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Via email: selectmen@townofberlin.com

Select Board of the Town of Berlin
27 Linden Street
Berlin, MA 01503

Re: Highland Ridge Development

To the Select Board:

Casa Realty Service is marketing 'over 55' residential units in a planned Highland Ridge Development located in Berlin. <https://www.elitebuildersllc.com/highland-ridge> The Development parcel is zoned as a Berlin Senior Residential Overlay District and is a land parcel of about 78 acres, about two-thirds of which is steeply sloped and unsuited for building. The 66 condominium units offered for sale sit tightly crammed into a landlocked, level portion of the parcel where water and septic works are situated, leaving scarce common land suitable for residents' use and enjoyment.

As an abutter residing in Berlin town center, I have witnessed a callous attitude by the Developer towards the Town and its residents. Site infrastructure work begun in the first half of 2020 included extensive clear-cutting of trees across much of the unbuildable, sloped sides of the parcel, septic and water works, and construction of an access lane abutting the slope, the single access point to the parcel. During this phase I watched large trailer trucks and heavy utility trucks travel continuously, often at reckless speeds, between the Development on Highland Street and Carter Street at Town center, creating unsafe conditions for residents and requiring intervention by Berlin Police to mitigate. The heavy loaded vehicles have damaged Town roads, and the speeding continues. Six days a week construction noise has been unrelenting in the neighborhood.

Of perhaps greater concern is the marketed housing design and the looming public safety issues for the Town inherent in the Development plans. Casa Realty's marketed unit and site designs fail to meet the spirit or the letter of senior housing under Berlin's Senior Residential Development Zoning By-Laws. The housing units offered are too dense, are completely ill-suited for seniors to 'age in place' and are not in harmony with *"the town's natural features and resources, its historic and traditional landscapes, the existing and probable future use of adjacent land and the general intent of the Zoning Bylaw"*. An Attachment (2 pages) details these and other deficiencies. I ask the Select Board and the Town to take immediate action to address these deficiencies.

Lastly, the individual principals operating the Development have a troubling history in nearby municipalities (see Attachment). I ask the Select Board to implement performance guarantees and commitments from the principals and the corporate entities engaged in the Development as soon as possible to mitigate public safety issues being created and to secure compliance with regulations.

Thank you,



Mary E. Porter