

SUBDIVISION PRACTICE TEAM REPORT

ON

PAPINEAU PROPERTY

Sprague, Connecticut

This report is the outgrowth of a request from the Sprague Planning and Zoning Commission, with the approval of the owner and developer, to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Project Subdivision Practice Team. The Team that reviewed the Papineau Property 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:

-- Soils -- Soil Conservation Service

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

- Engineering - Soil Conservation Service

Property would be expensive to develop due to the presence of ledge outcrop, steep slopes and hardpan found in the open fields. Basement and foundation drains would be needed in the hardpan soils. Road construction and on-site sewage disposal systems would have severe limitations because of the steepness of the slopes and the shallowness to bedrock.

- On-Site Sewage Disposal - Connecticut Department of Health

The property must be concluded to be generally unsuitable for subsurface sewage disposal. The upper level portions of the property are underlain with impervious soils and subject to high seasonal ground water. The hillside part apparently contains better drained soils, but is underlain with ledge and the slope is such that any type of development would be difficult. Any property where the slope exceeds 10 percent presents difficulty for subsurface sewage disposal.

- Forestry - Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission

The woodland is a mixture of oak, hickory and maple with a smithering of other species. Because of the steepness of slope, logging has not been done for many years. This has allowed the trees to grow to a larger diameter, giving the woodland a more massive appearance. In the construction of roadways and the clearing of houselots, care will have to be taken not to cover the boles of trees on the downhill side. The uphill side of roads will want to be cleared back some ten feet. Trees on the uphill side will deteriorate due to root exposure and the changing of soil moisture conditions.

- Fish Division - Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game

The Shetucket River, in the old Baltic Pond Basin, is stocked with trout and is one of the better trout fishing streams in this area. Hopefully, in the next ten to twenty years, the establishment of atlantic salmon and possibly shad will be an actuality in the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers. It would be desirable for the State of Connecticut to purchase the entire sloping area as part of the proposed state park for this area to assure future use of this stream by the public.

- Game Division - Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game

If limited building is allowed along Papineau Hill Road, provisions should be made for public access to the rear of these residences.

Any road development larger than a horseback trail would destroy much of the beauty of this steep, wooded acreage, dropping off to the stream bed below. The floodplain acreage would provide camping and picnicking facilities for canoeists and boaters using the river.

The old aged hardwoods provide limited habitat for grouse, deer, squirrel and a wide range of song bird species. Wildlife improvements would include the creation of small one-half acre openings, and release of old apple, dogwoods and viburnums in the wetter sites. It is recommended that part of the property be used for open space reservation bordering the attractive Shetucket River Valley.

- Planners View - Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency

The tract of land on top of the hill appears to have the least number of development problems, but should be served by a community sewer system. The sloping tract of land would be most appropriate as part of the proposed Shetucket River State Park. This would enhance the value of the more level land at the top of the hill to the extent that sewerage might be justified in that area. With park land to the east and the country club to the west, the 22 level acres would be in a highly desirable location. A tastefully designed subdivision, taking advantage of the vistas could be very attractive.

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

The Papineau Property, located in the town of Sprague, is an area having severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal systems. These limitations are based on the soil properties and characteristics of which the principal limiting factors are high water table, slow permeability, steep slopes and depth to bedrock.

The site would be costly to develop at this time, because of the lack of a municipal sanitary sewer system. Particular attention would have to be given in the construction of roads and homes, and drainage systems would have to be installed for both of these.

The site has excellent potential for development as a park or open space area because of its natural scenic features, which include overlooks of the Shetucket River and it's valley, ledge escarpments with trickling water, a bubbling brook, originating out of the ledge rock, clusters of pine and laurel and the large trees and boulders throughout the sloping area. The site can be developed into a picnicking area with boat docking facilities.