

July 12, 2021

Vern Carlson
Chairman, Planning and Zoning Commission
18 Church Street,
North Haven, CT. 06473

Re: PZC application P20-38S
Slate Upper School
1500 Ridge Road
North Haven, CT

Dear Chairman Carlson, and the Planning and Zoning Commission,

As a resident in the area of this proposed development, I would like to offer my review comments in opposition to the Planning and Zoning Commission application #P20-38S.

My qualifications for providing these comments are as follows:

- I am a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Connecticut.
- I am currently holding the position of a municipal Town Engineer.
- I have over 37 years of experience reviewing and working on local land use developments and projects, 23 years of which were for the Town of North Haven as Town Engineer.

Unfortunately, I have a commitment this evening, and won't be able to attend the continued hearing on the above referenced application. Accordingly, please read the following comments into your record and consider them in your deliberations.

Noting that there has been testimony and submissions of professional review comments relative to drainage, traffic, and other technical issues in opposition to this application that I agree with and support on a technical level, I do not want to provide just more of the same comments. I do however wish to address a few items that I see as key issues that you should consider.

A main issue with this application is the proposed use within a residential zone. My experience with this type of application is that there is a tendency to view a special use as something that is common and generally acceptable. Why else is it potentially allowed per regulations? However, this alternate use (a specific type of private school in this case) and respective site development should be evaluated very carefully for its determination of need. Making a "Determination of Need". That's your main responsibility.

Vern Carlson
Chairman, Planning and Zoning Commission
7-12-21

In order to make a determination of need, you first should think back to when the regulations were written, and why the allowance of schools within residential zones was allowed in the first place. Back then, most families only had one working parent, one car, and limited resources. Schools had to be located so that students could walk to school, and parents could have easy access. Additionally, school grounds provided other vital resources for the surrounding neighborhoods, such as ball fields, play grounds, and open space. However, in today's world, there no longer is a vital need for encroachment into residential zones to provide for local easy access, or certainly for the specific and specialized type of use and access specific to the proposed development of a high school. In fact, the proposed use could and should be more appropriately located in a transitional zone where the access and surrounding uses, infrastructure, and environment would be more suitable. Just look at the Town's public high school and where it is located.

This is why we have zoning regulations, and why this type of proposal requires public involvement. This application is not about the need for educational programs, or popularity of this specific school. That is not the question. The question is...Is this an appropriate location? And is there a specific need that the school be located at 5100 Ridge Road?

My other main concern is that the roadway infrastructure is not suitable for supporting a school facility. The steep grade and resultant poor stopping distance within Ridge Road, and the inadequate sight distance for the Ridge Road/Mount Carmel Avenue intersection are conditions that cannot be addressed without major roadway reconstruction that would need to extend beyond existing Rights of Way.

Something I've noticed over the years is that the guidelines that are provided in the State Traffic Manual are typically used as minimum standards. An engineering/traffic evaluation is also supposed to incorporate professional judgement to include adjustment to guideline distances and dimensions (standards). In this case, sight lines and stopping distances should be lengthened beyond the aforementioned guidelines to compensate for the existing steep profile grades, young age of many drivers (major access route for college students), and non-compliant existing roadway conditions. The proposed application does not adequately address these issues.

I hope that you consider these factors in your deliberations and reach the conclusion, as I have, that this this application should be denied.

Very Truly Yours,



Scott H. Schatzlein, P.E.
19 Lancelot Drive
North Haven, CT 06473

cc: Alan Fredricksen, Land Use Administrator

From: Sinard, John
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 3:31 PM
To: 'John Sinard' <sinardj@comcast.net>
Subject: Town of North Haven PZC meeting June 15



Hello Mr. Parese.

I understand that the Town of North Haven's planning and zoning commission will be holding a meeting on June 15, at which the proposal for the Slate Upper School will be discussed. Unfortunately, I will be out of town that day, and busy at the time of the Commission hearing so unable to join even remotely. However, I would like my voice to be heard, if possible. I understand that you will be present for the meeting and would be grateful if you were willing to read the following statement into the record on my behalf. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks.

John Sinard

Good evening. My name is John Sinard, and I live at 4421 Outer Ridge Road, just about 900 feet down the road from the proposed site for the Slate Upper School. I oppose the application for building the Slate Upper School at 5100 Ridge Road.

From conversations with some of my neighbors, and from visiting the Town of North Haven web site, I learned that the town adopted a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) on July 24, 2017. It became effective on September 1, 2017. Ironically, this plan was adopted during the same time that the PZC hearings for the Slate Lower School on Mansfield Road were being held. This Commission used taxpayer dollars to enlist the services of the firm of Milone and MacBroom to create this plan following an in depth process which involved data collection and analysis, a series of reports to this Commission, and community outreach in the form of a public workshop and community survey. This Commission formally endorsed this Plan of Conservation and Development, but is now considering a proposal, prepared by the same firm which prepared the POCD, which is in direct contravention to many of the recommendations in the Town's adopted plan.

Among the many POCD recommendations that this proposal ignores are:

- Managing sewer expansion areas - the area south of Mt. Carmel Avenue is specifically identified as a sewer avoidance area. Development in this area is recommended to be limited in order to preserve the rural and pastoral nature of the area, which is also slated for future scenic road status.
- Reducing the adverse impact of vehicular traffic in specific areas including Blue Hills Road, Mount Carmel Avenue, and Outer Ridge Road.
- Protecting scenic roads that contribute to the Town's character.
- Enhancing the safety and smooth flow of traffic in residential areas.
- Studying adoption of a Scenic Road ordinance to protect views along roadways that contribute to the Town's character, such as Outer Ridge Road and Kings Highway.
- Protecting sensitive habitats and natural resources.
- Reducing storm water impacts of new developments through land use regulations.
- Protecting high-quality wetlands and their ecosystems while encouraging appropriate use.
- Avoiding significant adverse impacts on water quality and continue to protect water quality by preserving watercourses, wetlands, and aquifers.

This is a very special part of North Haven. It is why I fell in love with the area and moved here over 25 years ago. After using taxpayer money to develop comprehensive recommendations for the preservation and improvement of the Town of North Haven, and adopting those recommendations, it would indeed be a sign of poor leadership, not to mention a waste of taxpayer money, for this Commission to then allow an application which is in direct conflict with these recommendations. On behalf of everyone who cherishes the very special character of this part of North Haven, please deny this application and don't let the applicant come back with another attempt to desecrate our town for their own purposes. Thank you for your time.