

November 20, 2024

Rebecca Soleyn/Dorothy Lewis & Family
48, 56 & 60 Chapman Lane
Gales Ferry CT 06335

Ledyard Planning and Zoning Commissioners
Liz Burdick, Ledyard Director Land Use and Planning
Ledyard, CT

Dear Commissioners and Ms. Burdick,

Our family has lived, farmed, built boats and businesses at the end of Chapman Lane for 100 years. We are currently operating a small vegetable and herb farm and have plans to increase our production, add livestock (goats &/or alpacas), as well as to produce value added products made from our produce via an onsite commercial kitchen. For over two years now, our plans to improve our property and expand our business have been delayed as we wait (and wait, and wait some more) for Cashman's apparently extra special permit application to snake its way slowly through our town zoning process. And since time is money, this process has cost us significantly. If Cashman's current application is approved, we will be unable to move forward with any of our plans to grow our business and improve our property as all of our land will be covered in toxic dust making it unsafe and useless as grazing or cropland. Any crops we grow will be unsafe for human consumption being covered in toxic and often invisible dust. Even the flowers we grow will be unsafe to smell (or sell) without concerns that each sniff of their aroma is also delivering a dose of invisible cancer causing dust. The value of our property will be decimated as it will no longer be fit for use as a farm and unattractive to residential buyers due to the noise, dust, vibration, and safety concerns of living directly adjacent to and less than 750 feet from an active quarrying operation. Imagine being unable to invest in and improve your family home and business because it is no longer a safe investment. Imagine that your property stands to lose essentially all of its value due to a new neighbor's business interests being put above your own, even when your family has lived on the property for 100 years, long before there was any industry there. Over the last century, our family have witnessed the growth and decline of industry on both abutting property (the site now known as Gales Ferry Intermodal) as well as

several industrial sites across the Thames River in Montville. In every case, the only people who benefitted from those industrial sites were the owners/operators of the industrial sites. And when they are done with the sites, they leave. And what they leave behind is a giant mess. While we understand that development of industrial sites is important to the local economy, it is also important to understand that Gales Ferry and Ledyard are residential communities with little infrastructure to support heavy industry. What infrastructure there is, is funded primarily by the taxes paid by its residents, not its industrial sites. The plans that Gales Ferry Intermodal has for development of the former Dow Chemical Site on Route 12 and especially the proposed blasting and processing of aggregate from Mount Decatur over a 10 year period will be extremely detrimental to our property, life, and business as well as those of our neighbors, many of whom have lived here for generations. For these reasons we ask you to deny the proposed special permit application and preserve the quality of life, property values, and health of us and our neighbors.

Quality of Life (zoning reg. 11.3.4.C, 11.3.4.E, 9.2.C.1, 9.2.C.3, 9.2.C.4)- 10 years of regular blasting, dust, noise, and vibration from machinery, boats, barges, and increased train traffic will certainly degrade our quality of life and already is! We are experiencing obnoxious low-frequency noise, vibration, and strong diesel exhaust fumes from the boats, their generators and other equipment at the pier. This occurs at all hours of the day and night making it difficult to sleep, causing headaches and anxiety. We often have our workday on the farm interrupted and have to come inside and close all windows due to the strong diesel fumes and exhaust from both boats and train traffic. We have never experienced the degree of noise, vibration or exhaust like what we are now experiencing since Cashman began operations at the former Dow site and our family has lived here for over 100 years. The proposed quarry operation will undoubtedly continue to dramatically degrade our quality of life and ability to enjoy our property in peace. I submit to this Commission that for this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Property Values (zoning reg. 11.3.4.D, 8.16.D)- Real estate located near active, long term quarrying and blasting operations have significantly decreased property values. Would any of you purchase a home less than 750 feet from a proposed or active quarry? Would you pay the same price for an identical piece of property directly adjacent to a quarry as you would the same property not next

