

TESTIMONIAL

Laurie Burstein

*STATE BONDING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 5, 2009, 11 A.M.*

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 1D

- HELLO, I AM LAURIE BURNSTEIN, MEMBER ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT'S, BOARD OF SELECTMEN.
- I AM HERE TODAY REPRESENTING MY COLLEAGUES ON THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN IN SUPPORT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW YMCA IN ELLINGTON THAT WILL SERVE OUR RESIDENTS AND THOSE IN OUR NEIGHBORING TOWNS OF:
 - SOUTH WINDSOR,
 - EAST WINDSOR,
 - VERNON,
 - SOMERS,
 - TOLLAND,
 - AND STAFFORD.
- OVER THE PAST DECADE, EASTERN CONNECTICUT HAS EXPERIENCED A RAPID GROWTH IN POPULATION. THIS MEANS THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE GROWN TREMENDOUSLY.
- IN ADDITION, ELLINGTON CONDUCTED A TOWN-WIDE "NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY" IN NOVEMBER OF 2005, AND THE COMMUNITY EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH, FAMILIES AND THE ELDERLY THAT WOULD ENHANCE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE THAT ONLY A COMMUNITY CENTER COULD PROVIDE.
- THEY ALSO GREATLY DESIRED A YEAR-ROUND SWIMMING FACILITY WHERE CHILDEN AND ADULTS LEARN TO SWIM AND EXERCISE AS PART OF AN OVERALL HEALTHLY LIFESTYLE.
- I PERSONALLY KNOW OF ELDERLY FOLKS IN OUR TOWN WHO FEEL ISOLATED AND ALONE, ESPECIALLY DURING THE WINTER MONTHS. THEY NEED SOCIALIZATION AND EXERCISE TO COMBAT DEPRESSION AND HEALTH-RELATED ILLNESSES. THE YMCA WILL BE A BEACON FOR THEM.

- THE YMCA WILL ALSO ADDRESS GROWING NEEDS OF FAMILIES AT RISK BY PROVIDING QUALITY, LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT THE YMCA IS KNOWN FOR, INCLUDING:
 - BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE;
 - PRE-SCHOOL;
 - AND TEEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

- LASTLY, IN THIS ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, WHERE EASTERN CONNECTICUT HAS BEEN SUFFERING NUMEROUS JOB LOSSES, THE NEW YMCA WILL EMPLOY APPROXIMATELY 150 TRADES PEOPLE WITH 75 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME PROFESSIONALS ULTIMATELY EMPLOYED IN THE NEW FACILITY.

- THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY. I DEEPLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PROJECT FOR EASTERN CONNECTICUT.