

From: Lily Horan <ljahoran@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 5:00 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC
Cc: DarienZBA; Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: Objection to 7-Eleven Proposal

November 20, 2020

Dear Darien Planning & Zoning Commission ("P&Z"),

I write regarding the proposed 7-Eleven at 306 Boston Post Road. As a nearby Darien resident, I am extremely concerned about the proposal and strongly oppose its approval in full. Not only does 7-Eleven's proposal require several amendments to Darien Zoning Regulations (the "Regulations"), which are in place to protect our town and its residents and prevent precisely this kind of addition, the proposal offers no benefits to Darien residents whatsoever, and only brings a multitude of potential harms. My greatest concerns about the 7-Eleven proposal are: (i) traffic; (ii) light pollution; (iii) noise; and (iv) safety. I ask that the Commission carefully consider these concerns, which I know are shared by many other neighbors and town residents that I have spoken to, and vote no against 7-Eleven's proposal.

Zoning Regulations

7-Eleven seeks amendments to no less than seven Regulations, including: Section 210; Section 755 (SB Zone Accessory Uses); Section 904w (Parking); Section 1056.1 (Principle uses requiring special permit); 1056.2 (Accessory Uses Requiring Special Permits); 1056.3 (Service and Repair); and 1056.5 (Storage of Vehicles). Of course, the Regulations are in place for the benefit of our town and its residents. While amendments are certainly appropriate from time to time to further benefit our town and residents, for example by bringing in and supporting new small businesses, 7-Eleven's application hardly qualifies as one of those circumstances.

Among the stated purposes of the Regulations, are:

- a. Guide the future growth and development of the Town in accordance with the Town Plan of Development which is designed to ***promote the most beneficial and convenient relationships among the residential, commercial, and public areas within the Town***, considering the appropriateness of various uses in each area, and the suitability of each area for such uses, as indicated by existing conditions and trends in development.
- b. Provide adequate light, air and privacy
- c. Protect the character and the historic, social and economic stability of all parts of the Town, and ensure that all development shall be orderly and beneficial.
- d. Protect and conserve the value of land throughout the Town and the value of buildings appropriate to the various zones established by these Regulations.

* * *

f. Promote the most beneficial relation between the uses of land and buildings and the circulation of traffic throughout the Town, having particular regard to the avoidance of congestion in the

streets and the provision of safe and convenient traffic access appropriate to the various uses of land and buildings throughout the Town.

* * *

k. Improve the appearance of all parts of the community by requiring or encouraging as appropriate, reasonable and necessary steps as part of the application of these Regulations.

Art. I, Sec. 100 (emphasis added).

7-Eleven's proposal flies in the face of all of the above-stated purposes. The proposal offers no benefit to Darien residents – on Post Road alone there are several gas stations and convenience stores. I have *never* had to wait for a pump. 7-Eleven would not be fulfilling any need for Darien residents. In fact, a large gas station, convenience store, and restaurant would only unnecessarily serve as competition for other small and local businesses in our town.

Moreover, it is clear from 7-Eleven's proposal that it will rely heavily on attracting transient traffic off of I95 in order to run a successful business. It is further clear that 7-Eleven will rely on overnight stops to the gas station and convenience store for its success. Neither of these business strategies provide any benefit to our town and only bring the risk of heavy traffic and crime to our neighborhood.

In the November 19, 2020 memorandum submitted to P&Z by Ms. Souchuns, (and now part of the public record) she states that “[a]llowing 24-hour operations ensures that many in the community who have off-hour needs . . . have a convenient in-town option for gas and retail products . . .” But Ms. Souchuns misses the point completely. What Darien residents love about our town is the small-town feel – the lack of 24-hour operations is precisely what helps preserve this. When and if any residents have off-hour needs, there are plenty of options one mile down the road from the 306 Post Road location.

Obviously, the only beneficiary of 7-Eleven's move to Darien is 7-Eleven. Why would P&Z grant seven amendments to the Regulations for a business that only harms (more on that below) and offers no benefits to our residents whatsoever?

Equally as important, why would P&Z want to create a precedent of making these kinds of amendments and exceptions for national businesses like 7-Eleven? As made clear in the public record, previous approvals for special permits for convenience stores inside of gas stations were granted with critical constraints such as limiting operations to 6 am to 10 pm and no on-site food prep. Additionally, these establishments were only approved where it was assumed that there would be ***no increase in traffic congestion in the area and no creation of unsafe traffic conditions in the area.*** As discussed below, this is not the case for 7-Eleven's proposal, where 7-Eleven's own traffic analysis admits to a substantial increase in traffic (and, this proposal does not even accurately account for the traffic increase – it will be substantially more).

