

Ginsberg, Jeremy

From: Stephanie O'Malley <scomalley95@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Olvany, Stephen; Leahy, Jennifer; Warble, Larry; Rand, James; Gately, Cara; Reilly, George; Ginsberg, Jeremy; Anderson, Don; Shreders, Robert; DarienZBA; Huffard, Kim; Cunningham, Kevin; Stevenson, Jayme; Hayes, Brent
Cc: Jim O'Malley
Subject: 7-11

Good morning,

I am writing this morning to express my concern with the proposal to have a 7-11 "supercenter" in town. I am from Long Island and am very familiar with 7-11. My issue is with then over the top addition of the gas station and signage. Our town has made it challenging for small businesses to advertise-lots of rules about signage. When Shake Shack wanted to open in town, there was signifiant discussion about their signage and the word "eyesore" was most certainly used. Please explain why 7-11 proposes should even be considered.

I love on this side of town and traffic need there is a nightmare on a weekday-let's also consider weekends and holidays. The traffic study done during a pandemic should be found laughable. This type of convenience store/gas station configuration does not exist along CT's 95 stretch. All gas stations/rest stops are not in the midst of the town and other businesses. They do not intersect with the Post Road. They are self contained along 95. Why would we accept this drastic shift in configuration?

Since Darien is sandwiched in between 2 cities and the Post Road and 95 act as connectors, are we providing an easy place for drug deals to occur with 24 hour business? Let's not make it easier for crimes to be committed in our town.

I will keep this brief since I am sure you have many letters to read, Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Stephanie O'Malley
21 Circle Road
Darien

From: Kenneth Prince <KennethSPrice@outlook.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 10:57 AM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC
Cc: Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: Proposed 7/Eleven on Post Road

Dear Messrs Ginsberg and Olvaney,

As 33 year residents of Darien who reside nearby to the current Duchess restaurant site on the Post Road, we write to express our strong opposition to the proposal to permit a 7/Eleven gas station/convenience store with fast food to open at 306 Post Road.

A 12 fueling position gas station, with an attached 24 hour convenience store with fast food, and with a huge 40+ square foot sign may well be appropriate for a Connecticut Turnpike rest area, but certainly is not appropriate in a small, quaint suburban New England town. The substantial increase in vehicle traffic (including trucks) that such a mega-station would likely draw from out of town travelers off the abutting Route 95 could lead to substantially more traffic on the 2 lane Post Road – which traffic and accompanying noise would be undesirable in our town, particularly late at night into the wee hours after midnight.

In addition to unwanted traffic and noise, the incursion of late night travelers into Darien raises the risk of increased crime after dark, especially for the homes and properties in neighborhoods near the proposed 7/Eleven site. Safety of our neighborhoods should be a top priority for Darien Planning and Zoning Commission members.

Moreover, to allow a 24 hour gas station/convenience store on the Post Road would not be fair to our local Darien merchants, many of whom are sole proprietors (unlike 7/Eleven), who close down their businesses at respectable hours in keeping with our suburban setting.

Finally, there is no necessity for yet another gas station on the Post Road. There are at least 4 existing stations (Mobil, BP, Sunoco and Shell) on the Post Road in Darien within half a mile of the proposed 7/Eleven site. And there are at least 2 other gas stations further up the Post Road in Darien. We are hard impressed to understand what purpose would be served for the residents of Darien if P&Z were to permit yet another gas station to be added on the Post Road.

For the above reasons, we urge the Planning and Zoning Commission to not approve the proposed 7/Eleven 24 hour gas station/convenience store.

Thank you for your attention.

Kenneth S. and Jane M. Prince
15 Dellwood Road
Darien

From: Bette Hartmayer <bette.hartmayer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 11:08 AM
To: Stevenson, Jayme; Conologue, Diane; Russell, Cheryl; fadelman@darienct.gov; Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienAR8; DarienPZC; Olvany, Stephen; Leahy, Jennifer; Martin, David
Subject: 7-Eleven

I am voicing my objection to the proposed conversion of the Duchess site on the Post Road into a 7-Eleven. This is not just a convenience store and small service station. It is a 4,050 square foot, quick-service restaurant and convenience store, open 24 hours, 12 gas fueling positions, with 48 foot lit up sign meant to divert traffic from I-95 into the town of Darien.

Planning and Zoning should not amend the current regulations. This will not in any way enhance the town or the future of Darien. Thank you.

