

North Street
Neighborhood Association

NorthAssoc.org
Keep It Green

Come to the Conservation Commission Hearing **Thursday, January 8** (doors open at 5:30pm, big condo proposal to be discussed at 6:15pm) **City Hall Hearing Room** (210 Main Street, 2nd floor, enter via back door)

The woods and wetlands behind North Street absorb water and help keep our neighborhood safe from flooding. Kohl Construction proposes to build 25 condominium units plus roads in this swampy area, which other people have largely (and wisely) left unbuilt for 350 years. This would add yet another wide expanse of hardtop to join those at King Street, the Industrial Park and the Coca-Cola plant.

Warning Signs: Flooding In Our Neighborhood

Nature is already pushing back, with flood damage reported on View Avenue after Tropical Storm Floyd (1999). During the past six years, the Fire Department has been called to pump out basements on Bradford Street, Elizabeth Street and Woodmont Road. They've also had to respond to cars stuck in water under the railroad trestle at North and King Streets. If Kohl's project goes forward, your home may be at increased risk from water intrusion.

Mold Seen in Homes Built Near Wetlands

As residents of Meadowbrook Apartments know, water can not only damage property but can create a health hazard as well. Like Kohl's proposed condos, over half of Meadowbrook lies within 100 feet of wetlands. Moisture and mold have penetrated into several apartments via the chases that hold the utilities.

Stormwater Basins Often Degrade and Fail

Developers like Kohl often try to manage stormwater with techniques like detention basins. On paper, these appear to work, but their failure rate is significant and the cures can be expensive. Recent examples of failure include basins at Northampton High School, Carlon Drive, and Bridge Street School. The latter had water backing up into the cafeteria. Its basins had deteriorated and filled with silt. The cost to set up a different system: \$22,000.

The Solution: Ask the Conservation Commission to Preserve the Buffer Zone Around Wetlands

A time-tested solution to all these problems is simply to give wetlands their space. A healthy wetlands buffer zone protects homeowners and reduces the amount of pollution that flows into our waterways. These buffers don't need costly maintenance, just preservation. **Come on January 8 at 6:15pm and ask the Conservation Commission to minimize the amount of disturbance and hardtop within 100 feet of the wetlands behind North Street.** If your basement already requires a sump pump or you've experienced problems with water, the commissioners need to hear from you. If you can't attend in person, mail your comments to Paul Wetzel, Chair, Conservation Commission, City Hall, 210 Main Street, 2nd floor, Northampton, MA 01060. Mr. Wetzel can also be emailed at pwetzel@smith.edu.

The green buffers around our wetlands absorb water, moderate temperatures, filter the air and beautify our neighborhood. Don't let developers pave them away. Learn more at www.NorthAssoc.org.

The official hearing notice: Continuation of a Notice of Intent filed by Tofino Associates, Inc. and Northern Avenue Homes, Inc. for the construction of twenty-five dwelling units and associated roadways, parking areas, driveways, sidewalks, utilities, landscaping and stormwater management system. Project is proposed to take place in the 100-foot buffer zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands. Project location is Northern Avenue, Map Id 25C-12 and 25C-17.