Traffic

In my two years living on Birch Road, traffic and speeding have been a constant concern. Birch Road and Sylvan Road are already used at cut-throughs from Post Road to Brookside Road. Cars and trucks often turn onto Birch from Post speeding way over the 20mph speed limit. Traffic apps, such as Google maps and Waze, only exacerbate the situation as they direct traffic between the Merritt Parkway and I95 to use our street as a cut-through when there is congestion on the highways. This increase in traffic (and speeds) has been felt by our entire neighborhood.

Moreover, turning onto Post Road from Birch Road, especially during peak hours and especially turning left, is already extremely difficult and often dangerous. Cars coming off of Birch are met with traffic coming off I95 to the left and heading onto I95 from to the right. Although Post Road is only a two-lane

road, it is so wide at the intersection with Birch that it is often treated as four-lane, with cars passing on both sides often simultaneously.

7-Eleven's own traffic analysis clearly states that a 7-Eleven at this site will cause a material increase in traffic. 7-Eleven will obviously do its best with competitive gas prices to induce traffic (cars and trucks alike) off of I95 and away from the already TWO highway rest stops in Darien. What good does this substantial transient traffic do for our town and nearby neighborhoods?

It is estimated that the trips to and from the current Duchess site will more than double, and since this is from 7-Eleven's own analysis, this is the best case scenario. Exceptionally troubling from 7-Eleven's traffic analysis is its admission that the project will not be able handle peak hour traffic. The revised Capacity Analysis Summary dated November 3, 2020, states that the average delay for exiting vehicles will be nearly 4 minutes and the driveway will be at 119% of capacity. By 7-Eleven's own admission, its proposal faces operating constraints that cannot and will not be resolved. Why would P&Z approve such a project?

It also appears that 7-Eleven's traffic analysis is flawed for various reasons, and I understand that the Town's Traffic Engineer Michael Galante is engaged to review the traffic analysis. At the last P&Z meeting he already reported that he has concerns with the traffic study. I also reviewed 7-Eleven's traffic analysis and noticed a few flaws, such as:

1. 7-Eleven relied on "ITE Trip Generation" numbers are based on national averages yet they are applying them to one of the busiest corridors in the US. The McDonald's at the nearby service area is the highest volume location for McDonalds in the US. How is it appropriate to use National averages from a handbook?
2. 7-Eleven is seeking to replace a little-known regional QSR with the #1 convenience chain in the US, yet they are treating them the same as it relates to trip generation. Obviously, 7-Eleven is going to draw substantial traffic from I-95 North and South via apps, signage, etc.
3. Given COVID has dramatically impacted traffic patterns, the 7-Eleven has chosen a single data point from 2016 for each AM / PM day part they study. At the highest level, there is substantial variability in human mobility based on basic variables like the weather. There is substantial variability in traffic across both I-95 and Post Rd driven by accidents/incidents, local events, etc. These numbers seem inappropriate to rely on.
4. The "Birch Rd Analysis", which is particularly important to me, is basically irrelevant as it is based on traffic data taken during the middle of the COVID pandemic. Metro North volumes are down 70-80%, schools are hybrid, many of us have the privilege of working from home. We are all living differently. Given their inability to properly demonstrate the impact on our street, how could this project move forward?

These are just some examples of the numerous flaws in 7-Eleven's traffic analysis. It is further clear from Mr. Galante's comments at the last public meeting that he also has many concerns with the analysis. P&Z simply cannot rely on such an incomplete analysis to approve 7-Eleven's proposal.

Light Pollution

As a 24-7 business, 7-Eleven will have its signage and business lit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Obviously, this will change the atmosphere of the area and neighborhood, where there are currently no 24-7 businesses or signage. From my house, the lights will be visible from our yard and inside our home. This change in the composition in our neighborhood, again, for the benefit of no one except 7-Eleven, is not a welcome change.

Noise Pollution

Similarly, 7-Eleven will attract patrons, cars, and trucks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This includes loiterers at all hours of the day and night. The additional noise that will accompany these patrons, cars, trucks, and loiterers, is another unwelcome addition to our neighborhood. There are currently no businesses in the nearby area that are open 24-7 (for good reason), so this noise pollution would again negatively change the atmosphere of our neighborhood.

Safety

Of course, with the drastic increase in traffic, an increase in accidents follows. This area on Post Road already sees a high number of collisions with traffic speeding on and off of I95. Moreover, with the addition of the new crosswalk across Post Road (at Birch Road) there is an additional concern about pedestrians, including children, crossing in this area as well.

