

**RESOLUTION OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
(SOMERSET COUNTY)
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE the Edgewood Properties development proposal for the area bounded by Bennetts Lane, Route 27 and Veronica Avenue and to recommend rezoning this as a conservation district if possible.

WHEREAS, the primary objective of the Environmental Commission is to advise the governing bodies, planning boards, zoning boards of adjustment and boards of health on environmental issues including preserving and protecting the natural resources of the Township as well as the impact of proposed developments within the Township; and

WHEREAS, expert testimony was presented to the Planning Board on January 18, 2006 regarding the extensive environmental constraints prohibiting such magnitude of high-density development on subject property, including C-1 streams and headwaters, wetlands of exceptional resource value and flood plains; and

WHEREAS, such qualified experts recommend the property be classified as a conservation district rather than be developed for high-density housing; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Commission believes that wetlands and wetland buffers, flood plains and flood plain buffers, C-1 stream buffers, and land in Planning Area 3 should be excluded from the lot area in computing the building density allowable on the site, reducing the acreage available for high-density residential housing to approximately 20 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Edgewood Properties concept plan does not take these environmental qualities that limit the appropriateness of development into account; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board of the Township of Franklin on December 7, 2005 adopted an alternative Housing Element/Fair Share Plan that provides sufficient affordable housing without the inclusion of the environmentally sensitive Bennett's Lane/Veronica Avenue site; and

WHEREAS, a joint subcommittee of the Franklin Township Planning Board and Franklin Township Council met on January 26, 2006; and

WHEREAS, it is further our understanding that the joint subcommittee, at the direction of the Township attorney, in its deliberations chose to disregard the December 7, 2005 official "Letter of Interpretation" from the NJDEP acknowledging the existence of the endangered red-shouldered hawk and the subsequent upgrading of the wetlands status on the subject property; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee recommended that the Edgewood Properties, Bennett's Lane/Veronica Avenue project, modified to provide 644 housing units, be included in the township's Housing Element/Fair Share Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board met again on February 1, 2006 and based on the subcommittee's recommendation they voted to reverse their decision by recommending to the Town Council that the Edgewood Properties proposal be included in the township's Housing Element/ Fair Share Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council met on February 8, 2006 and voted to accept the Planning Boards recommendation to include the Edgewood Properties proposed plan to be included in the township's Housing Element/Fair Share Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Environmental Commission of the Township of Franklin, Somerset County, State of New Jersey, opposes the inclusion of the Edgewood Properties plan for high density housing and commercial development in the area bounded by Bennetts Lane, Route 27 and Veronica Avenue, as it was voted for by the Township Council on February 8, 2006, for the Township's Housing Element/Fair Share Plan. The Environmental Commission further recommends rezoning this environmentally sensitive area as a conservation district or if this is not possible to reduce the permissible density to better address environmental and traffic concerns while making the scope of the development consistent with the sensitivity of the environmental issues.

Adopted March 13, 2006 by vote of the Environmental Commission.

The listed members voted in favor of this resolution with Dr. Theodore Chase, Jr. abstaining. John Clyde was absent at the time of the vote.

Arnold W. Schmidt, Chairman
Barbara Beringer
Jean Gierlich
David Triggs
Arnold Vernick, PE
Dianne Pydeski