

Aggrieved Person

Statement of Appeal: Matter #LA26004

Subject: Formal Appeal Regarding Development Precedents and Bylaw Non-Compliance

Introduction In November 2023, then-Housing Minister Rob Lantz amended *The Planning Act* to streamline the planning process and reduce frivolous appeals. However, these amendments were explicitly not intended to obstruct legitimate appeals. Appeal #LA26004 is a substantive and legitimate challenge based on the following failures to adhere to established municipal regulations.

Bylaw Non-Compliance and Precedent Concerns The Town Council's failure to enforce several critical bylaws has established a concerning precedent for future development permits. Specifically, the current development fails to meet the requirements of the following sections:

- **Section 3.3.d:** Lack of a required Development Agreement for Institutional uses.
- **Sections 5.2.3 & 5.2.4.b:** Accessory buildings must remain subordinate to the main building and are prohibited within front yard areas.
- **Section 5.3.1:** Requirements for buildings to be erected on a single lot of record.
- **Section 5.7:** Failure to secure the mandatory entranceway permit for driveway access.
- **Sections 5.03 & 6.11.2:** The proposed use as a visitor center and guardhouse is not a permitted use within the Institutional Zone.
- **Sections 5.14 & 5.33:** Violation of the "one main building per lot" restriction and unauthorized ancillary uses.

Impact on Neighborhood Character The lack of enforcement regarding these bylaws sets a legal and administrative precedent that could be exploited by neighboring properties. Six homes in the immediate vicinity—three directly across the street from my home and three adjacent to my property—could utilize these deviations to obtain similar permits, fundamentally and permanently altering the character of the neighborhood.

Future Development Risk Further concern arises regarding **PID 255562**, a 43-acre parcel in Albion owned by **Hopetown Development**. This property is located within 97 meters of my residence. Given Hopetown Development's close affiliation with **GEBIS**, the precedents set by the current lack of bylaw enforcement pose a significant risk to the future development and density of this large, nearby tract.

There is a complex network of overlapping directors and shareholders connecting **GEBIS**, **Hopetown Development Corporation**, and various other entities.

1. Primary Overlapping Directors

Several key individuals hold directorships across multiple organizations involved in land acquisition and development:

- **Zhu Jun Yao:** Secretary to Xiao Feng Li; Director of **Hopetown Development Corporation**, **Great Fortunes Development Company Ltd.**, **Core-Life Construction**, and the now-dissolved **Universal Cihang Ltd.**
- **Xiao Feng Li:** Director of **Hopetown Development**, **Compassion and Grace Institute** (a mainland China group), **Grand Unity Investments**, and **Universal Cihang Ltd.**. He is also a shareholder in **Team SQF**.
- **Chang Zhang:** Director of **Hopetown Development**, **Montague Transcendence Inc.**, **Canadian Transcendence Inc.**, and the **Compassion and Grace Institute**.
- **Yaw Hui Chen:** Director of **Hopetown Development**, **Core-Life Construction**, **Hope International Education Foundation (PEI)**, and several **Bliss and Wisdom** foundations in Taiwan.
- **Xianzhen (Hardy) Lin:** Director of **Hopetown Development** and **Core-Life Construction**; shareholder/owner of the **Riverhouse Inn**.

2. PID and Property Connections

The following PID numbers and properties are specifically linked to GEBIS-affiliated individuals and the Hopetown network:

Property/Location	PID Number(s)	Associated Owner/Shareholder
Farmland	244574	Shen Hongyeh (Venerable Hong Yeh Shen, GEBIS)
Farmland	244657	Chien-Hua (Tim) Lin (Venerable, GEBIS)
Clements Subdivision	1160035, 1039932, 1167964	Li Chun Chen (Director, Dynasty Restaurant)
Clements Subdivision	1160027	May Hua Shyu (Director,

		Dynasty Restaurant)
Clements Subdivision	1160969, 1160977	Pin Chu Chen
Clements Subdivision	1161009	Wen Lung Kuo
Clements Subdivision	1160019	Weng Hsiu Chu
Clements Subdivision	1160043	Yi Ting Chen
Clements Subdivision	1160050	Li Fei Lee
Clements Subdivision	1160993, 1169614	Liang Yuan Chen
Clements Subdivision	1155878	Kai Chun Yu
Clements Subdivision	1159631	Yu Hsin Lee

3. Key Institutional Links

- **276 Route 17:** This address serves as the head office for **Hope Education and Development** and is used as the registration address for 11 of the 15 properties in the **Clements Subdivision**. It is owned by **Kuei Chun (Cindy) Lin**, who is a director in **Co-Life Development, Universal Cihang, Great Fortune, and Daily Construction**.
- **The 75-Acre Spin Farm:** This property, adjacent to Hopetown, was acquired by **15 Chinese monks** through a process of "bundling" (purchasing 5 acres each to bypass land protection limits).
- **GEBS/GWBI Leader (Mary Jin):** Owns five parcels totaling **498.79 acres**.

There are extensive and documented connections between the **Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Society (GEBIS)** and the **Hopetown Development Corporation**. These connections involve shared leadership, financial transactions, and a common origin within the broader **Bliss and Wisdom (Fuzhi)** organization.

1. Shared Leadership and Overlapping Directors

The most direct connection is the "cross-pollination" of executives between GEBIS, the Chinese group **Compassion and Grace**, and Hopetown Development.

