

August 8, 2026

To: Charman and members: AD HOC Committee to Evaluate Separation of Planning and Zoning

From: Karen Parkinson. 55 Rose Hill Road, Ledyard. 50 year resident of Ledyard, Retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, business owner, and community volunteer (currently Chair, Ledyard Historic District Commission and President Tri Town Trail Association.

Yes, I am strongly supporting the separation of Planning and Zoning Functions in order to have dedicated thinkers on planning and dedicated regulators on zoning. These are definitely two distinct separate kinds of folks; it is truly unrealistic to expect the same person to function in both capacities. Planning requires “out-of-the-box” “what if” non-linear thinking. Whereas zoning requires folks who are most comfortable “in the box” “compliance to rules and regulations”....linear thinkers.

I am not being critical here, just observing. Since the combination of functions in 2012, the composition of the Planning and Zoning Commission has become increasingly composed of linear thinkers. And the Agenda is full of “zoning”. Items. Looking back, the Commission re-wrote most of the zoning regulations; not much of any time in thinking about a “vision” of Ledyard’s future.

AT POINT: The POCD should be written by Planning Commission with the assistance of a Citizens Action Group. Ledyard should have a 50 year vision with the POCD the ten year plan to get there. Consultants are not the answer; use that money for updating the 2012 Gales Ferry Plan for the shopping area. And then making it happen.

At a recent Planning and Zoning meeting, I was making a public Comment and I directly asked each member to “put their planning hat on”,,,,,then seeing the replied body language, I realized they had none to put on! Their job was zoning regulation.

My concern is that some members of this AD HOC committee have already made up their minds to maintain the status quo, because of resistance to change or the concept of long range visionary thinking.

In closing, I would like to “cheer on” Ledyard. We have some great thinkers and doers, just waiting to be asked to help with planning. Lets get back our “Village Design Districts!” Maybe solicit “service industries” such as an out-patient medical group? Dental group? A 24-hour vet hospital? A 55+ community? Exercise gyms? All the services needed by the thousands of new families moving into the large apartment complexes in Groton. Ledyard can supply services, not housing! Who is paying attention to the Mohegan Riverwalk and how that will impact Ledyard? How can PLANNING take advantage?

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