

Dear Editor,

We need to clear up some issues reported last week about the Lighthouse Motel. Every citizen in Scarborough should understand the truth about what is happening in Pine Point.

We have lived here all of our lives. The Lighthouse Motel was once a horse stable. It's been a motel for a long time but open only during the summer. In the fall the owners put up plywood over the windows and doors and close. They return in the spring and for 15 years or so put up orange barrels to barricade the public road to the beach that runs between the motel and their parking lot. Now there is a smaller barricade thanks to the Town Council who ordered it to be reduced. But people think that road belongs to the motel because it looks like private property. Kids play there, guests park their cars there to unload, and motel staff ask people to leave. There isn't even a crosswalk from the parking lot to the motel to show it's a public road.

A couple years ago we went to several meetings the Lighthouse Motel had when they wanted the town to swap land so they could make their motel into expensive condos. They wanted 8 condos, then when neighbors complained they went down to 7 and finally agreed on 5. They also wanted the Town to take ownership of the point of their land on the beach because that little piece falls in the shoreland zone area and the Town told us that if any of your land is in the shoreland zone you can't expand the building. They even wrote a deed for this piece, but the Council would not accept it. The Zoning Board would not approve their application and told them to work with the neighbors. All that summer a lot of people came to listen to their plans. Finally, they came up with a plan that most everyone could agree to. It was for five – that's FIVE – condos. Not 22 they want now.

To change their motel to 5 condos they still needed the town to help them out. A neighborhood group got together and selected representatives to ask the Town Council for a study about this land swap and shoreland zone deal. They elected four excellent people to work with the Town. The group asked what the Lighthouse Motel was going to give back to the Town for the help the Town was going to give the owners. One excellent idea was for the Town to swap the land IF the motel would give up a piece of it to add to the public road. The 5 condos were going to have parking in the back and landscaping in the front, so giving up some land would have been reasonable so the Town could widen that road and make it a wonderful access point to beach for people with handicaps, visitors and locals. The group also thought the owners should agree to limits on things like fences and trees so the public's views wouldn't disappear. These are all reasonable things. It would have been a win-win. But they were not interested.

The Residents Group supported the 5 condos. But the owners needed the Town to help them make a big return on their investment. They had the hotel on the market for \$2 million, but no one would buy it because at that price because it would not be profitable. So why couldn't they just work with the Town, give a little and get a lot?

It's two years later and they decided they will sell off "a few" of the 22 motel units so they can afford to renovate. This family sold the land next door where all the construction is happening for \$3.5 million. They probably can afford to renovate. We read where they asked the Town last winter if they could convert to 22 condos without going to the Zoning Board and the Town said NO, of course. The Town told them they would have to apply to the Zoning Board like they did 2 years ago. But they didn't

go to the Zoning Board again because they probably realized the Board would never let them put in 22 condos on a tiny piece of land. Instead, they went to the Registry of Deeds and filed their condominium papers despite the Town's ruling. They did this just a few days after the Town Council received the new ordinance for these projects. Fortunately the Town filed its own papers to prevent this. The papers they filed are not for "a few units," they are for 22 units. This information is all on the Internet.

Perhaps they think 22 condos would be a nice addition to the neighborhood. But they had a lot of opposition to 8 condos just two years ago from the Zoning Board and the neighborhood. We all know what will happen. 22 different owners means no control down there. People will buy the rooms so they can come up for a few weeks in the summer, and then they will RENT them out for other summer weeks and probably all winter. There will be more noise and traffic and very little control. The parking lot across the street will stay there so condo owners walk across a public road summer and winter. People say condos are more conforming than motels in the residential areas. We say that this change would be just like a motel, only worse. Right now they are only open for the summer.

The owners argue that other places have converted to Condos so why can't they. They use the Rest Point Condos next to Conroy's Garage as an example. Our friends, Andy and Lillian Vire, changed over to condos over 23 years ago. Laws and rules change and so does land value. We watched the Council meeting when Jeff Messer asked how many hotels have done this in the last 10 years, and he said it makes no sense to go back more than 10 years. He's right! Dave Grysk said only one other place has converted since he's been here and that place went to the Zoning Board. Also, the Vires owned much more land than the Trumans. The Trumans want to put 22 single family homes (that's what condos are) on 1/3 of an acre of land? That's ONE-THIRD of an acre. Yes, other places like the Moorings Cottages have changed to condos many, many years ago. They too have more land, have separate cottages, adequate parking, rented year round, and have kitchens. The Lighthouse is one huge building and the building covers much of its 1/3 acre. It is rented 12 weeks a year then they put up the plywood for the rest of the year. They have no kitchens. They don't have two parking spaces for each condo they want, and two spaces are required for homes according to the Town. They don't have a sprinkler system the Fire Department told us. You just can't compare these properties. We hope the Council will reject these arguments, especially that there is a precedent for this. We know the owners feel singled out, but if there were ten other places like theirs we would offer the same arguments. This is not about them, it's all about what's best for the public. There's nothing wrong with condos, it's the number of them.

Finally we want to say that the huge fence the Lighthouse just erected blocks all of our views of the shore toward Old Orchard. They said they put it up because of the construction next door which bothered their guests. First, the construction has been on the street not where they put up the fence. Second, they will be closed in a few weeks. Third, they sold the land where the construction will happen. Fourth, the fence is permanent when it could have been temporary. They say their business has been off 50% because of construction. They sold the land sold for \$3.5 million. Didn't they expect construction?

This fence should come down immediately. It is a spite fence. If they refuse to remove it, then the Town should stop being so patient and take action. What can the Town do? Remove the large stone wall they installed right in the public street at the dangerous curve on King Street. Public works shows it located right in the road. How about ordering that the motel office be closed because they have been using it as living quarters in violation of the planning board approval they got to build it? How about the Town putting up its own fence in front of the motel? That is just as absurd as what they did. They only own a few inches of land in front of the building. How would they feel? The Town has let a lot go over

there for a long time, but Nick Truman says in the newspaper “We don’t get anything from this town but a headache.”

So, to the Trumans, why don’t you go back to the plan you agreed to with the town and the neighbors in 2005? Then be kind to your neighbors so they might support it again, take down that fence, stop condemning the Residents Group who have never done anything to you personally, then beg the Town to help you out like they were willing to before. But don’t ask for everything and offer nothing. That’s public land in front of your hotel, not yours. Those are everyone’s views of the ocean, not yours to control. Your business is seriously non-conforming and you have to follow the ordinances like everyone else if you want to change it. You will make another bundle of money if you build those five condos you agreed to, and then you can give a little back to the neighborhood and everyone is happy.

Thanks to the group of people in Pine Point who have worked so hard to keep everyone informed and acted so professionally. People have tried to discredit the group by making ridiculous claims, but they have done a tremendous job working to lobby the Town officials on many issues down here. The Town should respect their effort and reject the idea that there is some kind of feud going on as the Town manager said recently. That is what the owners would like you to think.

Linda Welch Dianne McLellan Charlotte Guest