

Roxanne Maher

From: Naomi Rodriguez
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 10:28 PM
To: Deborah K; Town Council Group
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Fred Allyn, III
Subject: Re: Too many concerns
Attachments: Ledyard TC Letter 8.12.24.docx

Hello Ms. Edwards,

I have read your letter in its entirety and thank you for it. The Town Council appreciates letters from residents. I will have your letter put on the communications list for the August 14, 2024 Town Council meeting. Again, thank you for your letter.

Respectfully,

Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman
Ledyard Town Council

From: Deborah K <whistldyxc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 6:11 PM
To: Town Council Group <TownCouncil@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Too many concerns

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

Good afternoon Chairwoman Rodriguez and Council Members,
I have attached a letter of several concerns I have regarding activities taking place in our town. I know some may be out of your purview, but it is important for you to get a full picture of how so many of us are feeling in Gales Ferry and what we are talking about to one another. Thank you for reading the attached.

Regards,
Deborah Edwards
30 Bluff Road West

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Regards,
Deborah Edwards
30 Bluff Road West

From: Deborah Edwards

Gales Ferry

August 12, 2024

To: Town Council Group

towncouncil@ledyardct.org

Subject: Too many concerns

First – I want to thank all Councilors and Commission members for volunteering valuable time to serve our Town, truly and sincerely, it is appreciated. This is a trying time and you are receiving a lot of the pent up frustration of residents who have had their plans, lives and dreams upended these past two years. Thank you for listening and for reading the following.

- **Mayor** I will begin by saying I was shocked at the outburst of Mayor Allyn to a citizen during public comments at the July 24th meeting of the Town Council. I was further disappointed he refused to collect himself when Chairwoman Rodriguez requested order, blatantly telling her no. His actions were an embarrassment, completely unacceptable for the role he plays as Ledyard's leader. I'm pleased to hear he apologized to the Chair (at end of the meeting), and I hope he also issued an apology to the resident. If his actions bear any resemblance to his reasons for firing our previous Planner, I strongly urge that be pointed out to him.
- **Mtgs./Audio** How does a citizen learn and contribute to a process when they cannot hear? Residents attending 'virtually' kind of expect technical issues, but residents who attend in person have been complaining for months and months that we cannot hear the members, staff or presenters. The equipment is there, please put it to use. The advantage to attending in person is, we can observe demeanor and body language. Watching the staff, we see eyes roll and half smiles at each other when a citizen is speaking. Please be professional when representing our town.
- **Joanne Kelly/Schools** At the most recent P&Z meeting, which was very well attended, one citizen provided valuable information regarding cost vs benefit to taxpayers on proposed multi-family housing. She chose to be specific regarding the cost of educating a student and the current capacity of our schools. She was challenged by the Commission Chair, who concluded she and others were saying 'we don't want families with children'. I hope the resounding objection by attendees to his statement helped rectify his misunderstanding. I personally was

grateful to receive the data she provided, and the forewarning regarding future costs. Should we factor in possible expansion of our schools when considering some of these projects? I was also grateful to those who spoke about the provision of emergency services. Gales Ferry has a volunteer Fire Department, always fundraising and looking for volunteers. Will they be stretched too thin or will new residents be a possible fresh pool of volunteers? The points being voiced for consideration were balancing the usual outcry for increasing our tax base. It is called managing expectations. There is consensus that the tax base needs to be increased, but the balance needs to be weighed and considered, hence the points made. I heard many residents speak to the need for diverse housing, including multi-family. The objections are with regulation changes of 2022, crowding exceptionally high structures into a historic village, which is definitely out of character with our neighborhood. I heard no disagreement with multi-family housing of 2 – 3 stories in height, consistent with our original 'Gales Ferry Design District' that had been carefully crafted. That plan was not to encourage building "up".

