

Copy of comments addressed to the Riverhead Planning Board on July 21, 2011, regarding the Knightland Project proposed for Wading River.

Submitted to Riverhead Planning Board on July 21.

First, I must state that we (the RNPC) still do not believe that this board should continue to review this site plan because:

- a. It does not conform to the intent of the zone (“to allow for the development of small clusters of shops, including eating and drinking establishments and professional offices, geared primarily toward providing daily services to residents in the adjacent residential areas”) and hence it does not conform to the zoning
- b. SEQRA requires that you do not segment the review of the four proposals in this 2-mile stretch, but that you review them cumulatively
- c. The Town should impose a moratorium on all plans in the Rte 25A corridor study area, which should include this property — a property that might be recommended for a zone change

Still, since this board is discussing this project today, I feel compelled to bring to your attention the numerous problems I, speaking on behalf of the RNPC, see with this particular site plan.

1. The comprehensive plan recommends a 250- to 500-foot greenery buffer be maintained on rural corridors and that visual quality on Sound Avenue be regulated carefully, a recommendation the Planning Board required a business to meet in 2006. The setback on the Knightland site plan is only 30 feet: 220 feet short from that minimum. That is woefully inadequate and we ask this board to require an exponentially larger setback. By increasing the setback or buffer area on Sound, one would have to eliminate at least the two back rows of buildings facing Sound Avenue. That would go far to addressing the next issue.
2. The scale of this plan is entirely too big for this recently combined parcel. The number and size of these stores is excessive and, combined with the configuration of the plan, clearly take it from the realm of a small cluster of stores to serve the daily needs of adjacent residents to a shopping destination geared towards tourists and other non-locals that would change the face of Wading River. The scale of this mall would also contribute to the amount of traffic it will create, which leads to the next issue. Thus we ask that if some version of this plan is approved, that it be significantly scaled down in terms of building and parking lot square footage.
3. The entrances on Sound, a delivery truck entrance approximately 275 ft from the light and a main entrance a few feet west of Fairway Drive and multiple entrances to Ramblewood, would make an already congested area nearly impassible; pose a major safety issue for drivers, pedestrians and bikers; and create a significant hardship for the nearby residents. Thus we suggest that this board insists the applicant redesign the plan and eliminate both Sound Avenue entrances.
4. The traffic study that was done for the Knightland and Central Square projects was conducted in early February and, according to the Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning & Policy Commission in a letter dated July 13, the study “does not appear to consider potential traffic volumes and impacts based on expected traffic

during the peak fall season when traffic delays are at their highest level. The study also fails to evaluate the potential adverse traffic impacts at study intersections during the summer season...". In light of what seems a very reasonable analysis, we must request that a second study be conducted, during the peak summer and fall seasons. I also strongly suggest that as long as the Great Rock site plan is being considered, that it be included in the new traffic study as the traffic from the golf course flows on and off of Sound almost directly across from the Sound Ave entrance to Knightland and thus clearly presents a significant cumulative impact.

5. The structure that is now called a 'restaurant' on the site plan is clearly not a restaurant but is instead a food court. I know this because (a) a restaurants would not be located 300 feet from the nearest parking space but a food court might, (b) it's almost unimaginable that a single restaurant would have an 875 sf bathroom (a third of the size of the proposed dining room), but 875 sf is a reasonable size for a rest area at a food court at a mall, and (c) the developer himself told this board this would be a food court in an open meeting on November 4, 2010. This property is not zoned for a food court and I am compelled to point out, based on this board's direction to the applicant during that November meeting, that merely calling it by another name does not change what we can all see from the site plan – that the westernmost building is a food court with a comfort area. We ask that you require this plan to be redesigned without a food court and instead, if the applicant so chooses, with a building that is clearly recognizable as a true restaurant that is close to parking. I also implore that you include a covenant that specifically prohibits a food court, describes it, and that details the consequences of attempting to disregard the covenant.
6. The applicant also indicated on November 4 that this project includes a tourist information center, though it is also not called out as such on the site plan. We ask this board to also address the tourist information issue in the covenants, in the same fashion as the food court is addressed.

Again, I must restate that we do not believe that this site plan should be continued to be reviewed by this board due to the inconsistency with zoning and because this constitutes segmentation that violates SEQRA. That being said, there are so many issues with this site plan that it appears that the applicant should be required to significantly redesign and downsize it, if it were to go forward.

Thank you for your time.

I would like to pass you a copy of these comments so that you might review them and consider acting on them.



Dominique Mendez
President, Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition

CC: Riverhead Town Clerk for distribution to Riverhead Town Board