Bette Hartmayer
6 Harriett Lane
Darien

From: William DeRiso <wderiso@optonline.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 3:04 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC
Cc: DarienZBA; Stevenson, Jayme

To the members of Darien P&Z,

My name is Will DeRiso and I live at 10 Point O Woods Rd South with my wife and 3 children (ages 15, 13, 11). We have lived in Darien for 16 years. I am writing to you regarding the proposal to build a new 7-Eleven on the location of Duchess Restaurant at 306 Post Rd near Exit 13. This location is just 1500 feet from our home.

I would first like to thank you all for your service to our town. We as a community are very fortunate to have so many individuals willing to volunteer their time for the betterment of Darien.

With regards to this proposal, I have grave concerns about what has been presented. I strongly oppose the project for a number reasons:

1) **TRAFFIC VOLUME** - Since we moved into town in 2004, there's been a notable increase in traffic going back and forth on the Post Rd in and out of Norwalk. With the development of areas just along the border (restaurants, fast foods, big box retail, etc), traffic has become at times overwhelming. Turning out of Birch Rd/Richmond Dr onto the Post Rd can take a long time during rush hour periods and on weekends. I watched the P&Z meeting from Nov10th on youtube and found the 7-Eleven commissioned traffic study to be laughable. Most importantly, they conducted it during the biggest pandemic in a over a century. While I can't comment on how much traffic they added to their numbers, I tend to believe it would increase the amount of traffic exiting off Exit 13 by a notable amount.

2) **TRAFFIC SAFETY** - With changes in the entrance/exit ramp lanes heading south on the Post Road into the I-95 entrance at Exit 13, I have witnessed potential accidents on a number of occasions. Cars are often attempting to cross lanes while heading south. I imagine that having a large 7-Eleven just past the intersection would create even more issues...especially since the Post Rd is one lane each way at that location. In addition, a large gas station **will mean an enlarged entrance to allow for 18-wheelers to access the site to deliver fuel.** I also noticed a new crosswalk that has been created from the corner of Birch Rd across the Post Rd. I assume this is due to the increase of people walking in the area and the potential threat to pedestrian safety. I would assume that safety will become an even bigger issue with this increase of traffic.

3) **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY / CRIME** - Currently there is not one gas station in all of Darien that is open 24hrs. Our town has survived for generations without one, and I do not see the need for one now. I am not sure how/why a 24hr gas station would enhance the town in any way. As the old saying goes, "*nothing good happens after midnight.*" I'm sure I don't need to provide you with the statistical evidence (it's all over the internet) that regardless of location, **violent crimes are more prevalent during night hours.** Those crimes are even worse between the hours of midnight and 4am. A 24hr location is a magnet for people who are up during the night. Given just 4% of the US workforce is in employ between 12am and 4am, those who are up at that time and not working are generally unemployed. There is a direct correlation between unemployment and violent crimes regardless of the statistical makeup of the population.

In addition, whether that person is unemployed or educational age, the likelihood they are using substances (most likely alcohol) is materially higher during late-night hours (this is also a statistical fact). Obviously, substance abuse impairs judgement. **That presents a direct threat to the surrounding community, particularly the residents of the homes that are closely located to the location.**

During the P&Z meeting, 7-Eleven gave a Crime Prevention presentation explaining the different things they do to ensure safety. That included a "fishbowl-like environment" and bright lights "both inside and outside". Two things come to mind - (1) In order to prevent crime (which is currently not a problem), we will now have a brightly lit service station lighting up the street every night and all night? (2) If crime does take place, where does the criminal often run to avoid being pursued? He/She doesn't run into the light...he/she runs away from it. That would be right up Birch Rd.

4) **TOWN CULTURE** - Darien has long been a quaint small New England town. Big retail stores and large service stops are not conducive with that environment. In addition, large signs which can be seen from a major national interstate will cause even more traffic to exit off the highway bringing more people, more traffic and more safety issues.

As a resident in the neighborhood which abuts this location, ***I strenuously object to this project.***

Once again thank you for your continuous service to our community, and I hope you all remain good health and you enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

Sincerely,

Will DeRiso

917 561 9651

wderiso@optonline.net

From: Maribeth Milne <mbmilne@snet.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 3:50 PM
To: Stevenson, Jayme; Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC
Cc: Harry Milne
Subject: 7-Eleven proposal

I am writing because I feel that #1, this has been surreptitiously handled.

