

December 7, 2023

To: RIDEM Freshwater Wetlands Program
Martin Wencek, Program Supervisor
From: The Bristol Conservation Commission
Re: Application 22-0264

Dear Mr. Wencek;

The Bristol Conservation Commission has reviewed the noted application to alter freshwater wetlands in order to build a hotel on Gooding Avenue in Bristol. After extensive review, we have concluded we cannot support Application 22-0264 as currently proposed.

In our view, the proposal to build on almost 50,000 square feet of swamp and wetlands would seriously and negatively impact the function and value of that wetland, as it will no longer protect the subject property, nor properties downstream (Silver Creek runs just to the East). Significantly, one of those properties is the location of the current and future Mount Hope High School.

The extensive engineering work proposed, in our view, doesn't mitigate wetlands impact, it effectively destroys that portion of the wetlands it will be constructed in. It is also not clear that, with storm frequency and intensity increasing, it will sufficiently handle extreme events. The potential for the man-made system to be regularly overwhelmed would create an ongoing hazard for downstream properties.

We have, therefore, concluded that the risk of this alteration, effectively a "re-architecting" of nature, to adversely impact a wetland and surrounding properties is far greater than any benefit it may promise. Protection of our wetlands, and their benefits, is of paramount concern. We are very concerned this proposal not only doesn't protect or even "alter" a wetland, it destroys a large portion of it and, with it, will cause more problems downstream.

Respectfully,

The Bristol Conservation Commission
Tony Morettini, Chair