As made clear by 7-Eleven's own presentation regarding the numerous measures they are forced to take in order to deal with the crime that their establishments attract, the proposed 7-Eleven will no doubt bring an increase in crime to our town and neighborhood. In particular, the 24-hour aspect of the of the business opens the door to robberies, late-night loitering, etc. Worse, with the property's abutment to I95 it couldn't be easier to hop onto the highway within seconds of pulling out of the parking lot. This inevitable criminal activity and potential for firearm involvement (based on past armed robberies of similar businesses in the area and along I95) is extremely concerning.

A recent conversation with Darien Chief of Police Don Anderson, as well as his November 18, 2020 statement referenced below, confirms that all of these safety concerns are valid.

Statement from Darien Chief of Police Don Anderson

Finally, I think it is important to note that many of my concerns stated above were echoed by Police Chief Anderson in a statement released on November 18, 2020. Chief Anderson explained, in part:

"I do not believe that there is any dispute that this project, if approved, will increase traffic in and around the parcel. 1) The extent of the traffic increase and the 2) viability of the area being able to safely support the traffic increase (vehicular and pedestrian) is exactly what is being closely examined now by our contracted traffic engineering professional. . . . The Police Department's Administration has had numerous conversations with residents who have concerns about this proposal. Their concerns are received and completely understood. Some of the questions that have been raised with us;

- Does the Police Department have concerns about the traffic increase in the area?***
- Does the Police Department have concerns about an increase in traffic collisions in the area?***
- Does the Police Department have concerns about pedestrian and crosswalk safety in the area?***

- Does the Police Department have concerns about any potential loitering or criminal activity in a 24 hour a day convenience store/gas station on US 1 and directly adjacent to I-95?***

The straightforward and reasonable answer here is "yes" to all of the above. The Police Department is always looking to keep the Town of Darien as safe as possible in both traffic management and overarching public safety matters. That is exactly why we are following this application very closely and with all due diligence. . . ."

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, which I know are shared by countless other town residents.

Lily Horan
5 Birch Road
Darien, CT 06820

November 20, 2020

Jeremy Ginsberg
Director, Planning and Zoning Commission
2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820

Dear Mr. Ginsberg,

I am writing in opposition to the proposal by 7-Eleven to develop the Duchess property on the Post Road. As a property owner on Birch Road, I have concerns about increased local traffic and the impact on local business and the environment.

Over the eleven years that I have lived on Birch, traffic in the neighborhood has significantly increased. When 95 South backs up, Google Maps directs cars off 95 at exit 13, south down the Post Road, and either through town or up Mansfield to the Merritt. There are many weekday mornings when it takes over five minutes to turn off Birch onto the Post Road in either direction. And many more cars than usual turn up Birch. The last thing we need is to further encourage drivers wishing to avoid accidents, road work, and commuter traffic to exit onto the Post Road. At lower-volume times it is simply not true that 7-Eleven will be a "pass-by" property, as it claims. It will be pulling drivers off of 95 and onto the Post Road. These are drivers who otherwise would have 'passed by' down 95, en route to the I-95 Darien SB Service Plaza, three miles away.

While I understand that 7-Eleven does not currently plan to sell alcohol, I worry about future regulation on this front. What is preventing it from selling 24 hours in the future? And what attraction will the 24 hour food and beverage service have for minors? At least once a week I watch - and hear - young people speed down Birch Road very late at night, and I pick up their discarded trash from my lawn in the mornings. I am wary of 7-Eleven becoming a destination for them.

I would also like to see more proof that the wetlands located near this site will not be affected by the new development, and that there is not further environmental impact to consider.

In closing, I do not see how a 7-Eleven benefits our town or "promotes business/economic development." In fact, it threatens the Mobil station business that is already established across the street, and that has served my family well for eleven years. It competes with Darien Diner. It makes 353 Post Road a less desirable storefront. It makes Darien Crossing a less desirable place to work and Dynamic Athletics a less desirable place to work out. And it makes the Birch/Point 'O Woods/Richmond/Maywood neighborhood a less desirable place to live.

Please do not approve the 7-Eleven proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Gault
46 Birch Road

From: Meg Devine Aronsohn <megarons@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 6:47 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienZBA
Cc: John Aronsohn
Subject: Comments on Proposed 7-Eleven at 306 Boston Post Road

Dear Darien Planning & Zoning Commissioners and Darien Zoning Board of Appeals Members,

We are writing to state our strong opposition to the proposed 7-Eleven gas station/convenience store at 306 Boston Post Road. As residents of Birch Road for nearly 20 years, we have significant concerns about the significant negative impacts this proposed development would have on our neighborhood and upon Darien more broadly.

It is clear that the economics of this proposed 7-Eleven rely upon drawing hundreds of cars (and potentially trucks) from I-95 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. In essence, 7-Eleven is asking to create a private alternative highway rest stop in our town in close proximity to an established residential neighborhood.

