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Land Use Department

Some of you may have taken note on October 17 of the death of Claire Gaudiani. Ms. Gaudiani was the president of Connecticut College from 1988 to 2001. She took over leadership of the New London Development Corporation and became notorious for the role she played in convincing Pfizer to build a huge research center on Pequot Avenue in New London.

The New London City Council relinquished its development responsibilities to the New London Development Corporation and granted powers of eminent domain to that organization, which purchased nearly all the privately owned land on the peninsula and took what it could not purchase by eminent domain. A number of private property owners fought the move on the grounds that the city had no right to take private property and turn it over to a private developer; in 2005 the United States Supreme Court ruled against the homeowners in a 5 to 4 decision.

Many lives were essentially upended. People who thought that they were secure in their homes, and that there were laws and regulations which protected the security of their lives and their homes, were ultimately forced out of homes they loved. Ironically, a large portion of the affected area has still not been developed.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a local, and a classic, case of Might not making Right. Those original residents of the New London area that was affected by this land grab have never been, and can never be, adequately recompensed for the stress, the pain, and the heartbreak of learning that local laws and regulations can not be depended on to protect your right to live without interference in your own home if there are wealthy and powerful forces that stand to make a profit at your expense. Consider the current major evils in the world. There are plenty of examples, but consider that Putin has invaded Ukraine not because he has the

right to do so, but because he has the power. Consider the corporations purchasing apartment buildings and raising rents to levels unaffordable to the current tenants, thus turning them out of their homes. They do this not because it is the right thing to do, but because they have the might, which has not been limited by the tenants' local governments.

When I first began attending these meetings and heard the testimony of people who cited the protections supposedly put in place to keep people safe, and healthy, in their homes, I was amazed that this proposed project would even be considered. Many speakers testified to the many ways in which, if this scheme was approved, their lives would be made, first unhealthy, then unlivable. The people who support this project are not the people whose lives would be adversely affected. After an earlier meeting I had the pleasure of speaking with a Bozrah resident, who told me that there is a blasting and dredging project going on near her home and that that they are experiencing every single negative impact that we have been warned about by citizens who are fighting this project.

Might does not make Right. I do not trust the claims made by Cashman that technological protections will ameliorate the likely problems that will result from this blasting and dredging project. I sincerely hope that those of you who will be making a decision that will affect so many local residents will consider this at every stage in their decision-making process.

Thank you.

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