In addition, there no need to add an additional , huge gas station, especially a stone's throw from the I-95 station as well as the station that presently exists across the street from this proposal. This will make business more challenging for the existing gas stations. This will only add to the already ridiculously crowded traffic on the post road. The town continues to add additional sources of traffic year after year i.e., Avalon, The Royle housing project to name a few. Each addition that they squeak in adds to the density of traffic that takes away from the small town feel.

Also, I object to the fast, junk food type of facility being added to our town. Is there no better alternative to a place offering "7-eleven Slushies" and other junk food?? We know that the COVID crisis is disproportionately affecting Americans in poor health and with chronic disease and 7-Eleven fast junk food may be a contributing factor. Can't we think of something better for our community??

Respectfully,

Maribeth and Harry Milne
17 Highland Ave
Darien

From: Wyn Lydecker <upstartwyn@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 4:12 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: Duchess - 7-Eleven Proposal

November 22, 2020

Re: Duchess – 7-Eleven Proposal

Dear Mr. Ginsberg and Members of the Darien Planning and Zoning Commission:

Our family is sincerely concerned with the proposal before the Commission to issue special permits and variances that will allow 7-Eleven, Inc. to raze the Duchess family restaurant and replace it with a new 7-Eleven outlet. First, convenience stores are targets for crime. Second, a 7-Eleven with 6 fueling islands, a convenience store, and a quick-serve restaurant with plans to operate 24-hours-a-day will create more traffic problems in an already congested area. Third, the proposed project is not in keeping with the character of Darien.

Crime:

Convenience stores account for six percent of robberies nationwide. Those that operate during the late evening hours and middle of the night have the highest rates of robbery. A study by Arizona State University's Center for Problem-Oriented Policing shows that this is particularly true for convenience stores that have easy escape routes. The proposed 7-Eleven will be on the Post Road heading north out of town and directly onto an entrance to I-95, making it very easy for robbers to make a quick flight.

Why would our town want to allow the creation of a business that is known for attracting crime, particularly violent crime? Last week, an armed robber held up a convenience store in Stamford, and 10 days ago, a person was murdered during an armed robbery of a convenience store in Waterbury. The City of Hartford has refused to issue permits to several gas and convenience stores to operate 24-hours-a-day in an effort to reduce crime.

Traffic:

The traffic study done by 7-Eleven's traffic consultants indicates that up to 143 additional cars per hour will go in and out of the proposed 7-Eleven. The Post Road (Route 1) is already a highly congested road, particularly during peak hours and when motorists leave I-95 when it is jammed for any reason. The study forecasts more delays as additional southbound cars wait to turn across traffic into the proposed 7-Eleven.

Anecdotally, as Birch Road residents, we often witness traffic delays and confusion caused by cars turning into or leaving Duchess. We have also seen the impact that the addition of a popular store or restaurant can have on traffic volume and dangerous turning. Just think of the snarls and muddle caused by cars turning into and out of Starbucks in Darien. On weekends, Exit 13 is often jammed up with long lines of cars headed to Costco, just over the Darien/Norwalk line. Imagine even a portion of those people leaving Costco and coming to 7-Eleven for a Slurpee. In Norwalk, lines of cars waiting to get into Chick-Fil-A create at least a half-mile of traffic jam, even during the current pandemic.

As far back as 2011, SWRPA did a study of the congestion on Route 1 through Darien that showed 16,000 vehicles pass through town on that road daily, with extreme congestion during peak hours. That study forecast a 20% increase in traffic by 2030 and proposed ideas for mitigating the problem, including a suggestion that any development should fit the character of Darien.

Town Character:

The Vision Statement in Darien's 2011 Town Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD") states that "Darien continues to be primarily a New England style, single-family dwelling community... Downtown and traditional neighborhood commercial centers or corridors, through scale, character and density should create a strong sense of place for living, shopping and dining and add to the vitality of our community."

The POCD further states in the policy for commercial development:

#1. Keep future commercial development consistent with the existing small-town New England character of Darien. And #6. Seek to limit business impacts and intrusion on adjacent residential properties and streets.

As a chain of convenience stores with over 70,000 outlets worldwide, 7-Eleven is antithetical to both the vision and commercial policies of our town.

Our town officials should be supporting our current business owners and encouraging the development of more locally owned small businesses that will enhance the experience of living here, rather than allowing the creation of a large, 24-hour gas station and convenience store.