This proposal, by definition, dramatically increases traffic along an already congested and dangerous portion of Boston Post Road. From our experience as twenty-year residents of Birch Road, the traffic projections discussed during the November 10 P&Z meeting are grossly inaccurate and drastically understated. For example, the wait time for a turn from Birch Road onto Post Road was estimated by 7-Eleven's traffic expert as under 30 seconds on average. As residents who have made this turn thousands of times, we can tell you that it is the norm to wait several minutes to make a left turn from Birch Road onto Post Road during non-pandemic times, and oftentimes even longer during rush hour or when I-95 backs up. Additionally, Birch Road, Richmond Drive and surrounding streets act as pass-throughs for cars coming from points north of the neighborhood and heading south. The addition of a major concession like 7-Eleven would only increase volumes on these residential streets. We could fill pages comparing the 7-Eleven traffic projections with our experiences drawn from 20 years of driving this stretch of Post Road, but hope these illustrations demonstrate the yawning gap between 7-Eleven's traffic projections and reality.

By the applicant's own acknowledgement, the proposed 7-Eleven will be a target for criminal activity. As we watched the November 10 P&Z meeting, we took no comfort from the applicant's presentation. The applicant's security expert had never seen the site plans and was unfamiliar with the proposal. The applicant's visibility expectations into the "front" of the store (which does not face Post Road) are unrealistic -- there is no way to see into the store unless one is already in the parking lot. The "fishbowl strategy" 7-Eleven touts just isn't at work here. Given the inherent crime risks of a 24-hour gas station/convenience store, combined with the applicant's lack of priority given to this critical issue, there is no way nearby residents or the Darien P&Z Board should feel comfortable with this proposal.

The Darien Police Department will have no choice but to increase its efforts and resources dedicated to the area near the proposed 7-Eleven, all at Darien taxpayer expense. Increased patrolling, traffic enforcement actions, and responses to criminal activity should be fully expected. It is unfair and inappropriate to expect the Darien police department and the taxpayers of Darien to bear the risks and costs associated with the security challenges posed by this 7-Eleven proposal.

Noise and light pollution from the proposed 24-hour 7-Eleven will easily reach homes in the nearby neighborhood. Noise pollution is already an issue with I95 so nearby. The increased noises associated with this 7-Eleven will include: vehicle noise and horns, customer noise outside the building, siren and alarm noise from expected criminal activity. If this same strip of land was considered part of the highway, a comparable 24-hour operation would require noise reduction barriers such as those that surround the nearby highway rest areas. The 7-Eleven proposal introduces this increased level of noise to a residential neighborhood with no option for noise mitigation.

We would also like to put some context around the "nearby neighborhood." We estimate there are at least 55 children of high-school age or younger on Birch Road alone. The surrounding streets (Richmond, Point O'Woods, Point O'Woods South, Sylvan, Maywood) at least double the number of children affected by the 7-Eleven proposal. The lives, health and safety of these children are placed at increased risk by this proposal from the combination of difficult and dangerous traffic levels on Post Road, increased volume of speeding traffic on neighborhood streets, increased security risks, and increased noise levels.

As evidenced by the substantial public opposition to this proposal, there is no need or demand from Darien residents for the services proposed by 7-Eleven -- there is already a plethora of gas and food options in Darien, plus 24-hour options nearby in Norwalk and Stamford. With an absence of local demand, 7-Eleven will need to draw traffic and customers from I95 to be economically viable. Presumably 7-Eleven will use their app and marketing prowess to attract customers away from the two nearby I-95 rest stops by offering lower gas and coffee prices. There is no reason to believe this customer traffic would be

limited to passenger vehicles -- what is to prevent trucks/tractor-trailers from making the same choice? In fact, at times of high traffic volume, trucks would need to wait on the shoulder of Post Road, even if for a few minutes, until enough vehicles exited the 7-Eleven parking lot. In effect, this would narrow Post Road and make driving on Post Road or making left turns onto Post Road even more difficult and dangerous. The potential for truck traffic frequenting the 7-Eleven only exacerbates the already alarming traffic, safety, noise and light pollution impacts of this proposal.

7-Eleven is asking for multiple changes to Darien's zoning regulations. These proposed amendments are purely for the benefit of 7-Eleven and if adopted will have ripple effects throughout town. Similar amendments proposed by other applicants have been denied by P&Z and ZBA, especially when there is likely impact from commercial developments on residential neighborhoods. Furthermore, the 7-Eleven proposal is in direct conflict with multiple aspects of the 2016 Darien Plan of Conservation & Development.

