

Roxanne Maher

From: Christopher LaCasse <christopher.j.lacasse@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2024 2:47 PM
To: Elizabeth Burdick
Cc: Town Council Group
Subject: Fwd: Letter Opposing five-story 320-unit apartment complex

Some people who received this message don't often get email from christopher.j.lacasse@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good afternoon,

My name is Dr. Christopher La Casse, and I reside at 10 Mull Berry Dr. I am also a member of the Gales Ferry District. One of our objectives is to help protect the character of Ledyard and Gales Ferry Village and the quality of life from over-development that will be detrimental to our town and our children.

As some of you know, an application is pending before the Wetlands Commission for a five-story 320-unit apartment complex on the 19-acre parcel at 19, 29, and 39 Military Highway, also known as the Sweet Hill Farm.

The application is expected to be approved by the Wetlands Commission in September. The application will then be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The existing zoning regulations will allow the proposed 19-acre, 320-unit, five-story apartment complex by right, without a public hearing. This massive complex would be larger than the 14-acre 304-unit Triton Square four and five-story apartment complex being finished just west of the Super 8 motel on Rt 12 in Groton.

The complex would not be in character with Ledyard or the Gales Ferry Village. It would conflict with the approved Ledyard Plan of Conservation and Development. Such a high-density massive development will have unintended consequences, such as a need for school expansion, more teachers, increased school bus transportation costs, and more police and social services. It is wrong for our town.

As an educator with three young children, I have frequently voiced my concern to the GFS/JWL principal about the **already unacceptable** student-to-teacher ratio in our

schools. Affluent school districts are successful in large part because their classroom sizes are very small, enabling more one-on-one time and student engagement, which is the cornerstone of a quality education. An influx of more people in this town would result in either a significantly increased school budget to hire ten or more teachers OR a precipitous decline in what was once a desirable school system. When the reputations of school systems decline, families with high-achieving children tend to relocate or avoid settling in those areas.

However, the 19-acre property would be perfect for a park. It would be ideal for hosting the annual Regatta Races, possibly the Ledyard Town Fair, and other significant outdoor public events. It would also be perfect for a Ledyard Youth Center, sports fields, a community pool, and civic activities.

Under Chapter 152 §9-369 of the Connecticut General Statutes, you have the right to place any question you wish on a ballot. I urge that you amend the agenda this evening and discuss the merits of putting the question on the November 5 ballot to determine if Ledyard residents would support the town acquiring the 19-acre parcel as a public park for future generations. Placing the question directly on the ballot would do no harm and would be necessary to justify the expenditure and bonding required to purchase the property. We are willing to help prepare the question for the ballot.

Because there are statutory lead time requirements for placing questions on the ballot, you should make the decision this evening. By amending the agenda and discussing this matter this evening, and if you are in favor of asking the question on the November 7 ballot, your decision would help to justify a moratorium by the Planning and Zoning Commission on receiving multifamily applications in the Gales Ferry Development District until after November 5.

Please - as a minimum - amend your agenda and discuss the idea this evening. It is important.

Thank you for considering this proposal. It is a significant opportunity that will otherwise be lost.

Thank you.

Christopher La Casse, PhD

