

## SUBDIVISION PRACTICE TEAM REPORT

ON

### MUSIC VALE ESTATES

Salem, Connecticut

This report is the outgrowth of a request from the Salem Planning and Zoning Commission, with the approval of the developer, to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Project Subdivision Practice Team. The Subdivision Practice Team that reviewed Music Vale Estates consisted of the following personnel:

W. L. Lucas, Project Coordinator, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; T. Willerford, D. Capellaro and P. Schur, Environmental Health Services, Division of the Connecticut State Department of Health; D. Southwick, Civil Engineer, B. Whitney, Soil Scientist, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service; G. Amt, Assistant Director of the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency; R. Young, Director, L. Barber, Assistant Director, Windham Regional Planning Agency; J. Olsen, Service Forester, Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission; C. Wilde, Chief of Fisheries Division, and A. Lamson, Chief of Game Division, Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game.

The soils of the area were mapped by B. Whitney during the month of April. Reproductions were made of the soil survey, natural soil group descriptions, proportional extent of soils, and table of limitations for urban development and were forwarded to all members of the Team prior to their review of the site.

The Team met and inspected the entire site on May 14, 1969. Reports from each Team member were sent to the Team Coordinator for review and summarization. The following is a summary of these reports:

#### Soil Conservation Service - Soils -

The soils of the area have characteristics that have severe limitations for urban development. The principal limiting factors are high water table and slow permeability. Refer to Soil Map and tables included in this report for full details.

#### Soil Conservation Service - Engineering -

Construction of a pond on Harris Brook would be a costly enterprise for the limited area to be flooded. The high cost of impoundment is due to the large Watershed that consists of 1,473 acres. The swamp area could be improved for wildlife habitat by creating small potholes throughout the area.

The three drainage ways that cut through the site make layout of roads and lots difficult. Road foundation and basement drains would require special attention and would be an additional cost for homesite development.

Connecticut Department of Health - On-site sewage disposal

The site is generally unfavorable for subsurface sewage disposal. Seasonal high ground water level must be at least 4½ feet below ground surface. A small percentage of the site is marginally acceptable for subsurface sewage disposal.

Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission - Forestry -

A preponderance of red maple, speckled alder and spice brush are species that indicated the area to have poor drainage. The area can be made more attractive by the introduction of hemlocks. If the site is to be developed, care should be taken to prevent injury to the red maples which are sensitive to wounding.

Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game - Fish Division -

Harris Brook should be retained in as near a natural state as possible. Any removal of shrubs or trees shading the stream will result in an increase in water temperature. This would also be true if the existing washed out dam were rebuilt. Both would affect the fishing in Eight Mile River. A shallow impoundment on Harris Brook would be costly and would result in the deterioration of the stream below. Pond fishing could be provided in the area west of Harris Brook along the unnamed tributary stream.

Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game - Game Division -

The site inspected is an excellent wildlife area well stocked with wildlife food plants. With reference to Salem Center, this area would seem to be a desirable acquisition for the town of Salem. As the surrounding territory is built up, the site could readily be developed into a broader and more intensive recreation area including picnic areas, camp sites, ball fields, nature trails, etc.. Some limited controlled hunting might be considered here under a permit system operated by town authorities.

Southeastern Region Planning Agency - Planners Viewpoint

With sewerage, the site investigated could contain a very attractive and varied residential development leaving the wetlands, ponds and streams as the basis for an open space program. Development of the site would be very expensive and would require correspondingly expensive homes to justify development.

The cost of sewerage alone could be prohibitive because of the long distances between development clusters.

In reviewing and analyzing the above reports of the Subdivision Practice Team members, the following summarization is given for your information and consideration:

The site called Music Vale Estates, located at Salem Four Corners, is an area having severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal systems. Eighteen percent of the area has moderate limitations, while eighty-two percent has severe to very severe limitations. This is based on the soil characteristics of which the principal limiting factors are high water table and slow permeability.

The area would be costly to develop at this time, because of the long distances from a waste disposal system which the Team feels is necessary. Because of the wetness of the area, special measures such as drainage would have to be designed for the road system and the foundation of the homes. Development of a large water impoundment would be costly because of the large drainage area of Harris Brook watershed. Landscaping of any type in the open field areas would also be costly because of the lack of topsoil which had been removed some time ago.

Considering all the natural elements of the area, it would be a very expensive project to develop as a subdivision. However, it does have good potential for development as a wildlife or open space area. It can be developed, at small cost, as both a wetland wildlife area, or as an upland game area.

Small dugout type ponds can be constructed in low wetlands and supplemental evergreen plantings can be made throughout to further enhance the area. With some drainage of the level open fields, more intensive recreation areas can be constructed. The area can be developed for picnicking and camping and used as a nature study area for nearby schools.