

Changes likely in Cotuit development

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A proposed 50-acre, 128-lot subdivision in Cotuit is seen by many in Mashpee as a behemoth on the border. Four of the development's five sides abut Mashpee and its three access points are on Mashpee roads.

"We weren't entirely happy about it," said Bob Nelson, chairman of the Mashpee Zoning Board of Appeals.

But according to Nelson and Ruth Weil, the town of Barnstable's director of growth management, negotiations with the developer, Cotuit Equitable Housing, regarding the 40B affordable housing subdivision,

may produce positive changes.

"Progress is going on amicably," Weil said

Nelson, who represents his town at those negotiations, said Mashpee was invited by Barnstable to send a representative. Nelson said he's involved in the negotiations "to a very limited point."

Nelson said entrances on Route 28 and Noisy Hole Road are the primary concerns for Mashpee. Noisy Hole Road is completely within Mashpee.

"We've made considerable progress and we're pretty close to agreement on a lot of items. This Thursday [Jan. 5] the developer is

supposed to have some new plans for us to look at, where they're going to move the main entrance on to Noisy Hole Road and off Route 28," Nelson said.

Nelson said that Route 28 would be a right turn only entrance that would be used primarily for emergency vehicles.

"This is at the request of the fire department," Nelson said. He called it a valid request.

The portion of Route 28 where the entrance to the development would be located is unusual in that the north side of the road, which is where the development would be located is in

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Entrances on Route 28 and Noisy Hole Road are the primary concerns for Mashpee. Noisy Hole Road is completely within Mashpee, but the 128 homes would be in Cotuit.

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Mashpee, while the southern side of the road is in Barnstable.

"The traffic on 28 is a tough situation. Any place on 28 where you're going to make a left-hand turn — regardless of which way you're going — is a potential problem. We would rather see a little more traffic go into Mashpee than to see them going off 28," Nelson said.

"I see the potential coming out of this is a set of traffic lights at that point. Both towns are interested in it," Nelson said.

Noisy Hole Road is shown on maps as running from Route 28 to Route 130, but it is not a well-paved connection.

"Most of it is just a dirt road that is passable but not really recommended to use," said Nelson. The portion that leads from Route 28 to what would be the Cotuit development is just slightly better.

"Technically speaking, it's paved," Nelson said. "There's a possibility that something could be done to build it to 130, but this is something that the town has to look at it."

The site is near the Mashpee Conservation Commission land and Mashpee Water District land, but Nelson said that it doesn't appear that the development would have a negative impact on those areas. Having to provide police and fire services are not a concern either, Nelson added.

"It's understood that at best, Mashpee would be a backup."