The state Adirondack Park Agency has sent a “Notice of Incomplete Permit Application” to a Miami developer who wants to build a resort-style hamlet on 355 acres in the town of Jay, according to the APA’s website.

The application, submitted to the APA as a large-scale residential subdivision, has drawn local attention since it was received by developer Eric Stackman on Oct. 19. A public comment period for the proposal was open from Nov. 1 to Dec. 3, and the nearly 200-page-long PDF of comments shows that most people are opposed to the development.

Stackman is proposing the construction of 20 townhomes, 60 villas with an optional guest suite, 18 estates with an optional guest suite, and possibly six mansions or two hotels containing 17 rooms each. The development would also have “amenity” buildings, such as a clubhouse.
David Gibson, managing partner at Niskayuna-based green group Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve, submitted a public comment in November calling for the APA to declare the application incomplete, citing a lack of composite maps and consideration for the land’s resources and wildlife. Now, Gibson’s request has come to fruition.

The APA formed its Notice of Incomplete Permit Application for Stackman’s proposal on Dec. 23, telling Stackman he couldn’t get a permit for the project until he submits: maps accounting for the land’s existing conditions and natural resources; a project narrative detailing sensitive plant and animal species there; a list of bird species there; a map of past logging activities; conceptual map alternatives that avoid or minimize impacts on resources; and other details about the property.

The APA requires a two-step application process for large-scale residential subdivisions. The first part is the conceptual application submitted by the developer, which is expected to include most of the information the APA said is missing from Stackman’s proposal. The second part is the public comment period. Once Stackman re-submits the first part of his proposal, the APA will hold another public comment period for it.

Gibson said in an email on Monday that ADK Wild finds the APA’s notice “entirely appropriate and necessary,” considering what part one of the application asks for. But, he said, this process is revealing a larger problem with the APA’s consideration of these large-scale residential subdivisions: that the process lacks “legal teeth.”

“Large subdivision applicants like … Mr. Stackman have the resources to string the APA along over time, release information requested gradually, resist other requests or only answer partially, and wear the APA staff down so that eventually … the application is deemed complete and the final approved layout/design looks remarkably like what was originally submitted,” Gibson wrote.

Gibson said the APA needs a “legislative fix” to codify ecological site analyses and open space conservation plans. That way, he said, everyone would know what is expected from the applicant from the outset, before the proposal is marked as complete.

Stackman could not be reached for comment by press time on Tuesday. He submitted a letter earlier this month defending his proposal, largely in response to the negative public comments.

This is one of the largest developments to come before the APA since 2012, when the agency reviewed a proposal from Pennsylvania-based investment group Preserve Associates for a housing development in Tupper Lake with about 700 units, a spa, marina and an equestrian center. The development was not constructed.