

Part of what we do

In response to Marsha Kipperman's letter to the editor ("You're seriously protesting this?" Aug. 1), I'd like to set the record straight about what the Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition actually objected to the sign that All Star is proposing. The fact is that none of us complained about the bowling pin and ball, and neither my co-founder, Phil Barbato, nor I took issue with the one foot extra in height. What we did object to was a sign that is three times the allowable size because the applicant wants it seemingly as a result of his own decisions.

The sign code was passed for a reason, and that was to preserve the rural aesthetics of the town — and for safety. If All Star simply would have put, or would now replace, the signage on the building to reflect that it's a bowling alley, then that would probably eliminate the "need" for a variance.

No one is saying there aren't bigger issues in town. The RNPC regularly speaks out on those, too: issues like the overdevelopment of Wading River, a proposed senior community on Mill Road in Riverhead, and the redevelopment of EPCAL. Just because bigger issues exist, that doesn't mean we must all remain silent on other issues, especially when there's a public hearing. So when several residents who spoke up in the first All Star hearing told us they couldn't attend the second one, we went down to Town Hall to read one of their letters and represent them, because that's what the RNPC is all about.

It may not rise to the level of clear cutting dozens of acres unnecessarily — something we would have opposed had we known about it — but if the sign code is consistently subverted, then that will contribute to Riverhead looking more and more like the rest of the island. Of course we realize that a lot of damage has already been done, but many of us look around and still see a Riverhead that remains largely rural and we think there's hope that we can still retain what makes this place so special. But only if we speak up and act now.

Dominique Mendez

president, Riverhead Neighborhood
Preservation Coalition