

My name is Elizabeth Smith, I live at 40 Chapman Lane, Gales Ferry, Lead Use Department. My home is located half-way up the southwest side of Mt. Decatur in a valley between two large cliffs. Our land was gifted from my husband's family and has been in their family for generations.

First, thank you all for your service to our beautiful town.

I concur with the prior speakers and their points and concerns regarding denial of this application.

I'd like to start by discussing **wells**:

My well is 400 feet deep and is my only source of water. While the town water pipes run across the front of my property, I cannot connect my home to them due to the ledge and my underground wires. Any damage or contamination to my well, and others who may be affected by this proposal, is unacceptable. It would leave residents of this town without safe drinking water.

As mentioned by another speaker, the State of Connecticut, DEEP, states that there is concern for possible negative impacts to the quality and quantity of water in neighboring drinking wells, as well as other environmental factors such as erosion, sedimentation, and decreased surface water quality conditions as a result of blasting operations.

I have researched, and heard experts testify here, that shock and vibration from blasting can damage the casing of the wells, cause fissures in the rock which can contaminate the aquifer with radon, arsenic, and/or uranium; decrease the flow of water from my well and can cause turbidity in the water making it unusable.

Additionally heavy rain will wash dust, including silica dust, off the rock face where it could seep into the ground water or wash into the River effecting the aquafer and the river environment.

These problems relate to Planning and Zoning Regulations, 9.2.C.4 and 11.3.4.F.

## **FOUNDATIONS:**

The DEEP document also considers issues relating to the blasting activities, “these may include the potential for structural damage to neighboring properties due to air blasts and vibrations, and/or noise and dust control. These can cause cracked foundations or separated walls.” This would likely release radon into basements, lower property values and potentially destabilize our homes.

Blasting can also cause cracks in the drywall or mortar joints, basement damage, damage to masonry or retaining walls, water leaks in the foundation, and ceiling fissures.

These problems relate to Planning and Zoning Regulations, 8.6.D, 9.1 and 11.3.4.D.

### **ROCK FALL:**

The north side of my property is all cliff, extending from the Chapman Lane all the way past my property line. I am concerned that the vibration or shock waves from the next 7-10 years of blasting could cause large boulders to be dislodged and damage my house or block my driveway. There are similar rock problems further down Chapman Lane.

Regulations 9.1, 9.2.C.1 and 11.3.4.D

### **Traffic:**

There has been much discussion about truck traffic, and I agree that the stop light at the driveway to the GFI property will help with that intersection. But I have not heard much about the impact those large, heavy trucks will have as they go south into the middle of Gales Ferry.

In less than ½ mile, from Whalehead Road to Christy Hill Road, there are at least 20 entrances or exits onto Route 12, and three stoplights. I worry that one of these trucks will not be able to stop quickly enough to avoid a collision when someone slows or stops ahead of them. Living on Chapman Lane, I can testify to the difficulty one can have trying to turn left (and sometimes right) onto Route 12. The vehicles can be backed up most of the way up the hill. This is a heavily used intersection not just due to the 50 or so homes there, but also the Church, Day Care, Paving Business, Henny Penny and Marina Traffic all on Chapman Lane. I fear the addition of these trucks will make it even more difficult to exit or enter Chapman Lane.

**Water usage:**

I understand that GFI plans to use up to 50,000 gallons of water per day, taken from the Thames River then flushed or run off back into the river. What impact will this have on the life of this important water way. The turbidity, sedimentation and hazardous dust caused by the water being flushed back into the river will impact the oyster and scallop beds there, as well as the fish that currently thrive in the river, including the federally and state protected Snubnose Sturgeon. This runoff will work its way both up and down the Thames (due to tides) and will eventually end up in the Long Island Sound and the head of the river in Norwich.

Besides the damage to the Thames River, this project will have a huge impact on the area due to the removal of a large portion of Mount Decatur. This will affect the wildlife, destroy the beauty of the landscape and impact an historical site from the War of 1812.

*The holding onto 8 acres of the historical site unless approval is received feels as if GFI is holding our history hostage. If they care about Regulations: the preservation of history, why not donate the full area regardless of the outcome of the application.*

As I looked through the Ledyard Planning and Zoning Regulations, there were several things that stood out to me. I will read only the relevant parts.

According to the Ledyard Planning and Zoning Regulations, the purpose of these regulations are to:

- secure safety from fire, panic, flood and other dangers;
- promote health and the general welfare;
- protect the state's historic, tribal, cultural and environmental resources
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Chapter 6, part A, The Gales Ferry Development District's Purpose is:

To encourage pedestrian-friendly commercial development of unified design and scale to create a higher density in Gales Ferry Village. These regulations are intended to attract and encourage family activities.

In addition to the stated purpose, the district is intended to:

Encourage a blend of low intensity commercial, civic, and residential land uses.

A quarry doesn't work with any of these stated purposes.

In Chapter 8, Excavation – Filling or removal of soil, gravel and stone, Part D states the purpose of these regulations is to insure the following:

Landscape is not needlessly marred during and after operations.

I believe removing 40 acres of Mt. Decatur will certainly mar the landscape.

...will not be a source of dust, pollution and/or siltation; There will be Silica dust in the air and washed into the river

...will not be generally characterized by unsightliness ... which would have a deteriorating influence on nearby property values.

Several of our previous speakers have shown the impact this will have on our property values, the losses have already begun.

Chapter 8.8C states: The sale, destination, or ultimate use of the removed topsoil, sand, gravel, clay, stone, or other materials does not determine whether a Zoning Permit or Special Permit is required.

Chapter 9, it states that: The Site Design Requirements are intended to protect public health, safety, welfare, property values, and natural

resources; to encourage site design and development that is efficient, effective and in keeping with the general architecture, rhythm, aesthetics, and existing development pattern/layout in the immediate neighborhood.

This proposal does not comply with any of that!

**Section 3.8 Prohibited Uses** bans Short Term Rentals (aka AirB&B, etc.). I recall from one of the P & Z meeting a while back that these were not desired by the citizens of Ledyard due to the noise and traffic/parking problems that may happen.

Also banned are **Shipping Containers**. These are not a structure (such as a shed) and are considered unsightly.

Both of these are far less offensive compared to the operation being proposed by GFI for the former Dow Chemical property on Mount Decatur.

I remember when the Lantern Hill Silica mine was closed, decades ago, due to the health hazards of silica,. This application will have a similar effect on the population and natural resources of our town.

This proposal does not comply with so many of our regulations, I'm sure you are familiar with them all.

There have been a record number of community members attending these meetings, submitting exhibits and reaching out to the commission asking you to oppose this project. It is clear that this development does not fit into this location, does not comply with the Planning & Zoning Regulations, and is not wanted by the citizens of Gales Ferry. I feel that with 165 acres of land, there are better locations on the property to build warehouses or storage areas.

**For these reasons, this application should be DENIED.**