmare.

In the 9 months when Clark School is in session, we have to plan our day around when traffic is not greatest. We can't imagine what it will be like with more vehicles in the mix. At drop-off and pick-up, Foundry Street and Davis Lane are narrowed significantly by the waiting cars that often trail onto Carriage Road. (If Clark no longer functions as a school, it is possible that it will be renovated and put to a Town use that will also generate significant traffic - a children's library, or a senior or community center are possibilities that have been mentioned. And unlike the School which functions 8 ½ months of the year, these uses would be 12 months a year.) And, construction vehicles will travel these roads - possibly for years, depending on the length and phasing of the development process. (We understand from a neighbor who attended the site walk this year that, when asked how long the project would take, the answer given was: "five years".)

The additional traffic will also be an ongoing strain on the infrastructure of the Village. The corner of Foundry & Boston Post Road is already a traffic jam - daily. And so are many, if not all, intersections along Boston Post Rd. The Village center can be anticipated to become a total log jam with all of the additional cars in these 2 projects. (We often sit in our car for 8-10 minutes to make the right from Foundry Street onto Boston Post Road. This is not at the height of commuter hour or during peak school drop-off/pick-up times. This is mid-morning mid-week, even when school is not in session.)

Now the Village hosts a strong and active community life - families go for walks, people walk their dogs, kids run up Boston Post Road after school to meet their family members, joggers run, kids on bikes and trikes ride, and seniors go for their constitotionals. An increase of traffic will alter this peaceful, desirable community use of the town walkways and streets significantly. Amherst will forever lose something that is very precious to every townspeople as the entire character of the Historic Village will change and be at jeopardy. Don't think it can't "happen here".

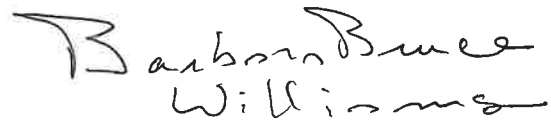
Bob grew up in Hyannis on Cape Cod when it was a small peaceful Cape Cod village - in 15 years time, inadequate zoning left the community irretrievably altered. That is a blink of an eye in Amherst's long, proud history. That is the danger if the applicant's projects go forward. And, the Village is central to the well-being of Amherst. It is not a risk to be assumed.

If there are any questions or if we can address any issues that members of the Planning Board have after reading this letter, we would be happy to do so.

Sincerely,



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cc: Ms. Nic Strong, Community Development Director