

Memorandum

TO: Jeremy Ginsberg

FROM: David Keating, Zoning Enforcement Officer



RE: Flood Hazard Area at 22 Seagate Road in Darien

DATE: June 29, 2020

The Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) show that the expected flooding of Holly Pond in the vicinity of Seagate Road will extend up to elevation 14. The shoreline is designated as Flood Zone VE 14 and then inland the Flood Zone is AE 14. Attached is a copy of a portion of FIRM panel 536 which shows the Seagate Road area. To make it easier to understand, I have marked the map to show the street and the house at 22 Seagate Road. On the FIRM map, the house at 22 Seagate Road is just barely touched by the AE (EL 14) flood hazard area. However, the contour map submitted with the application shows that the entire parcel is below elevation 14 and therefore would be subject to, and must comply with, the Flood Damage Prevention Regulations.

The graphic depiction of the flood zone on the large scale FIRM is based on the best information that the engineers and map makers had available to them at the time that the flood maps were made. That information did not include detailed contour maps or site specific surveys. The important information is that all land up to elevation 14 will be subject to flooding and thus is regulated under the Flood Damage Prevention portion of the Darien Zoning Regulations (Section 820). Section 822a includes the language... "The determination of flood hazard areas shall be based on the flood elevations shown on the FIRM maps in conjunction with an up-to-date and accurate topographical survey of the property. Areas of special flood hazard are determined utilizing the base flood elevations (BFE) provided on the flood profiles in the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for a community." (Emphasis added) All of my training regarding floodplain management has taught me that the AE 14 flooding will include all land that is up to elevation 14.

The property owners of 22 Seagate Road have applied to FEMA for an official clarification, or Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) to have FEMA determine the extent of the flood hazard area in this specific situation. As of this date, FEMA is in the process of reviewing the LOMR, but has not yet acted upon the request. Unless and until FEMA approves the LOMR, my advice is that the Planning and Zoning Commission process the pending Land Filling and Regrading application and CAM application and Flood Damage Prevention application using the recognized practice that in the vicinity of 22 Seagate Road, all land up to elevation 14 is in the Flood Hazard Zone. The biggest difference would be that the proposed house could not have a basement.

Attachment: marked portion of FIRM panel 09001C0536G