to that operation? Or course you wouldn't. And you don't need an expert to tell you that! I submit to this Commission that for this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Health Risk (zoning reg. 11.3.4.C, 9.2.C.1)- Toxic dust from blasting and processing activities will leave the work areas just like it does at every other quarry. How will this dust affect the health of children playing outdoors at nearby schools and daycare centers? How will the dust affect the respiratory health of our seniors and others with existing health challenges? If this plan goes forward it will eliminate our ability to keep any animals on our farm as breathing in toxic blasting dust as well as grazing on plants covered with it is unhealthy for both the animals and farm workers. We also have concerns for the health of local pets and wild animals living in the area. Constant explosions are agitating, obnoxious, and more than unsettling even to humans who understand what is happening. But what effect will those explosions have on animals, both domesticated and wild, who have no idea what is occurring and will only feel terror and panic? For this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Risk to the Environment (zoning reg. 11.3.4.F, 9.2.C.1) - Many people have worked for many years to clean up the environmental consequences of industry along the Thames River. How can we make absolutely sure that the river and surrounding environment are not harmed by future development? What are Gales Ferry Intermodal's plans for cleaning up the existing polluted areas on the site? How can it be legal to disturb a contaminated site with 10 years of constant blasting, truck traffic, vibration from crushers, and the toxic runoff from at least 7000 gallons of water per day sprayed on top of the whole operation to "keep the dust down" all sourced from our municipal drinking water reservoirs? For this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Noise and Vibration (zoning reg. 11.3.4.C, 9.2.C.3, 9.2.C.4)- Heavy machinery, industry, and blasting create significant noise and vibration, including low frequency noise/vibration that is extremely annoying and also difficult to measure with traditional noise/vibration testing. We are already experiencing this low frequency noise/vibration from boats, barges, and generators at the GFI pier, as I stated earlier. How will the town of Ledyard monitor noise and vibration? We are also concerned with vibrations from blasting causing damage to our foundations as well as causing ledge/boulders to fall, potentially onto Chapman Lane

resulting in road obstruction, safety and property damage concerns. Who will be responsible if this happens? Our zoning regulations prohibit any vibrations from leaving the industrial site. GFI experts admitted that vibrations from blasting will leave the site. For this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Public Welfare and Safety (zoning reg. 11.3.4.B, 8.16.I)- Route 12 is mostly a 2 lane road. Will Route 12 be able to handle the increased number of large tractor trailer trucks which accelerate and brake very slowly? Cashman/GFI's solution to this significant problem is to lower the speed limit on Route 12 to 35 mph. Will the Gales Ferry Fire Department and nearby schools which are located very close to the GFI entrance be affected by potential traffic congestion? GFI's solution to this is to restrict the two existing Route 12 entrances to the schools and force all school traffic through the one remaining entrance on Route 214. This "solution" will undoubtedly cause major traffic congestion throughout the whole area of the route 12 and route 214 traffic junction. What about all the diesel exhaust fumes from trucks and heavy machinery and their effect on public health and the ability of nearby neighbors to enjoy their outdoor spaces? On our property, we are already experiencing a significant increase of diesel exhaust fumes from the GFI pier and increased train traffic and it is definitely affecting our ability to enjoy our outdoor space and potentially affecting our health. I don't want to imagine how much worse it will get if GFI is allowed to move forward with their plans. For this reason alone, this application must be denied.

Over the past two years, our community has been saddled with its own self defense. We have attended what has to be close to 100 hours of public hearings and zoning meetings. We have consulted with and paid for attorneys and experts. We have been publicly insulted in person and in the press, called NIMBYs, and told we are being selfish for valiantly trying to preserve our community and way of life instead of allowing a new neighbor's financial interests to be more important than our own health, safety, and property values. We have put in thousands of hours of our valuable personal time in the hope that we could each add something to our collective goal. And our community has grown closer in our united desire to preserve the beauty, safety, and future of our beloved little town. I know that you, the Commission, already know all of this because you have been right here with us the whole time. You have seen us stand up for our rights as citizens of the town of Ledyard as written in our zoning laws. Many people have said that they are empathetic to the position you have been put in,

having to make a decision about such a hotly debated issue and I agree. I would not want to be in your position and truly appreciate your service to the town, all in a volunteer capacity and without any direct benefit to yourselves. But I would say that this decision does not have to be a difficult one to make. It is clear to me, as a layperson, that what Cashman is proposing in this special permit application is not an allowed use according to our zoning regulations. Period. And that is easy to see.

I thank the Commission, the town staff, and the residents of our lovely little town for all of your time, hard work, fortitude, and dedication in service to Gales Ferry and Ledyard. Together we can protect this place we live and preserve it for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Soleyn & Dorothy Lewis & Family