- **Anonymity** I am surprised to learn that changes to our Zoning Regs can be requested through representation of "anonymous" parties, from ANYWHERE at anytime. This brings me to the recent comments at P&Z made by the lawyer for a current applicant in which he "schooled us" all about the financial investment made by a company when choosing to locate. The lawyer told us the company wants security and continuity in regulations. He actually went further by directly threatening litigation. I want to know why families who choose to live in Ledyard, also making a strong investment in their homes and neighborhoods, looking for security and continuity in regulations, can have that security and investment challenged by outside interests done anonymously? Be brave – if a business truly feels they will be an asset to a town and a good neighbor, then why the subterfuge? It's a two-way street and there are lawyers who can argue both sides. It's how they make their living.
- **RETROACTIVITY: 1.4 of Ledyard Zoning Regulations** states - Nothing herein contained shall require any change to approved Site Plans, or to the construction or designated use of a building for which a building permit has been issued and construction shall have commenced, based upon regulations in effect prior to the effective date of these regulations (or any amendment thereto) if the development work is completed according to such plans within the period specified by CGS §8-3(i) & CGS §8-3(j). "Work" for purposes of this

subsection, means all physical, public improvements required by the approved plan. The Commission can grant extensions as provided by law.

CGS §8-3(i) In the case of any site plan approved on or after October 1, 1984, except as provided in subsection (j) of this section, all work in connection with such site plan shall be completed within five years after the approval of the plan. The certificate of approval of such site plan shall state the date on which such five-year period expires. Failure to complete all work within such five-year period shall result in automatic expiration of the approval of such site plan, except in the case of any site plan approved on or after October 1, 1989, the zoning commission or other municipal agency or official approving such site plan may grant one or more extensions of the time to complete all or part of the work in connection with the site plan provided the total extension or extensions shall not exceed ten years from the date such site plan is approved. "Work" for purposes of this subsection means all physical improvements required by the approved plan.

CGS §8-3(j). In the case of any site plan for a project consisting of four hundred or more dwelling units approved on or after June 19, 1987, all work in connection with such site plan shall be completed within ten years after the approval of the plan. In the case of any commercial, industrial or retail project having an area equal to or greater than four hundred thousand square feet approved on or after October 1, 1988, the zoning commission or other municipal agency or official approving such site plan shall set a date for the completion of all work in connection with such site plan, which date shall be not less than five nor more than ten years from the date of approval of such site plan, provided such commission, agency or official approving such plan and setting a date for completion which is less than ten years from the date of approval may extend the date of completion for an additional period or periods, not to exceed ten years in the aggregate from the date of the original approval of such site plan. The certificate of approval of such site plan shall state the date on which such work shall be completed. Failure to complete all work within such period shall result in automatic expiration of the approval of such site plan. "Work" for purposes of this subsection means all physical improvements required by the approved plan.

What I am hearing at P&Z meetings is, once an application is submitted it's a "done deal" [*in relation to regulation changes*]. It doesn't sound like it to me. If an application (including site plan) is modified/revised after regulation changes, which regulations apply – old or new? What is the number or scope of modifications/revisions allowed before it morphs into a new application? None of the above Ledyard regulation states that an application is a "done deal" once submitted. If there is other text or another CT statute that our P&Z is relying upon, it should be specified.

- **Ethics** The creation of a “Code of Ethics” and formation of an Ethics Commission has been requested by several residents, many times. Our Town was urged/advised by the State of CT to do so years ago. They provided templates for use to assist in getting it accomplished. The process has been started and stopped more than once. Why? I am concerned that this is not being taken seriously, research is slow and meetings are cancelled. Work done previously should be expediting this process. Why is Ledyard dragging its’ feet on this when almost 90% of the towns in CT have done as requested? Please get this done, we are waiting.
- **Moratoriums 3.9 of Zoning Regulations** (regarding Moratoriums) is blank. Moratoriums were in place for Cannabis establishments and STRs, while regulations were created or updated under the previous Planner. It can be done. When asked, our current Planner voiced it takes time/work to draft and then have the Commission hear/approve. Numerous residents were requesting a moratorium on certain types of applications months ago, it could have been done by now. (An unintended benefit of a moratorium may have temporarily reduced the Land Use/Planning office workload, while they dealt with office relocation and staffing issues.)
- **Meetings** I opened with a comment about decorum (or lack of), and I’ll close with one as well. Through attendance at many various meetings over the past 2 years I have heard:
 - Can’t talk about it – an application is submitted.
 - Can’t talk about it – an application is expected.
 - Can’t talk about it – there is no application before us.
 - Can’t talk about it – fear of litigation.
 - Can’t talk about it – lawsuit is pending.
 - Can’t talk about it – settlement agreements.

We (literally) can’t hear about what’s going on in our town and you won’t talk about what’s going on. So.... frustration ensues and decorum gets lost.

Thank you in advance for consideration of these concerns. Please feel free to share with any parties who may be interested. I have intended it to be part of the public record.