

Cranford Environmental Commission

Municipal Building Cranford, New Jersey 07016

December 19, 2011

Attn: Engineering Supervisor for Union County
State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Land Use Regulation
P.O. Box 439
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0439

Re: Cranford Development Associates LLC
 215 & 235 Birchwood Avenue
 Block 291, Lot 15.01 & Block 292, Lot 2
 Cranford, Union County, NJ

Dear Sir/Madam:

In a recent Superior Court of New Jersey decision in a builder's remedy lawsuit, the court granted permission to the builder (Cranford Development Associates, LLC on behalf of The S. Hekemian Group) to construct 360 apartments and a parking garage on highly environmentally sensitive property on Birchwood Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. This property had been zoned commercial, as low density office since the early 1960s. It floods frequently, contains wetlands, and serves as a natural catch basin for the flood-prone Northeast quadrant of Cranford. During the recent Hurricane Irene, the entire property was covered with deep water. The drainage flow from this area empties into and commonly overwhelms the Casino Brook, a tributary of the Rahway River, resulting in substantial flooding along downstream streets. At the location where the Casino Brook joins the Rahway River, the combined volume of water accounts for the town's most serious drainage issue. Bottlenecks in the river channel below this point slow water evacuation flow during significant rainfall events.

The level of flooding damages from Irene throughout the Township of Cranford resulted in it being designated a Federal disaster area by FEMA. The proposed development would increase impervious surface and exacerbate extreme flooding conditions in surrounding neighborhoods.

Attached is a copy of the first page of the application form relating to this property. The Cranford Environmental Commission strongly urges the Department to deny this application for a flood hazard area permit.

Sincerely,

Nelson Dittmar
Chair

cc: Township Committee
Township Administrator