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June 7, 2022

Planning and Zoning Commissioners
City of Shelton
54 Hill Street
Shelton, CT 06484

RECEIVED
JUN 7 2022
PLANNING & ZONING

Re: Application #22-04

Dear Planning and Zoning Commissioners,

I am writing to express my support for the text change of Schedule A, Line 10A regarding farm structures on farmland of 10 acres or more. I have lived in Shelton for more than 33 years and, as expected, have seen rapid and significant changes occurring during that time. Some of these changes have been for the better and some have not.

One of the changes that has occurred, not to the betterment of our community, is the loss of farmland. As the value of property for housing lots increases, it becomes increasingly difficult for farmers to resist the urge to sell their land to developers, especially if they are unable to make a living farming their land. It is the smaller farms in the area that face this problem the most.

I believe the text change could be one step toward the goal of preserving our farmland and farmers. It would allow small farm owners the same opportunity to earn a living as the larger farms do now. And it is in keeping with the myriad of farm stands/stores that currently exist in R-1/R-1A zones, such as:

- Laurel Glen Farm on Waverly Rd
- Fairview Tree Farm on Sawmill City Rd
- Pumpkinseed Hill on Beardsley Rd
- Jones Valley Farm on Walnut Tree Hill Rd
- Beardsley Cider Mill and Orchard on Leavenworth Rd
- White Hills Distillery on Leavenworth Rd
- Jones Homestead Farms on Walnut Tree Hill Rd
- Guy's Eco-Garden, Janelle's Flowers and Lavendercroft on Leavenworth Rd

Would not the applicant's proposal align with these existing businesses? Or perhaps it would legitimize these currently operating farm stands/stores by encompassing them in the new text changes?

The requested text change regarding the types of products sold encompasses exactly the type of products sold at the above-mentioned facilities. The fact that the applicant has inserted into the text change that 50% of the sales would be produced on their premises or from Shelton producers will just be a boon to our local economy. It definitely falls in line with the Farm-to-Table movement that is taking hold in our country and is very much in keeping with Shelton's rural and agricultural heritage.

While the issue at hand is to address the text change allowing farm stands in a greater capacity, I should like to specifically address some of the classic Not In My Back Yard objections that were expressed during the P&Z meeting of Wednesday, April 20, 2022. A potential property the residents of Vista at White Hills are concerned about and discussed at that meeting is on Wabuda Place. Of the thirteen residents who addressed the Commission, seven presented traffic as their main concern. According to

Map #4110, which is on file in the Town Clerk's office, the parcel, on Assessor's Map 152 Lot 52 is located approximately 1,200-1,500 feet from the first house in the Vistas at White Hills development. One must also travel up a hill and around a bend before encountering any house in the development.

Five of the residents who spoke live on either dead-end streets or on an interior lot. I hardly believe that additional traffic would affect any of those residents. As a matter of fact, the only reason to enter into the Vistas at White Hills would be if you lived in the area or were traveling through to the lower portion of Village Drive, as is the current situation. Anyone that would be patronizing an establishment at the potential location would enter and exit at the East Village/Wabuda intersection, which currently has a three way stop sign to control traffic. If anything, perhaps any additional traffic might encourage drivers to actually *stop* at the stop sign, as opposed to rolling through, which is a frequent occurrence now.

Another objection presented was the desire to not have a store next to their properties. I hardly think having twelve hundred plus feet between any farm building and their houses qualifies as "next to". And do these residents understand that perhaps there were many of us that were not too happy when Mr. Wabuda sold his bucolic farmland to Tolls Brothers to build a massive housing development, thus changing the character of **our** neighborhood forever?

It seems to me that the applicant is more than willing to work with the residents to allay their concerns. The addition of a twenty-foot greenway as a buffer is an excellent offer. There is already a substantial greenway present, with considerable mature evergreens and deciduous trees bordering on three sides the property in question. The existing orchard can also contribute to the buffer and perhaps the applicant might choose to renew such orchard's vitality.

In addition, the parcel currently borders quite a bit of open space, both city owned and Shelton Land Conservation Trust owned. Keeping these 11.36 acres as farm land/open space and not housing will fall in line with Mayor Lauretti's wishes. As quoted in the March 12, 2022 edition of the Shelton Herald, the Mayor states "It is important to keep a balance between residential development and open space."

For the above stated reasons, I respectfully request the Commissioners to vote "Aye" on this application, and give our small farm owners the chance to succeed. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lang
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