For all these reasons, we urge the Darien Planning and Zoning commission and the Darien Zoning Board of Appeals to reject the proposed zoning amendments and to reject the 7-Eleven application for 306 Boston Post Road.

Thank you for your careful consideration and for your service to our town.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret and William Aronsohn
8 Birch Road

From: Duane Biasi <dbiasi@yakirapartners.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 6:09 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC
Subject: Proposed 7-Eleven Letter for the record

Dear Director Ginsburg and P&Z Commission Members,

I am writing today to voice my concerns and opposition to the application of 7-Eleven and Duchess Family Restaurant, Inc for the demolition of the current Duchess restaurant and the construction of a new building that would be occupied by 7-Eleven, operating a 24/7 gas station/convenience store. Other than the current property owner, I can't fathom how this structure would benefit the town and its residents in any manner and does not seem consistent with the Town's Strategic Plan of development. By my count, the 2.5 mile stretch of the Post Road between I-95 exits 10-13, currently has 7 gas stations, including 2 in the exact vicinity of the proposed structure. This does not include the 3 full-service gas station in Norton Heights at exit 10, or 2 large travel plazas directly on I-95 or the station at exit 9 in Stamford. Compare this to our neighbors in New Canaan, which is almost the same size as Darien, where they have a total of 3 gas stations, including one that is a travel plaza on the Merritt Parkway.

Darien downtown has undergone a dramatic transformation since I first moved to town. Rather than immediately heading out of town to New Canaan or Stamford for dinner or shopping plans, Darien has become a much more vibrant and family friendly destination for our residents. This has been done with excellent strategic planning between local developers and the P&Z. A 24/7 quick mart does not seem to fit this plan. In their own application the applicant states that they occasional hire private security to help dissuade crime and loiterers at their properties. Is this really the type of environment we want to introduce to our town and our youth? What benefit does a 24-hour store provide to our town other than putting a strain on our police department that is already taxed by being adjacent to I-95? If gas or sundries are truly needed, they can be easily obtained at either of the rest stops directly on the highway that are more prepared for a 24-hour clientele. Why benefit this large corporation in favor of our local providers who have supported our community for years. 7-Eleven just agreed to purchase Speedway brands for over \$20 billion dollars. As part of this purchase they will be forced to divest hundreds if not thousands of locations. What guarantees are in place that if approved, this location won't immediately be divested from the applicant as part of this merger?

Many homeowners in town have had to deal with the numerous wetlands restrictions in place considering how close our town is to the coastline. In this case there is wetlands watershed abutting this property. Considering how difficult it is for private homeowners to do projects in this type of situation, I question how submerging tanks with tens of thousands of gallons of gasoline can so easily be permitted, especially when it is clear there are many other options in town that can supply this service currently.

If the owner of the property insists on redeveloping this property, perhaps he should speak to his neighbor who redeveloped a previously rundown commercial property into a beautiful and high-end office complex. Rather than building a 7-Eleven that would make this new development less desirable, they could jointly design something that is cohesive and mutually beneficial. In this era of such divisiveness, I think this unique situation when such a large majority of our population is united against this particular development. Such consensus must count for something in determining whether the P&Z should allow this project to move forward. In short, this application is opposed by most residential and commercial residents in town, does not add any additional value for our population, does not rectify a need that is currently unserved and will serve as a public nuisance and safety problem to our town and should be unanimously rejected. Please enter this letter into the public record.

Sincerely,
Duane S. Biasi
23 Thomasina Road

Duane S. Biasi
Director of Trading

Yakira Capital Management
991 Post Road East
Westport, CT 06880
O: (203) 349-8191
C: (917) 626-0973

From: David Smith <david@davidssmith.net>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 1:31 AM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienZBA
Cc: Wilder Gleason
Subject: Public comment letter to Town Use Boards: please forward, file and post to website
Attachments: Letter to Darien Town Use Boards.pdf

Dear Sirs:

Please forward file and post the attached in Re: 306 Boston Post Road, 7-Eleven, Inc.: Proposed Amendments to the Darien Zoning Regulations (COZR #4-2020), Business Site Plan #128-B, Special Permit Application #314

Respectfully,

David S. Smith

203-940-2777 cell

david@davidssmith.net

DAVID S. SMITH
26 BIRCH ROAD
DARIEN CT 06820
203-940-2777

November 19, 2020

Re: 306 Boston Post Road, 7-Eleven, Inc.: Proposed Amendments to the Darien Zoning Regulations (COZR #4-2020), Business Site Plan #128-B, Special Permit Application #314

Via email: jginsberg@darienct.gov, DarienZBA@darienct.gov

Dear Chairman Olveny and Members of the Darien Planning and Zoning Commission, and Chairman Nedder and Members of the Darien Zoning Board of Appeals:

Our immediately impacted neighborhood and the broader Darien community has just awakened to a real-life nightmare. 7 Eleven has applications with the Darien Land Use Boards to put in our town the equivalent of a turnpike highway rest stop: open 24/7, with huge 12 pump gas islands (including diesel, for the trucks), a grocery store and a restaurant, all on a mere spot of land adjacent to I-95. This proposal is an egregious violation of established protections you were elected or appointed to administer and enforce on our behalf. I entreat you: send them packing. This has no place in or benefit to Darien.