Sincerely,

Wyn and John Lydecker

41 Birch Road, Darien, CT

Mobile: 203.536.4157

From: Maria Considine <riac60@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 4:50 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienPZC; Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: Proposed 7-Eleven at Duchess Location

To Whom it May Concern,

My Husband and I have lived in Darien for over 30 years... My husband grew up here and we raised our kids here. There is a reason for that. The residents of this culturally varied town may not all be on the same page economically, spiritually, or politically, but we all call this town home for the exact same reason. People that live here know what a hidden gem Darien is, both in terms of lifestyle, and environment. We love our town because it is a highly desirable area and there is a lot that goes into making it such. First and foremost, we are a community. We promote strong bonds by expressing and celebrating our own unique culture with specific (sometimes quirky), traditions that are held. In addition to a quaint-looking New England aesthetic that runs through the town, we have excellent schools, intimate churches, an abundance of parks, two glorious beaches, and numerous opportunities for a variety of recreation. We are minutes away from several of the area's top hospitals, and our town's proximity to New York, two train stations, easy access to I-95, the Merritt Parkway, and the bus line on Route 1, all make for an easy commute no matter where you work.

Darien manages to retain its small-town feel, while offering much of what you would find in larger metropolises. Living in a small town for some means traveling great lengths for delicious food, shopping, or entertainment. Not so in Darien. Everything you could possibly need is here. Though we have fast, easy access to larger retailers, malls, and such, in neighboring towns, many of our residents choose to support the small businesses here. It not only keeps the local economy thriving, it also provides a strong sense of community and inclusion. Parking is as easy as pulling into an open lot and stopping wherever you please. You can even choose to walk to all the local shops. And while living in a small town doesn't necessarily mean you know everyone, spending time in local stores, restaurants and parks, means there are always familiar faces you come across. This increases the odds of bumping into many of the same residents on multiple occasions which allows you to befriend and connect with them, making you feel at home. Enjoying such small moments as running into friends and neighbors everywhere from buying groceries, to drinking coffee, to hauling leaves to the dump, all adds to the quality of life here. There are many, many aspects as to why people love living here, but I think it is the non-commercial aesthetic that offers the greatest appeal. In addition to all these wonderful things, and maybe *most* importantly... Darien also enjoys a low crime rate. Having traveled extensively up and down the northeast corridor I can tell you that most all 7Eleven's have one thing in common, they are seedy places. The store and the parking lot outside are often a source of noise and litter and many...especially those in high-traffic areas... become hangouts and havens for crime. This is not something that belongs in our picturesque little town.

Also of note, is that the addition of such a business offers no support to the local community. With nearly half a dozen gas stations on our tiny 4 mile stretch of the Post Road, and being situated between **TWO** 24hr gas station/food/convenience facilities, a mere SECONDS away at the I-95 rest stops, a 7Eleven offers ZERO benefit to this town. It's an unneeded service that will further erode our small-town culture, have negative financial implications on local business, increase traffic, detract from our quaint aesthetic, and potentially invite crime into our community. While it *is* possible for a small number of (certain) chain stores and locally owned shops to coexist in harmony, keep in mind that small towns are easily diluted and dissolved by greed and commercialism. There is a fine line between providing resources for the wants and needs of a community, and allowing large, impersonal chains to take root and spread. Darien has historical interest. It has not been ruined by too much progress. We have some very nice shops and a few, but not too many, chain stores... this cheap, sleazy outfit does not belong here. The unsightly appearance of a garish, brightly lit, 24hr 7Eleven will forever change the landscape of this town. Another gas station would be superfluous and part of an already overserved genre (8) that is neither wanted, nor needed in our community. If you want a midnight cup of coffee, go to Dunkin Donuts. Need gas at 3

a.m? Go up on the highway. The goal could be to protect and preserve the aesthetic that gives our town its character, attracts new residents, and gives the generations born and raised here, incentive to stay. It should be the right of the community to determine how it grows and develops and our elected officials have a responsibility to prioritize the needs and wants of this community and the safety of its residents, over the almighty tax dollar.

