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Road construction clarified, building permits reinstated

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Correspondent

MERRIMAC -- Building permits for the Village at Merrimac were temporarily suspended last month.

Following orders from Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Mark Townsend, Building Inspector Philip Hagopian sent a letter on July 19 to K. William Krikorian, developer of the Chapter 40B project, a 55 and over, single-family home subdivision off West Main Street, notifying him that all further building permits for the project had been suspended.

Townsend ordered the suspension after receiving a letter dated June 28 from the town's engineering consultant on the project, Christiansen and Sergi of Haverhill. The letter identified what the engineer determined to be deficiencies in the two roadways within the subdivision, Gabriel and Nancy Ann lanes.

The building permit suspension was lifted Wednesday night by a 5-0 vote of the board after the receipt of another letter, dated July 20, from Philip Christiansen, which explained how a resolution to the roadway problems was reached.

The problems began on June 21 when representatives from Christiansen's office took depth measurements of the gravel placed for the roadway bed in anticipation of a proposed paving scheduled for June 24. Christiansen's office then notified the site contractor, Richard Morello, that the gravel was inadequate and needed to be corrected before any paving could take place.

Morello said he believed the roadway was sufficiently strong because of the sub-base he had installed, but did agree to correct the problem.

Engineers returned to the site on June 23 to inspect the gravel in the roadway bed, only to discover that the road had been paved.

The width of the roads was also a problem. Gabriel Lane measured 21 feet wide rather than 24 feet and Nancy Ann measured 23 feet rather than 24 feet. Two cul-de-sacs in the development were also came up short, 16 and 17 feet, rather than the required 20 feet.

The engineers also noted that the depth of the asphalt was greater than the required 2.5 inches; however, there were also many areas that were less than the required depth.

When Christiansen and Morello met on July 20, they determined that the zoning board had changed the original requirements that would have required wider road widths and a narrower asphalt base.

As to the inadequate depth of the dense gravel stone placed under the roadway prior to paving, Christiansen wrote in a letter to the board that Morello said more material was added to correct the problem until 7 p.m. the night before the paving.

Christiansen went on to write, "From what I have seen during the construction of the roadway, I believe the roadway sub-base is better than the designer required and the dense graded stone base used is better than that specified. ..."

He added, "For the record I am satisfied that the work done to date is acceptable and the developer should not be held up in his work."

Along with its vote to reinstate the building permits, the board voted to place all of Christiansen's documentation on the permanent record and placed a condition on the decision, requiring the developer to submit an as-built plan depicting the left, right and center line profiles so that any shimming to correct grading could be done before the top course of paving is applied.

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