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September 25, 2009

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME : Berkshire School Master Plan  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Sheffield  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Housatonic River  
EOEA NUMBER : 13852  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Berkshire School  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : N/A

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project change is insignificant and does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

MEPA History

The project was the subject of previous review under MEPA as an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) in 2006 and a previous Notice of Project Change (NPC) in 2007 that was also found to be insignificant. The project did not require the submission of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). As originally proposed, the Berkshire School Master Plan envisioned a series of improvement projects to be implemented over a 10- to 15-year period at the 404-acre Berkshire School campus located off Undermountain Road. A major portion of the campus is located within Priority Habitat Area for a state-listed species. The entire campus is located within the Schenob Brook Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

As proposed in the 2006 ENF, the Berkshire School Master Plan envisioned a 10- to 15-year improvement program comprising approximately 293,000 square feet (sf) of enhanced and

expanded academic, athletic and residential facilities to serve the existing student body of 385. The 2007 NPC maintained the same program but reduced the proposed new floor area by 30,000 sf to 263,000 sf and new parking by 77 spaces from 298 to 221 spaces. Expected impacts from the project were correspondingly reduced from 10.2 acres of new land alteration to 5.2 acres; 9.4 acres of new impervious surfaces to 7.1 acres; and 5.5 acres of disturbance to rare species habitat to 2.1 acres.

### MEPA Jurisdiction

The project was subject to review pursuant to Section 11.03(1)(b)(2), 11.03(2)(b)(2), 11.03(5)(b)(2) and 11.03(11)(b) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in the creation of more than five acres of new impervious surface; it was found to result in a prohibited “take” of a state-listed protected species; is located within an ACEC (Schenob Brook); and proposes the expansion of an existing wastewater treatment plant by ten percent or more of existing capacity.

The project required a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); an Amended Groundwater Discharge Permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP); possibly a Conservation and Management Permit from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP); review from Department of Conservation and Recreation’s ACEC program; and an Order of Conditions from the Sheffield Conservation Commission. The proponent was issued a Conservation and Management Permit by NHESP on November 28, 2007 and is granting a permanent conservation restriction to the Sheffield Land Trust on 11 acres of habitat.

The proponent did not seek financial assistance from the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction applies to those aspects of the project within the subject matter of required or potentially required state permits with the potential to cause damage to the environment. In this case, MEPA jurisdiction extends to stormwater, wetlands, rare species, wastewater and drinking water.

### Project Change Description

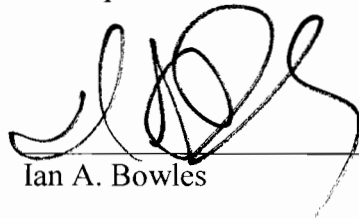
As described in the current NPC, the project change entails preservation of more existing buildings, elimination of the previously proposed New North Residential Village, addition of new tennis and squash courts, an increase in parking of 23 surface spaces, and the paving of 46 parking spaces that are now reinforced grass. Additionally, the proposed new Math and Science Building and Community Center have been reduced in size. Together, these changes will reduce the floor area of new structures by 3,000 sf from 263,000 to 260,000 sf; the intrusion into rare species habitat by 0.04 acres from 2.11 acres to 2.04 acres; add 23 new parking spaces from 221 to 244 spaces (but still 54 spaces less than proposed in the ENF); and add 2.4 acres of new impervious surfaces from 7.1 to 9.5 acres (0.1 acres more than proposed in the ENF). The

changes proposed in the NPC do not require any new or amended state agency actions.

Conclusion

After a review of the NPC, I find that the proposed project change is insignificant, in accordance with the MEPA regulations at 301 CMR 11.10(6). No further review of the project is required as a result of the proposed change. I commend the proponent for working proactively with NHESP to reduce the project's impacts to rare species habitat, and also note that the proposed changes will further minimize adverse impacts to the Schenob Brook ACEC.

September 25, 2009  
Date



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Ian A. Bowles

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