Maria Considine
Robin Hood Lane

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: Luisa de Samame-Spear <ls@lssconsultant.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 4:58 PM
To: DarienZBA; Olvany, Stephen; DarienPZC; Stevenson, Jayme
Cc: David Smith; nick@fvfunds.com; Doneit, Fred; Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: FYI and the 7-Eleven Public files

November 22, 2020

Dear Chairman Nedder, Vice-Chairman Williams, Chairman Olvany, Vice Chairman Leahy and First Selectman Stevenson:

I am forwarding to your attention and for the 7-Eleven petition files, a copy of the letter sent on November 19, 2020 to Mr. Donald Anderson, Chief of Police.

The intent is to keep you informed and to ensure that these communications are entered in the public files of the 7-Eleven application.

Thank you in advance for your attention,

Luisa Spear
23 Pond Lane
Darien, CT
(203) 655-1908

ls@lssconsultant.com

From: Luisa de Samame-Spear <ls@lssconsultant.com>
Subject: "Before we have an issue or a problem"
Date: November 19, 2020 at 1:39:08 AM EST
To: <danderson@darienct.gov>

November 19, 2020

Donald B. Anderson
Chief of Police-
Darien, CT Police Department
25 Hecker Avenue
Darien, CT 06820

Dear Chief Anderson:

I am a 37 year Darien resident who with a few hundred neighbors is taking a stand against the damage that opening a 7-Eleven in Darien most likely will cause.

While this project has been filed and notices were published, it was lost in the abundance of the combined pandemic and election news.

We learned about 7-Eleven intentions only last week and immediately started to reach out to neighbors and found out that most people did not know about it and immediately opposed.

As you are well aware, the town goes quiet around 10-11PM and one seldom encounters another vehicle when returning from a late dinner with friends. We are concerned for our safety, peace and quality of life that inevitably will be impacted by a 24-hour 12 gas/diesel stations and a convenience store.

We are certain that traffic will increase and will further slow its flow on the 2 lane Post Road. Most concerning is its proximity to I-95 that coupled with 7-Eleven aggressive marketing App offering low gas prices and freebies along with Waze, Google maps and throughway signs will attract I-95 traffic into town.

In addition to the above, the project envisions 50 FT trailers entering and exiting the gas station as shown in the detailed renderings filed in the Town Hall. This drawing depicts the radius a 50 FT trailer requires and will block Post Road traffic in both directions. Further to that, southbound traffic entering the town will have to turn left on Post Road to go into the gas station.

All of the above compounded traffic problems will further hinder the traffic entering/exiting Birch, Sylvan, Maywood, and Richmond Roads to name a few.

At the November 10 meeting we were made aware by a 7-Eleven employee of their heightened safety measures that are evidence of the inherent risks a 24 hour operation has. While we can only imagine what may happen, you and the officers that protect our community know with certainty what is at stake, what you will have to watch for, and what dangers may loom. The surrounding neighbors are concerned for their family's safety and the traffic that will spill into their narrow roads.

I was encouraged by a segment your message of July of this year in which you state:

"We think it is important to be proactively engaged with many community groups across our region well before we have an issue or problem. We always look to be engaged and be part of the "solution." "

In that spirit we respectfully ask that if you believe that our concerns and fears are founded, that you join your voice to ours "before we have an issue or problem" and that you object such an ill suited business for a small town as ours.

Sincerely,

Luisa Spear
23 Pond Lane
Darien
(203) 655 1908
ls@lssconsultant.com

From: Hutch Pegler <hutch.pegler@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 5:16 PM
To: DarienPZC; DarienZBA; Ginsberg, Jeremy
Cc: Stevenson, Jayme; terrie.wood@housegop.ct.gov; Anderson, Don; shredders@darienct.gov; hutch.pegler@gmail.com; Ryann Pegler
Subject: Pending Regulation Amendment, Special Permit & Application at 306 Boston Post Road (7-Eleven, Inc.)

To the Darien Planning & Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals:

We write in vehement opposition to 7-Eleven, Inc.'s proposed 24-hour rest stop facilities (six-island, 12-pump gas & diesel fueling stations along with a 4,000 square foot Raise-the-Roost fast food restaurant and convenience store) at the current Duchess Restaurant property on the Post Road.

This application and multiple amendments to current zoning regulations (with respect to non-compliant signage, parking, minimum square footage for intended property use, and more) are thoroughly inconsistent with the Darien Planning & Zoning Commission's 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). In its introductory pages the POCD clearly promulgates a number of specific objectives, including: maintaining & enhancing community character and promoting community spirit; managing business development; addressing overall traffic circulation and vehicular transportation issues, and; improving pedestrian and bicycling options.

