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Good Evening.

George Bernard Shaw once said that “Democracy is a device that insures that we shall be governed no better than we deserve”.

So what do we deserve for economic development?

Much of what we want and don't want for future economic development was clearly articulated in the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development, in the 2008 Town of Simsbury Survey and the recent Town Center Charrette which also touched on other areas of town. A main conclusion was that residents want to preserve the character of our community.

These are important as our town was named as the 57<sup>th</sup> best place to live in the 2009 CNN Money.com survey and was named to the National Trust's Top 12 Distinctive Destinations for 2010.

Last Fall Simsbury had a great experience with the Town Center Charrette. We have seen the excellent draft report and recently received the first draft of the zoning regulations from the Charrette consultant.

However, without waiting for the draft mixed use regulations from the Charrette, the Zoning Commission under the leadership of mostly Republican commissioners is plowing forward with adoption of a Planned Area Development or PAD mixed use regulation of their own.

Why is the Zoning Commission rushing so fast? Why are the mostly Republican commissioners pushing so hard for this?

Several people I know have heard a rumor that the owner of the Southern Gateway property may be interested in building a development of mid-sized retail stores. Stores similar in size to the Kohls and Dicks in Canton. Will this be the Mini River Oaks?

Is the Zoning Commission rushing to develop this PAD amendment for this purpose?

Four members of this past summer's PAD subcommittee wrote a minority report listing problems in the PAD draft language. The biggest problem was the lack of specificity and metrics in the draft. It does not reference the Plan of Conservation and Development. The draft is very vague in how it's written and not specific enough for zoning regulations. It is the language that law suits are made from.

The Zoning Commission has long said that Developers, Property Owners, and Residents deserve regulations that are understandable and predictable... this PAD draft is neither.

Let me switch briefly to politics.

We all know this is a busy election year. One active campaign is for the US House for Connecticut's Fifth District where there are eight candidates - six Republicans, one Independent, and one incumbent Democrat.

One of the Republican candidates happens to be Mr. Mark Greenberg of Goshen. The same Mark Greenberg who owns the Southern Gateway CL&P property in Simsbury and who engaged Konover Development to try and build River Oaks.

To me, it seems pretty early in the campaign cycle to pick a preferred candidate among the 6 political newcomers. However some people in town are clearly lining up to support Mr. Greenberg.

Recently the Torrington Register Citizen printed an article that Mr. Greenberg has been formally endorsed as a candidate for US Congress by our own Republican Selectman Moira Wertheimer and Republican Selectman Robert Hensley.

In mid January there was also a fundraising party for Mr. Greenberg at the Simsbury home of the former CEO of Konover Development who tried to build River Oaks. Also present at the party was Konover Development's former in-house attorney, the former chairman of the Simsbury Republican Town Committee and several other local Republican leaders. The party pictures are viewable on Mr. Greenberg's Facebook page.

Also, a quick review of Mr. Greenberg's recent campaign filing shows big donations from the Konover Development CEO, from Simsbury resident and River Oaks attorney TJ Donohue who recently chided the Zoning Commission for how hard it is to get development done in Simsbury, and other local architects, developers, builders and land use people. In fact the vast majority of all of Mr. Greenberg's campaign donors state-wide are in the real estate or development business.

Not that there is anything wrong with all this.

But I do think it presents an appearance. Why is there so much Simsbury Republican focus on a candidate who is only known as the man who tried to build River Oaks? Back then, why were so many Simsbury Republican leaders in favor of River Oaks when the vast majority of the town was so against it?

Does any of this have anything to do with why the Republican Zoning Commissioners are pushing for this imperfect draft PAD so hard and so fast? Why not wait for the Charrette mixed use regs to be finished?

Fellow residents, please pay attention to these issues. Do not forget what this town went through with the River Oaks experience.

If we don't pay attention to what's going on and what can result from it, we could find ourselves no longer the quintessential New England town. And then we could find ourselves getting what we deserve, not what we want.