

August 25, 2022

To Planning and Zoning commission, Chairman Tony Capon

Cc: Juliet Hodge, Town Planner

From: Karen Parkinson, 55 Rose Hill Rd, Ledyard

RE: public comments/P&Z Meeting August 25. 2022

Good Evening, I would like to add my thoughts and comments to this process of zoning regulation changes/revision.

I have listened to and appreciate Mr. Treaster's comments and opinions. His tedious reviews and edits are noteworthy. However, I have a different opinion of what Ledyard, as a community, wants going forward.

Our family has lived in Ledyard since 1970 (except for four years Navy stationed in S.C and Guam) We owned a home on Eagle Ridge, then purchased Rose Hill Farm in 1978. Our three children and one grandson graduated from Ledyard High School and now a great grandson is a student at Gallup Hill. I was employed as Ledyard's first Social Service Director and established the Social Service Board. I served one term as a Town Councilor. I was appointed to and served on the initial Tri Town Trail Committee and am the current President of the Tri town Trail Association.

I have seen many changes in Ledyard and Gales Ferry over these 50 years. Including the slow fade of Gales Ferry after Vality closed. And can recall how unattractive Ledyard Center used to be, with the Lou's Garage, a small grocery store and small Town Hall. In those years Navy folks were attracted to Ledyard and East Lyme for the school systems, and not much else. And yes, Ledyard has maintained a reputable school system and a safe community to reside and "raise your kids," as that was our reason why we choose to remain in Ledyard.

But in the last ten or so years there has been a transformation occurring. Ledyard is no longer simply a bedroom community chosen for its school system. Ledyard Center is becoming a true "center" of town, totally transformed with more to come. Gales Ferry shopping area is expanding and with planned improvements. Schools are combined and upgraded. But more noticeably, community groups are evident. Ledyard Beautification Committee. Ledyard Farmers Market Committee. And social media has a great following, with many comments of helping one another and comments about "what a great community we live in!" The Tri Tn Trail finally became a reality with the first two miles built, with Town cooperation and a great team of volunteers. The Grand Opening theme was "built with community pride!

As an aside note, I had one very dedicated volunteer, who formerly lived in Ledyard, now in a neighboring community, thoughtfully commented that Ledyard now has a sense of "community" that he wished his current community had.

So how does this affect Planning and Zoning? Going forward how does Planning ensure whatever is designed works to ensure there is a way to connect the community and ensure services and amenities focus on connectivity. Folks want to be able to walk and bicycle safely in their own developmentcan we have a trail system that encircles each new development, so folks can walk the circumference of their development? Why should they have to drive to Preston Park to find a safe place to simply walk? Folks want to connect safely and is it not the charge of P&Z to provide for public safety? Can there be a plan to eventually connect these to a greater trail system? Can we ensure that any multiunit housing have a pathway to services, such as grocery store, where they could safely walk or use a scooter? And a trail/pathway around the perimeter for safe walking and connecting? Can we develop a pathway so our elderly housing occupants could safely walk or cycle to CVS and other GF shopping?

Approving accessory apartments is a great benefit to retaining our younger generation and allowing seniors to remain as well. It's an indication that Ledyard is a connected community concerned about all. As the Tri Town Trail continues its development to Bluff Point, the design will try to connect as much of the community as possible.

This is my opinion of what Ledyard, as a community, wants going forward.

Thank you