First, we note the applicant's own filing concedes this location will become a target for criminal activity if approved. What else would compel them to proactively include a presentation regarding "crime deterrence" protocols in support of their application? These slides detail plans for "bright lighting inside and out" with a "fishbowl" effect as "research indicates that robbers don't like stores that are brightly lit," along with references to surveys of what "armed robbers in prison" tell them they look for when selecting targets. To our knowledge, other than the on-Turnpike rest stops, there are precisely zero businesses operating 24-hours a day in Darien. An enterprise that will increase nefarious activity (per applicant's own filing) is antithetical to enhancing community character & spirit while appropriately managing business development, and will further tax finite public resources.

In addition, this proposal is detrimental to traffic circulation & safety and will negatively affect pedestrian and bicycling options in direct conflict with the POCD's goals. Anyone who has driven from Norwalk to Darien on the Post Road knows this area is already heavily congested with cars and trucks navigating many curb cuts and a confusing traffic pattern (where Exit 13 Turnpike southbound off & on-ramps intersect and westbound Post Road traffic merges to one lane, all in one very compact area). It's a gauntlet even before taking into account frequently slow or stopped traffic on the Turnpike, which regularly results in Darien surface streets being overwhelmed. Darien PD data shows there have been 77 car accidents near the proposed site over the past three years; how will these statistics trend if this application and multiple zoning waivers are approved and traffic at that location doubles (per applicant)?

Applicant's traffic study is suspicious at best given it was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic and relies on a flawed "traffic projection model" that generates logic defying results by, for instance, concluding that the wait time for traffic turning onto the Post Road from Birch Road would actually decrease after adding hundreds of incremental vehicles (again, the applicant's data) entering & exiting 306 Post Road, which is just a few short yards away from Birch Road. The applicant's own traffic consultant obliterated his credibility at the last P&Z hearing by arguing that the two "EXIT" signs (with arrows clearly pointing right) at the exit of Duchess restaurant are not intended to suggest a right-turn-only, and "do not speak to traffic control."

Darien's Plan of Conservation and Development is an incredibly deliberate, carefully constructed blueprint for the future of our town. It's thoughtfully updated once every ten years with input from literally hundreds of people representing every facet of our community, who ultimately agree on a unified set of principles and objectives to guide future development in Darien. A vote for this proposal is a vote against both the letter and spirit of those principles and objectives.

Hutch and Ryann Pegler
31 Point O' Woods Road

Ginsberg, Jeremy

From: Ned May <nedmay@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 5:18 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; Stevenson, Jayme
Subject: Opposition to 7-11 Development

Jeremy/ Jayme,

First, thank you for everything you do for this town. I live on Richmond Drive in close proximity to the proposed development and run a business at 10 Corbin Drive. I have a vested interest in the outcome on both a personal and professional basis.

My wife and I strongly oppose the 7-11 development, all zoning amendments requested, and any permits for the same.

It is hard to be succinct on this issue as there are so many reasons (each of significant consequence), why this proposal should be rejected—Traffic, Safety, Required Zoning Variances, Inconsistency with Darien’s Strategic Plan, Does Not Fulfill a Community Need, Negative Impact on Long-standing Local Businesses, Detrimental to and a Deterrent to Commercial Developers Investing Positively in our Community, Negative Environmental Impacts, etc. etc. The list of reasons NOT to approve is LONG. I would even argue that the development would have a negative impact on Darien’s finances, as additional tax revenue at that site will be offset by collateral damage including reduced revenue at nearby businesses and significant incremental costs borne by the Police Department, Fire Department, Post 53 and other town agencies.

As evidenced by the huge volume of letters from residents ACROSS TOWN, the Police Chief Anderson’s public statements expressing concern, the number of parties who have engaged legal counsel and will invest significant time and dollars to fight this matter, THE OPPOSITION IS UNIVERSAL, WIDESPREAD and WILL ONLY INCREASE THE LONGER THIS MATTER REMAINS OPEN.

On a personal note, we have 3 young kids and I estimate there are over 100 elementary and middle school-aged kids on Richmond, Birch, Point O Woods, Watchtower, Maywood and Delwood. I don’t think it is conjecture to say that this development would create more traffic and criminal incidents—frequency of incidents *will* increase, it’s just a question of by how much and at what level of severity. I sincerely hope that we and the town as a whole do not have to find out the hard way.