Hundreds of townspeople are rising in vehement opposition at a point which may seem to you (our long-suffering and devoted representatives) to be "late in the process." Why now? Simple: We're outside the statutory 100-foot notice radius, the small print legal notice was buried somewhere in the back of a very limited circulation paper few get and fewer read, so we didn't see it, and, with COVID, our attention is on many other things. We weren't looking. Do you think 7 Eleven is being opportunistic about this? I do.

Before even considering the demerits of the proposal, 7 Eleven's self-serving and gallingly dishonest, tortured approach to facts and their aggressive, dismissive disregard for our established Land Use Board processes (ask the ARB) and zoning rules should alone have made this dead-on-arrival. Pardon the polemics but this one begs for such.

Here's the truth: 7 Eleven's proposal for this site is antithetical to the aim of the official Darien Plan of Development, which is, to quote: to "promote community needs, preserve community character, and enhance the overall quality of life." It tortures law, language and common sense to propose such outlandish, radical alterations to well-established zoning rules, regulations, and precedents.

The fatal flaws are numerous. In short:

- 1) The so-called traffic study, "bought and paid for" by the applicant, is a tapestry of blatant sophistry (the "black box model") and fabrication (bad data) that ignores or distorts dozens of self-evident facts-on-the-ground. An honest assessment would confirm the obvious: this project would make an already overly congested, dangerous area of our

roads (abutting my residential neighborhood) one of the worst in the region and make our neighborhood both access and escape proof. We can prove this, and more, given proper time, and will, if needed (Darien citizens will defeat this),

- 2) The profound all-day and, worse, all-night convenience store crime and safety risks of this proposal, inherently admitted and self-condemned by the applicant's own crime "mitigation" disclosures, would stress our already overtasked Police Department and convert it into the functional equivalent of 7 Eleven's "24/7" private security force at taxpayer expense,
- 3) The impact of all-day noise and all-night noise and light pollution would irreparably degrade our adjacent residential neighborhood. You wouldn't want to live near it. We don't either and shouldn't have to, and
- 4) There has never been a combination 24-hour retail food store, 100 sq. ft. food service, super-high-volume gas station (or remotely comparable) monstrosity on any sized parcel (and this one is tiny) anywhere in Darien. In fact, anything close to this is abhorrent. All for good, well-established, well-regulated and self-evident reasons.

Some think that this whole proposal is only their initial "ask-for-it-all" foray, and that these folks will keep banging on us until they succeed. I have a well-known fondness for making points through analogies. Here I consider particularly apt the fable of the Second Labor of Hercules, wherein the many-headed Hydra kept coming back until the hero finally figured out how to slay it for good. Read it: the moral of the story applies here quite well.

Stop them. Be our heroes.

Respectfully,



David S. Smith

From: Lisa Primmer <lisakayprimmer@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 9:01 AM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; Anderson, Don; Shreders, Robert; DarienZBA; Huffard, Kim; Cunningham, Kevin; Stevenson, Jayme; Hayes, Brent
Subject: Proposed 7-11 - don't do it!

Good morning,

We wanted to send a note expressing our extreme opposition to the proposed 7-11 in Darien.

What makes Darien beautiful and special is its small number of chain stores and retail outlets. This is appealing not only to residents, but future residents looking to buy a home and comparing Darien to towns such as New Canaan. To add another chain store, particularly one that is not very nice and tends to be associated with crime (especially given the proposed location just off I-95) would be a shame and detrimental to the overall feel of the town.

If having a 7-11 there does lead to increased criminal incidents, how do you propose the town combats this? How will this affect other nearby businesses and homeowners if the crime in that area increases? It would certainly decrease property values for the homes in that vicinity.

In addition, the town does not need a store like this. There are plenty of other convenience store options that meet the needs of our consumers in that same area.

Given how much all of the new development projects in Darien will really help improve the town (e. g. Corbin and Noroton Heights), adding this 7-11 would be a massive step backwards.

We implore you - do not allow a 7-11 to come to Darien.

