

**Paul Sousa**  
31 Dixon Avenue  
Bristol, RI 02809

February 18, 2026

**Bristol Planning Board**  
c/o Diane Williamson  
Director of Community Development  
Bristol Planning Dept.  
235 High Street, 1st Floor  
Bristol, RI 02809

**Subject:** Rejection of the Comfort Inn Hotel and Suites Application on Gooding Avenue, Bristol, Rhode Island

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing in response to the proposed building of a Comfort Inn Hotel and Suites submitted by D&M Boca LLC.

As the owner of a directly abutting property located south of the proposed site at a lower elevation, I feel compelled to clearly express my serious concerns regarding the long-term consequences of this project.

Since purchasing our home in the spring of 2012, we have experienced repeated and significant flooding episodes, particularly at the base of Dixon Avenue. During heavy or sustained rainfall, water filters into the wetlands east of my property. When the ground becomes saturated, the water rises to levels that block my driveway and threaten our home. All homes in this area rely on multiple sump pumps to maintain dry basements. In my case, the sump pumps run constantly throughout the rainy season and especially during prolonged storm events, such as the devastating floods of 2010 and again in the fall of 2021 (as shown in photos). Beyond the constant anxiety of potential water damage, my property itself physically degrades due to the elevated water table. Because of ongoing erosion and soil displacement from saturation and runoff, I am forced to re-grade my property approximately every five to six years just to maintain stability and functionality.

2026 FEB 26 PM 12:44

TOWN OF BRISTOL  
COMMUNITY DEV.

This ongoing expense has a direct and measurable impact on the fragile environmental conditions in this area.

The proposed construction of a hotel and large parking lot will inevitably reduce the surface area available to absorb rainfall. Even with engineered drainage systems and retention ponds, impervious surfaces increase runoff. This will almost certainly exacerbate the already severe flooding conditions that affect my home and neighboring properties.

After reviewing the site plans, my concerns have only intensified. The inclusion of drainage ponds will likely attract increased mosquito populations, exposing families in the area to heightened risks of disease transmission. While mosquito mitigation measures may be proposed, long-term enforcement and maintenance are uncertain at best.

Additionally, the site plan shows the main building eliminating one swamp entirely, with utilities and stormwater features weaving in and out of other wetlands. It is deeply troubling that a proposal with this level of direct wetland disturbance has progressed this far. Over time, runoff from salt, gasoline, oil, and snow maintenance operations could severely impact the surrounding ecosystem. Wetlands exist for a reason—they are natural buffers and filtration systems. Once compromised, their recovery is uncertain.

There is also what appears to be a potentially historic stone wall along the west side of the property. Although plans indicate it will remain, experience shows that what is drawn on paper does not always reflect what ultimately happens on site.

Beyond the environmental concerns, there are serious quality-of-life and safety considerations. This is a quiet residential neighborhood with families and children who play outside daily. Introducing a three-story, 80-room commercial hotel directly adjacent to homes raises legitimate concerns about privacy, increased traffic, and general safety. A hotel by its nature brings a constant flow of short-term visitors. While many visitors may be well-intentioned, the reality is that residents would have no familiarity with who is coming and going at all hours. Increased foot traffic, vehicle activity, lighting, and proximity to backyards and homes diminish the sense of security and privacy that homeowners reasonably expect in a residential area.

Bristol is often celebrated for its historic charm, commercial vitality, and walkability. But one of its greatest treasures is the remaining natural forest and open space—the wetlands, wildlife corridors, and ecosystems that still survive here. These areas support deer, coyote, fox, turkey, rabbits, and countless other species. Even the clearing that has already occurred on the proposed lot has displaced wildlife, increasing the presence of rabbits on our property. Habitat loss continues to shrink the natural spaces these animals rely on.

At what point do we say enough is enough?

The flooding issues remain paramount for me and my family, but they are only one aspect of a broader environmental and community concern. Who will bear the consequences if flooding worsens? Who will be responsible if mosquito populations increase, if ecosystems are damaged, or if the character and safety of this neighborhood is altered? It will not be the developer—it will be the families who live here, who have quietly coexisted with this fragile environment for years, managing flooding, insects, bats, and wildlife as part of the natural balance of our neighborhood.

Poor decisions made today will surely affect many generations to come.

I respectfully urge you, the members of the planning board, to consider my objections and the cumulative environmental, financial, and community impacts this project may cause. This area is already environmentally sensitive and residential in nature. Further alteration of these wetlands risks intensifying flooding, degrading ecosystems, and permanently changing the character of this neighborhood.

Please make the right decision and allow these wetlands to remain intact.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of the serious consequences this wetlands alteration could bring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Sousa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Sousa





