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**From:** Loch K Johnson <johnson@uga.edu>  
**Date:** September 27, 2024 at 2:58:01 PM EDT  
**To:** Michael Klemens <mklemens@salisburyct.us>  
**Subject: Letter from Loch Johnson, Related to the September 30, 2024, Town Hall Meeting.**

Dear Dr. Klemens, Here is a letter related to the Town Hall meeting scheduled for this coming Monday evening. Many thanks for your consideration, and for the good work you have long carried out for our Village.

Warmly, Loch Johnson (Main Street, Salisbury)

Letter to Chairman Dr. Michael Klemens:

A number of aspects of the Pope Property affordable housing project warrant further thought. Several of my colleagues in Salisbury and Lakeville have already written on several of these topics, so I limit myself here to the question of how many housing units are appropriate for this land.

The Schema #6 model advanced by the Pope Design Committee recommends 64 units. That is a large number for a property that is both limited in size, environmentally sensitive, and adjacent to the center of the Salisbury Village. Across the United States, affordable housing planners are adopting a "scatter site" model that disperses housing units into much smaller numbers around a community and its nearby countryside, as opposed to an "urban" model that packs the units into a single, crowded space close to the center of town. The end result of this latter "urban" model for the Pope Property has several unattractive---indeed, despoiling and even hazardous---features, as suggested below:

\* 64 units will require more than one entrance-and-exit: one from Salmon Kill Road and another from Library Road. This will require either strengthening the Rail Trail pathway across an aging pedestrian bridge that crosses the Wachocastinook Brook (at the cost of over one million dollars) or the construction of a new bridge farther east along Library Road that would enter the Pope Property at the current tree line on that land. This, too, would be expensive. Were the project smaller in size---say, 25-30 units smartly placed on both parcels of the Pope land---the traffic density would be much smaller and could be accommodated by a Salmon Kill entrance-and-exit.

\* 64 units would mean some 100+ cars and pickup trucks parked on the Pope Property (in addition to those visitors who come to participate or watch sporting events). This volume of vehicles would dangerously lead to traffic jams at the intersection of Routes 41/44 and Salmon Kill Road. No traffic light would be permitted at this intersection, since 41/44 is a State Highway. At best, there would be a caution light. Frustrated drivers, having waited a considerable amount of time to enter 41/44, might well be inclined to rush onto the Highway---or sit there for lengthy spells waiting for a break in the traffic, as more and more cars and trucks back up along Salmon Kill. This situation would lend itself to risky driving and high odds of horrible accidents.

\* In addition to serious traffic safety issues, 64 units would amount to the jamming of dwellings close together in the style of military barracks---not exactly a welcoming, family-friendly environment.

\* Further, the 64-unit model encroaches dramatically into the Salisbury Historic District---one of the few green spaces left in the Village. The dwellings would also reach close to the entire length of the Rail Trail's northern tier, near the Brook. This would inflict significant damage to the natural attractiveness of our Village, running contrary to the vow on the plaque of the Salisbury Association Academy Building that promises protection of our community's natural attractions.

\* High density housing also poses a decided danger to the rare wildlife species in this area, including wood turtles, American kestrels, and Slimy Scepters (according to the recent and excellent Salisbury Association Academy Building exhibit on endangered species located on or near the Pope land---a fragile ecosystem).

All this leads to a key question for planners: Why not adopt a lower density, "scatter" approach to affordable housing in Salisbury and Lakeville as a sensible alternative to a high-density, heavily trafficked, overcrowded "urban" approach, which is anathema to our lovely rural setting?

Submitted by Loch Johnson, Main Street, Salisbury