Lisa and Ryan Primmer
27 Bittersweet Lane

From: Sarah Watson Vrabac <sarahwvrabac@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 11:25 AM
To: Stevenson, Jayme; DarienPZC; Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: Proposed 7-Eleven at 306 Boston Post Road

Hello,

I hope you are doing well. I'm writing to voice my opposition to the proposed 7 Eleven at the current Duchess location at 306 Boston Post Road.

As a homeowner on this side of town, I'm concerned about the impact such a development would have on traffic and safety. Traffic coming off of exit 13 is already frequently backed up, and making a left turn from the Duchess location is difficult and dangerous. Our neighborhoods have recently been targeted for car break-ins and thefts, likely as a result of the proximity to the I95. The amount of time devoted in 7 Eleven's presentation to crime prevention strategies including holdup/panic alarms and bright-light deterrents only heightens my concern. Loitering and crime are clearly issues they expect to have to deal with at this location. The risks to traffic flow and safety are too high to justify the benefit of having a 24-hour mini-mart or additional option for getting gas.

A 7 Eleven at the Duchess location is not needed and detracts from development projects occurring throughout town. I do not understand the need for an additional gas station on this side of town given that there are already numerous gas stations nearby and a large, 24-hour rest stop only a few exits away. There is no demand for additional gas stations in this area, evidenced by the fact that the pumps at Mobil, BP, and Darien Car Clinic are never at capacity. Additionally, introducing a large chain like 7-Eleven to Darien detracts from the small-town, family-friendly image Darien is trying to cultivate in the Corbin District and Noroton Heights. A 7 Eleven would not benefit area homeowners and would inevitably take away from the character of Darien.

I sincerely hope that you deny 7-Eleven's application.

Thank you,
Sarah Vrabac
2 Deerfield Road

From: Andrea cragin <ascragin@optonline.net>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 11:27 AM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Cc: DarienZBA; shredders@darienct.gov; Anderson, Don; Cunningham, Kevin; Hayes, Brent; Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: 7 Eleven proposal

Dear Mr. Ginsberg,

My family and I have lived on 6 Dellwood Road in Darien since 2007 and we are apposed to the proposed 7 Eleven Store and Gas Station due to its certain harmful effect on the currently overly congested Post Road as well as its detrimental effect on Darien's own small businesses.

Over the past 13 years my family and I have noticed a tremendous increase in traffic on the post road currently caused by:

- commuters trying to escape traffic on I 95 during their daily commutes
- customers heading to the big box stores in our neighboring Norwalk which creates near gridlock during peak times
- customers leaving the big box stores in Norwalk and heading west on the Post Road to get on the I 95 South and North entrance ramps

This current traffic congestion often makes it difficult to head east or west on the Post Road as we leave our neighborhood via Richmond Ave. In addition, the volume of traffic is made considerably more dangerous by the combination of the I95 South exit 13 that requires crossing two lanes of traffic to head west into Darien and the close proximity of the I95 South and I95 North entrance ramps used by the masses shoppers leaving the big box stores in Norwalk.

The proposed 7 Eleven Stores and Gas Stations with its 6 gas pumps and aggressive marketing app will surely lure more drivers off I95 and into our town exacerbating an already difficult traffic situation. In addition, the increased traffic will most likely not be of any benefit our town but will in fact most likely harm our existing businesses, increase accidents on the Post Road, and be a detriment to our quality of life in Darien.

Amending Darien's current zoning regulations to accommodate this proposed 7 Eleven Stores and Gas Stations would only benefit 7 Eleven, Inc. and would not be of any benefit to the people who live in Darien.

- We in Darien do not need an addition 12 gas pumps in this location as there are already 3 gas stations in close proximity to the proposed site
- Nor do we need a 24 hour convenience store which will no doubt hurt our long standing existing businesses which are required to close after a certain hour
- There is no need for an additional "rest stop" on I95 since there are 2 relatively new ones on I95 within our town's borders
- There is no need to attract more car traffic to this already over congested section of the Post Road in Darien
- The current entrance ramp to I 95 South at exit 13 is too short and creates traffic on the highway. The additional cars leaving 7 Eleven and getting back on the highway heading south will exacerbate this already troublesome traffic issue
- The increase of transient human traffic in our neighbor will increase the potential for crime especially with the proposed 24 business

In short, the addition of a 24 hour 7 Eleven Store and Gas Stations to our neighborhood will not provide any benefit to my family or any of my fellow Darienites. We are, therefore, asking you and the rest of the Planning and Zoning Board to please uphold our current zoning regulations and reject the proposed 7 Eleven Stores and Gas Stations.

