

RECEIVED

EX#234

DEC 12 2024

Land Use Department

Hello neighbors. That includes the applicant – they too are our neighbors. A woman at the last public commentary thought of herself as the “new neighbor” having resided here two years ago. I have you beat – I moved my family into our home in late 2023. Next year I’ll finish a 20-year career with the Navy and have chosen Gales Ferry as the place to put down some roots.

I find it somewhat ironic that I was before this commission this time last year speaking on this same issue. I want to speak on behalf of my family – my wife Molly, a life-long New Englander, our 3 y/o daughter, Leah, and our 18 m/o son Rory.

I don’t believe I could add more well-researched objections to this application than has already been provided by those citizens that have stood behind this microphone. However, I’d like to comment on the subject of intent, good faith, and perception as it relates to this application.

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At its core, the underlying intent of local regulations and ordinances is to mitigate conflicts amongst neighbors. They are to promote peaceful coexistence within a community by establishing clear guidelines for acceptable behavior and providing a framework for resolving disputes when they arise. As it relates to this application, these rules exist to balance the interests of businesses, such as GFI, with the quality of life we have become accustomed to in this community. When evaluating applications, we must focus not just on compliance with the letter of the law but on adherence to its spirit.

A business’s intent should reflect an exchange of value—a fair give-and-take that supports economic growth while protecting the residents. When the process is manipulated, the balance shifts. Take, for instance, the applicant’s repeated withdrawal and resubmission of their proposal with minimal changes. This expunges previous testimony from the community, such as my own testimony last November. I have to ask: is there a metric by which an application is judged as being fundamentally the same as a previous iteration? Was the testimony of residents and experts that spoke on the applicant’s last submission not valuable enough to be included in this “new” application?

Furthermore, it is my opinion that the applicant has shown a lack of good faith in its attempt to label this proposal as a “major excavation” rather than what it is – a quarry. You can call a sapling a Christmas tree but I’m not gonna be putting presents under it for my kids. Similarly, you could put lipstick on a pig and call her Scarlett Johansson, but you’re not gonna convince me to buy her a drink and take her home at the end of the night. Likewise, no amount of deceptive wording or strategic loopholes can disguise what’s really

at stake here. Their tactics suggest a strategy of attrition, relying on technicalities and loopholes to wear down opposition. This is not the behavior of a neighbor acting in good faith.

I have to ask: what protections are there with respect to wasting the time of this commission, and that of the citizens that have conducted countless hours of research, unpaid, to present evidence that the applicant has been misleading? At what point does the town have the grounds to take legal action against the applicant for intentional misrepresentation? And how can we trust the applicant when their experts' testimony lacks good faith?

Unfortunately, it seems the applicant is treating our town as an obstacle rather than a neighbor and a partner. Any college-level business course will tell you that companies often build litigation risk into their business plans, weighing the cost of settlements and representation against profitability. This tactic prioritizes profit over people and in this instance, directly threatens our mental and physical health, and our quality of life.

What this means for us is that I have reasonable belief to think that GFI has already crunched the numbers on what we are worth and weighed that cost against their potential financial gains. I have to ask: What dollar value, "in lieu of taxes," would the town be willing to put on my kids?

And let's not ignore the ethical concerns here. The perception of undue influence – whether real or not – erodes trust. For instance, it's hard to ignore the conflict of interest that arises between the town and the applicant when GFI posts to their Facebook page of their efforts to "restore the historic Allyn House, once home to Ledyard's own Mayor Fred Allyn's family."

*Previous presenter in favor of GFI spoke of other historic restorations*

20:30

LTE 55



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Mentions



Gales Ferry Intermodal

Oct 3

We're working hard to restore the historic Allyn House, once home to Ledyard's own Mayor Fred Allyn's family.

This space will soon serve as a vibrant meeting venue for our community, filled with local charm and rich history. Even better? We're proud to have employed our talented local craftspeople for this restoration, celebrating the skills and dedication of our neighbors. 🛠️💙

Stay tuned for in-progress pics —together, we're not just building a space; we're strengthening our community!



I believe any legal team worth their salt would advise against any perceived relationship between government officials and private industry where a quid-pro-quo might exist. We need absolute confidence that decisions are made in the best interest of the community, not influenced by personal connections or other pressures.

A large part of why the planning & zoning commission exists is to make risk decisions. As we evaluate this application, we must apply fundamental risk management principles:

- Accept no unnecessary risk.
- Only accept risks where the benefits clearly outweigh the costs.

In this case, the benefits to the applicant are clear—they stand to profit. But what about the risks to our town? Increased traffic, reduced quality of life, health risks, and a weakened public trust in the town's ability to govern. I have to ask: are these risks we're willing to accept?

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In closing, I ask this commission to simply to treat the applicant as a neighbor and nothing more. Developers will come and go, but the fabric of our town – its people and its character – are what makes me want to raise my family here and call y'all neighbors.

Thank you for your time, your service to our town, and your thoughtful consideration of these concerns.

/Glenn Tainter

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