- **Yaw Hui Chen:** A Director of **Hopetown Development Corporation**, who is also a high-ranking official in the **Bliss and Wisdom** organization in Taiwan and the President of the **Hope International Education Foundation** on PEI.
- **Xiao Feng Li:** A Director of Hopetown and the **Compassion and Grace Institute**, whose son is a monk at **GEBIS**.
- **Zhu Jun Yao:** A Director of Hopetown and the Secretary to Xiao Feng Li, who also holds directorships in multiple Bliss and Wisdom-affiliated corporations on PEI.
- **Geoffrey Yang:** The Executive Director of **GEBIS** whose personal home in Stratford is also listed as the head office for the **Guan Yin Monastery**, a mainland China group connected to the same network.

2. Integrated Development Planning

Internal documents state that the **Hopetown Subdivision** was explicitly planned by **Bliss and Wisdom** through **GEBIS**.

- **Expansion of Montague:** The project is described as a plan to create a "Town within a Town" that would eventually be larger than the original Town of Montague (942.45 acres vs. 767 acres).
- **Secular Support Zone:** Hopetown is intended to serve as a secular private zone and a "K to 12" educational facility (**Hope Education**) to support the religious monastic compounds of GEBIS and GWBI.

3. Land and Financial Transfers

The history of land acquisition for the Hopetown project shows a pattern of properties being "flipped" or transferred between individual monks and these corporations:

- **Initial Purchases:** Land was originally purchased by individuals like **Bin Sun** (wife of Xiao Feng Li) and later sold to **Chang Zhang** (a Director of Hopetown and Compassion and Grace) before eventually being consolidated under **Hopetown Development Corporation**.
- **Individual Holdings:** Over **411 acres** of land adjacent to the 504-acre Hopetown property are owned by individual monks, followers, and connected corporations like **Sapphire Dreams** and **Ci Yun Institute**, creating a contiguous block of over 915 acres.

4. Institutional Affiliation

While GEBIS is often identified as a Taiwanese organization, investigative notes suggest it serves as the "controlling giant" for a network that includes three mainland Chinese groups: **Compassion and Grace**, **Guan Yin**, and **Ci Yun**. These groups are reportedly in a subordinate position to the **Bliss and Wisdom** parent organization, which manages their student visas and business cooperation through private school licenses held by GEBIS and GWBI.

Summary of Land Holdings and Corporate Interconnects

The development of the **Hopetown Subdivision** and surrounding areas in **Lower Montague** reveals a consistent pattern of land acquisition by individuals who share directorships across multiple organizations, primarily **GEBIS**, **Hopetown Development Corporation**, and the **Compassion and Grace Institute**.

1. Key Shareholders and "Cross-Pollination" of Directors

The following individuals act as the primary links between the religious monastic entities and the secular development corporations:

- **Zhu Jun Yao:** A central figure serving as Secretary and business partner to Xiao Feng Li. He holds directorships in **Hopetown Development**, **Great Fortunes Development**, and **Core-Life Construction**.
- **Xiao Feng Li & Bin Sun:** This husband-and-wife team manages significant land assets. Xiao Feng Li is a Director of **Hopetown** and the **Compassion and Grace Institute**. Bin Sun originally purchased the 504-acre Hopetown site before it was transferred through the network.
- **Yaw Hui Chen:** President of **Hope International Education Foundation (PEI)** and a high-ranking **Bliss and Wisdom** official in Taiwan. He is also a Director of **Hopetown Development** and **Core-Life Construction**.
- **Kuei Chun (Cindy) Lin:** A PEI realtor whose address (**276 Route 17**) serves as the registered head office for **Hope Education and Development**, as well as the contact address for 11 of the 15 properties in the Clements Subdivision.

2. Direct PID and Ownership Mapping

Investigative records link the following property identifiers to the GEBIS/Hopetown network:

Location / Project	PID Number(s)	Associated Owner / Entity
Monastic Farmland	244574	Shen Hongyeh (Venerable, GEBIS)
Monastic Farmland	244657	Chien-Hua (Tim) Lin

		(Venerable, GEBIS)
Hopetown Core	Multiple (504 acres)	Hopetown Development Corp (via Chang Zhang)
Clements Subdivision	1160035, 1039932	Li Chun Chen (Director, Dynasty Restaurant)
Clements Subdivision	1160027	May Hua Shyu (Director, Dynasty Restaurant)
Clements Subdivision	1161009	Wen Lung Kuo (Address listed as 687 Valleyfield Rd)
Clements Subdivision	1159631	Yu Hsin Lee (Spouse of Jasper Yang, Moonlight PEI)
Line Road / Farm	1012509	Venerable Gan Jing (Director, Ci-Yun Institute)

3. Strategic Land "Bundling"

Internal notes highlight a strategy used to acquire large contiguous blocks of land while appearing to remain within individual limits:

- **The 915-Acre Block:** While Hopetown is officially **504 acres**, it is physically connected to **411.43 acres** of adjacent properties owned by individual monks and followers, creating a combined development footprint of **915.43 acres**.
- **The 276 Route 17 Hub:** This single address links the **Clements Subdivision** buyers directly to **Cindy Lin**, who is a co-director with **Bin Sun** and **Zhu Jun Yao** in multiple construction and investment firms.

4. Supporting Documentation for IRAC

The following evidence points toward a unified development plan rather than independent purchases:

- **Common Use of Legal/Corporate Addresses:** The frequent use of **33 Brooke Street** (Riverhouse Inn) and **276 Route 17** suggests centralized management.
- **Direct Denials:** IRAC and the Executive Council previously denied applications from **Yaw Hui Chen** and **Xiao Feng Li** to purchase these lands individually (EC2020-348/349), yet the land was eventually consolidated under the **Hopetown** corporate banner.