

Dec 1, 2008

Good evening, my name is Curtis Brockway. I have lived at 537 Scotland Rd in Norwich for almost 22 years. My house is situated directly across the street from the Wilcox Family Homestead and the former Wilcox Sawmill the site for this proposed project.

Honorable members of the ***Continuing Legislative Committee on Planning and Economic Development***, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you regarding the proposed change of the designation for the parcel between Scotland and Hansen Roads back to "Rural" from "Neighborhood Conservation."

As I stated I live across the street from the site in question. It is very much a "Rural" neighborhood in every sense of the term. Every time I come out my front door I face the forest that would be demolished if this plan goes through. As I walk down the hill to get my morning papers, a common sight is to see all sorts of wild life, including turkeys, other birds, deer and an occasional fox in the fields there. Should a project of this magnitude go through that won't happen any more because their habitat will be destroyed.

To give a better understanding of how rural this area is, you should know that it is situated 2-1/2 – 3 miles from the start of the developed business areas of Norwich. When approaching the site after having driven 2 miles down Scotland Rd you reach the split with Hansen Road. As you continue North on Scotland Rd from the split for roughly a mile, to the intersection of White Plains Rd, there are only 3 houses on the west side of the street. The woods and habitats behind much of this area to the west would be destroyed if this project goes through.

One of the special things about this neighborhood that struck me as I was building my house many years ago was the sky on clear nights. It was like nothing I had seen before growing up in the city proper, of Norwich. With few houses and only an occasional street light, the stars in the night sky are stunning. After all these years of living there I am still amazed by the beauty of the night sky and during the day, the other natural beauty of the area.

I am very familiar with a project similar to this in Stonington called Stone Ridge and the changes it will cause. It is a large development for active seniors that was built on the old Perkins Farm not far from I-95. Before the development the farmland there was rural and peaceful. Now, when you drive by there, no matter the time of day, you see these large condo units all lit up with the trees removed and no animals around. No matter the time of day they cannot be missed. At night you see the lights from the development long before you can see the units. There is no escaping the changes.

I am convinced this project would permanently destroy the rural nature of this area because of all of the clearing, paving and lighting that would be part of the development. It would become another Stone Ridge except much farther from any business development and impacting many times more residents.

12/02/08 –

In addition to the remarks above that I gave at the 12/01/078 hearing I would like to clarify for the record a couple of closing statements made by Mr. Abele, the developer that were in error.

- He stated that the Backus Hospital was 1.2 miles away from the project and why shouldn't seniors be able to live in a rural area and be close to the hospital. From the point of his proposed development it is 2.5 miles to the beginning of Scotland RD. The hospital is another .5 miles from there at 326 Washington St. This area, except for the last 0.20 miles is residential and rural. That is a point that I made in my presentation. This section in Norwich is not close to the business areas of Norwich at all. To introduce this intense of a development would completely change the rural nature of the area. These distances can easily be confirmed by using Mapquest and my address.

- He stated the speed limit is 30 MPH on Scotland Rd as a rebuttal to those who talked about the winding narrow roads in the vicinity of the project. For the lower half of Scotland Rd, the more residential area, the street is wide and the speed limit is 30. From the split of Scotland Rd and Hansen Rd to the end of Scotland Rd the limit is 25. The proposed development is toward the northerly end of this strip between these two streets. That is the very rural part of the street and also the narrow winding part that was pointed out by many last night. I believe that 25 is also the speed limit on Hansen Rd.

Thank you again to you and the committee for giving us the opportunity to tell our side of the story. I trust that the committee will restore the 'Rural' designation to this area.

Sincerely,

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