

September 29, 2020

Jeremy Ginsberg and the
Planning and Zoning Commissioners
Town of Darien
2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820

Re: 170 Ridge Acres Road

Dear Mr. Ginsberg and Commissioners:

As residents of abutting properties to 170 Ridge Acres Road, we would like to bring to light our concerns with respect to the proposed project and the resulting impact to the surrounding area.

Drainage:

The far southwest corner of the property is not identified on the *Darien Wetlands/Watercourse Map* as actual wetlands; however, the area is often extremely wet and holds several inches of standing water. The elevation of the proposed SportCourt is by our estimation 10-12' in elevation above the area where water pools which results a large area of water funneling to the lower area where pools collect. This Spring was seasonally wet and the low-lying area held standing water for several weeks. The condition occurs annually as typical Spring rains are sufficient to create accumulation which oversaturates the area and a large visible puddle develops. In winter after any accumulation of snowfall the area is similarly filled with water/ice for extended periods.

We estimate the area of standing water can be as large as 25-30' in diameter and easily 6" deep or more.

When this is the case, the water is often moving and flows to lower ground, then eventually off the property and into the street area. Once into the street area, water flows into a drainage sewer located on the north side of the street at the bottom of the hill. The existence of that drainage sewer and pipe speaks to the need to direct water away from the road. We're confident that drainage pipe was installed to relieve the road from having a large standing puddle for prolonged periods.

The drainage pipe runs only the width of Ridge Acres and empties directly into the

yard on the property of #2 Ridge Acres Road. Runoff from the drainage pipe causes oversaturation in the corner of the property often creating its own standing water condition. In peak runoff conditions, oversaturation from this pipe can become so excessive that the visible standing water can extend in a puddle 3-5' wide and run the entire breadth of the #2 Ridge Acres property to eventually reach Molly Lane. Erosion from this flow has created an obvious crevice in the yard at least 30' in length. While the McKees have brought concern regarding the drainage of this pipe to the Ridge Acres Association in the past, no action has been taken to date.

The residents of #1 and #2 Ridge Acres are concerned a retaining wall will eliminate the natural topography and create a substantially smaller area for excess water to pool which will exacerbate the existing drainage condition and possibly create new areas of excess saturation and/or flooding.

The following bullets specifically highlight or concerns:

- Eliminating or decreasing the size of the area in which excess water pools will:
 - Increase the instances overflow drains into the pipe and therefore increase the frequency and volume of water onto the property of #2 Ridge Acres
 - Overflow into the property of #1 Ridge Acres and create a new flooding condition which currently doesn't exist
 - Saturate the ground with water that the current landscaping is unaccustomed to and create loss or of certain plants
- The surface of the court was described as impervious to water in the Darien DPW letter supplied in the application. The letter mentions that the attenuation of "peak rate of runoff" was not included in the application. We're concerned that no engineering data has been considered. We are further curious about recourse in the event measures taken with respect to solve the drainage issue are partially or completely unsuccessful. We also submit that the residents of #1 Ridge Acres have resided at the address for 15 years, and #2 Ridge Acres have resided at the address for 18 years and while we cannot currently provide engineering data, we provide anecdotal data based on a significant tenure.

Structural:

The Grading and Drainage Plan includes an illustration of the "Proposed Sport Court". The underlying description includes "Sideboards on court as railing". The

use of “sideboards” suggests this court may be convertible to an ice rink. Also, the fact the surface of the Sports Court is impervious to water suggests a material that might be used for an ice surface. If so, would additional water above and beyond natural precipitation be added to the rink for ice re-surfacing and eventually flow to this drainage area?

Also, in the event the court is convertible to an ice surface, is there any plan now or in the future to include refrigeration to maintain ice in the event the air temperature isn't sufficient to do so? Would the refrigeration equipment run perpetually? and would there be associated noise?

Another question with respect to this construction is lighting. The application makes no mention of lights. If lights are part of the construction plan now or in the future are there limitations things like height, size, brightness, and times of use defined by the DPW in any way? Would there be restrictions on where stadium lighting's use would be allowable and is there a minimum distance from another residence requirement?

Aesthetic:

The location of the SportsCourt is particularly conspicuous to the front face of #1 Ridge Acres. Given the court's significant size and placement, we're concerned that there will be a meaningful change in the current view and there will likely be an increase in the noise level. In the event there is a plan for lights or other additions not in the plan as posted, the impact on our privacy might be more severe. While we acknowledge that the plans show the construction is within the defined setback, we are concerned the impact on our privacy will still be meaningful.

For the reasons above the residents of #1 and #2 Ridge Acres Rd would ask for careful consideration with respect to the proposed construction of a SportCourt in the planned location. As stated in the DPW comments email on 9/15, the recommendation of an “as built drawing Should include measurements from known, permanent, and visible surface features...”, has not been posted as of now. In the absence of assurances that our properties will not be impacted, we remain concerned about this construction.

Finally, we are concerned that a significant of work has already been done. While the residents certainly have the right to clear land on their property, which they have been actively doing with considerable land moving equipment, we have observed multiple truckloads of what we assume is “fill” dumped in the general

area in question. Given there is no permit for this construction we wonder where “landscaping” ends and “construction” begins.

Respectfully,

Annie and Robert Weibel – 1 Ridge Acres Road
Annie and Gordon McKee – 2 Ridge Acres Road