



TOWN OF MILLBURY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING • 127 ELM STREET • MILLBURY, MA 01527-2632 • TEL. 508/865-4754 • FAX 508/865-0857

January 11, 2022

Charles Hunter, Assistant Vice President
Genese & Wyoming Railroad Services, Inc.
2 Federal Street, Suite 201
St. Albans, Vt 05478

Dear Mr. Hunter:

The Planning Board is in receipt of your correspondence dated January 6, 2022 and associated attachments. The Planning Board understands your position that any work performed on railroad property, including widening the paved width of Rice Road from 19' to 22' to enhance public safety, triggers the railroad's requirement to bring all assets up to current American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) standards, including the public at grade crossing and signal systems. You provided a proposal from ECC Corporation to perform this work in the amount of \$279,564.92 as well as a plan entitled "Highway Grade Crossing Signal System, Proposed Rice Road H-Plan, Main Line – Millbury, MA", dated January 3, 2022, prepared by Providence & Worcester R.R. Co.

As you know, the Rice Road railroad crossing currently does not have gates. They were removed approximately 42 years ago by the Providence & Worcester Railroad Company in 1979 and the crossing has existed in its current configuration since. During the public hearing for the proposed 46-unit Rice Pond Village development, abutters have expressed concerns about the alignment of the intersection of Rice Road and Providence Street, the width of Rice Road at the railroad crossing and its ability to accommodate 2-way traffic, and the lack of railroad gates.

In the interest of improving safety, the Planning Board wants the developer to absorb the costs of widening Rice Road to a uniform 22' paved width (including the 19' wide section within the railroad right-of-way), along with several other off-site improvements including improvements to vehicular and pedestrian safety along Rice Road.

Additionally, the developer has agreed to satisfy other municipal priorities including make a donation for park improvements, construct 5 low-income units for people with disabilities, and reduce the total number of dwellings from 52 to 46 units to protect on-site wetlands and reduce density. The off-site road improvements and other mitigation measures impact the ability of the Rice Pond Village project to absorb an additional \$279,564.92 in railroad improvements identified in your letter. Suggestions to make Rice

Road a dead-end street prior to the railroad crossing or to significantly increase the number of units within Rice Pond Village to absorb the costs of the railroad improvements are strongly opposed by abutters and do not have broad support among the Board membership.

For these reasons, the Planning Board respectfully requests that the Providence & Worcester Railroad contribute sixty-five percent of the costs to bring the crossing up to current AREMA standards. In preliminary conversations, the developer has been amenable to paying the balance as a Condition of Approval, but not more, as the development will only slightly increase traffic at the Rice Road/Providence St. intersection.

Please advise to the above by January 19, 2022 as the Planning Board's public hearing will reconvene on January 24, 2022.

Sincerely,



Laurie Connors
Director