Sincerely,
Andrea Cragin
6 Dellwood Rd
Darien, CT 06820

From: Joyce G. Fredo <jgfred@optonline.net>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 1:14 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Cc: Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: In opposition to proposed Seven Eleven development on Post Road, Current site of Duchess restaurant

I am a long-time Darien resident and I am strongly opposed to allowing this development for many reasons, including:

1. Severe detrimental impact on traffic in our small town. The traffic on the post road is already at a critical point. Witness the bottlenecks that occur through the day, seven days a week, westbound at Brookside and Sedgewick, and east bound at Corbin Drive.

Add to the the difficulty we already experience trying to make a left turn at exit 13 while traveling southbound on I-95, or trying to turn left out of Duchess, Ninos, or any business located on the left traveling west on Route 1.

2. Consider the additional traffic that will result from eastbound interstate traffic that will exit at exit 12 onto Tokeneke Road in order to reach this new Seven Eleven location, turning left onto Tokeneke road, then bottlenecking — at the railroad bridge — on Route 1 at West Avenue, the site of heavy traffic all day long, and also the site of many trucks that get stuck under the bridge. Traffic will exit at Exit 12 to reach this new location because it comes BEFORE the highway rest stop in Darien. The same situation will be created with interstate traffic traveling southbound in search of gas, cigarettes, and snacks: they will exit at Exit 13 southbound because this new development comes BEFORE the rest stop in Darien on the southbound side of I-95, at Stamford border.

3. Increased crime with a 24/7 Business in a town THAT HAS NO OTHER! This is not Yonkers! This is a small town with 20,000 people living in it. We cannot support this type of business here. The police have already issued a statement regarding concerns about transient business coming through town at all hours of day or night. The police have warned you about increased traffic problems and crime, in bringing this over-the-top type of development within feet of residential neighborhoods.

Look at what route one has become in Westport and Greenwich, towns which allowed uncontrolled commercial development and have made those towns traffic nightmares day and night. Please do not allow this to happen here in Darien.

Joyce Fredo
10 Ridgeview Avenue
Darien, CT. 06820
203-219-4416
Jgfred@optonline.net

Sent from the iPad of Joyce Fredo

From: Lauri Waldron <lauriwaldron@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 3:09 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: Proposed 7/Seven in Darien

My name is Lauri Waldron and my husband and I reside at 14 Birch Road in Darien, which is right around the corner from the current location of Duchess restaurant where a proposal has been put forth for a 24 Hour 7/Seven with 12 fueling positions and a restaurant. I have two main concerns with this - traffic and safety.

Traffic is already a huge concern in our area where Birch Road intersects with the Post Road. During morning and evening rush hours and even mid-day, it is nearly impossible to safely make a left turn out of our street. Cars often speed up after going through the traffic light at Rory's restaurant and make it difficult to find an opening to safely make the left turn. In addition, the Post Road is often also full of traffic, especially when I-95 is experiencing heavy traffic in the area and motorists get off the highway and travel along the Post Road. From what I understand, 7/Seven has asked for a variance to post large signage presumably to catch the eye of motorists on I-95 and get them to pull off the highway and enter Darien to stop for gas, a snack or meal. Since I-95 already has rest stops right off I-95 both North and Southbound, I don't see why this is in any way desirable. There have already been multiple accidents in this area and this proposal will only increase traffic and more accidents. In addition, there is already a Mobil diagonally across the street with a mini mart, not to mention at least 6 other gas stations along the post road as well as several in Norwalk. I am extremely concerned that the added traffic and congestion from the proposed 7/Seven will only exacerbate an already dangerous and congested area.

My second concern is the request by 7/Seven to be open 24hours a day. I don't see any reason why the town of Darien would want to allow a business to be open for 24hours a day, especially when there is a rest stop less than .5 mile away conveniently located right of I-95 and another one located southbound a bit further down I-95. With 24-7 service, and close proximity to the I-95 exit, the vehicles coming off the highway pose serious safety and security concerns to our neighborhood and the town of Darien.

I urge each of you to deny this proposal and its amendments to the current P&Z regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lauri Waldron
14 Birch Road
Darien, CT

Ginsberg, Jeremy

From: jennifer shea <jennifer@sheaboys.com>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 6:52 PM
To: Stevenson, Jayme; DarienPZC; Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: 7-Eleven

Jayme, Jeremy and the P&Z Commission,

I am writing to express my concern for the 7-Eleven project proposed on the Post Rd. A 24-hour convenience store/gas station may sound appealing to I-95 travelers, but there is no benefit for Darien residents. It is completely out of character with the rest of town. Traffic in that area is already terrible. It will hurt existing, local businesses and increase crime. Darien does not need anything open 24 hours.

Please do approve this project!

Best Regards,

Jennifer Shea
6 Fox Hill Ln