I implore the P&Z to reject this proposal.

Regards,

Ned May
Richmond Drive

p.s. Enclosed please find a letter written to the Darien Police Commission on this matter.

Darien Police Department
Darien Police Commission

Sincerely,

Ned and Barbara May
Richmond Drive

Attn: Robert Shreders, Administrative Services Bureau Capital (rshreders@darienct.gov)
Attn: Brent Hayes, Commissioner (bhayes@darienct.gov)

November 18, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

We are extremely concerned with the proposed 24 hour 7-Eleven development on the current Dutchess site. Our principal concerns are (i) Traffic and (ii) Safety. We live in close proximity to the site, but feel strongly that the impacts would be felt widely across town, including at the Darien Police Department, as we have no doubt the development would increase the frequency of both traffic and criminal incidents. This means additional burden on the police force for a development that seems to have universal opposition from the community.

The Darien Police Department does a tremendous job keeping our community safe. We implore the Darien Police Commission to continue to investigate the facts of the proposal, solicit as much as input as practical from the residents and local business owners spending significant time on this issue, and make its voice well known to the P&Z and to the broader town.

Traffic:

- A 24-hour, 12-pump gas station + convenience store + QSR will draw hundreds of incremental vehicles off I-95 every day to intersections already nearing capacity and will cause a step change increase in traffic in and out of the Dutchess site
- Given existing traffic patterns on Rte 1 near Exit 13, this incremental traffic will create hazardous road conditions—for example, the Exit 13 off-ramp is short and drivers must cross 4 lanes of traffic with an intermediate stop between the northbound and southbound lanes of Rte 1—it is rare a week goes by where we don't see an accident or near accident with drivers darting from I95, the businesses and side streets
- The recent re-lining of the Rte 1/ southbound I95 on-ramp has condensed traffic patterns and will exacerbate these issues further. We used to walk/ ride bikes to the Darien Diner, but don't do that anymore given safety concerns as patterns are more erratic as drivers navigate the traffic shifts
- In addition, I suspect the step-change in traffic will make left turns out of Richmond and Birch difficult, which could in turn drive more traffic through adjacent neighborhoods (including streets that have speed bumps, evidence that through traffic speed is already an issue)
- The impact of Waze and other mobile apps cannot be underestimated as they can have a material impact on directing traffic, including should 7-Eleven advertise this location on those platforms. Proximity to I95 already means cars are frequently diverted through the town of Darien, causing gridlock—imagine what that would look like
- Finally, 7-Eleven's traffic study is flawed and the record needs to be corrected before the development proposal advances any further

Safety:

- The traffic issues noted above create real safety concerns as well—more traffic creates the likelihood of more accidents and more chance for injury to drivers and pedestrians alike
- **In addition, we are extremely concerned with 7-Eleven's proposed 24-hour operation.** I don't think it is conjecture to say that this will create more incidents of crime—frequency of incidents *will* increase, it's just a question of by how much and at what level of severity
- As detailed in P&Z submissions, 7-Eleven has invested significant time and attention into their crime prevention efforts—evidence that 7-Eleven stores have a history of incidents (not necessarily an indictment of 7-Eleven, as one would expect that from any 24 hour operation)
- Darien already has an issue with overnight auto-theft—does the Police Department think this development would exacerbate that or related issues?
- A 24-hour, stand-alone gas/ c-store/ QSR operation in close proximity to I95 on/ off ramps, with the nearest 24-hour business more than 1 mile away just seems like a magnet for issues

We greatly appreciate your public service and your support of the Darien community. We strongly urge the Darien Police Commission and Police Department to investigate and make their voice known on these issues.

(917) 576-7875

JOHN.SARTORIUS@GMAIL.COM **JOHN M. SARTORIUS**

33 Birch Road, Darien, CT 06820

OPPOSITION TO 7-ELEVEN ZONING AMENDMENTS

DEAR DARIEN PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSIONERS,

I am writing to vehemently oppose the proposed 7-Eleven gas station/convenience store at 306 Boston Post Road. As residents of Birch Road, we have significant concerns about the negative impact this proposed development would have on our family-oriented neighborhood and upon Darien more broadly.

As a businessperson, I completely understand and appreciate the importance of driving a strong local economy, but in this instance, the negative consequences far outweigh any economic benefit.

Not only would the 24-hour gas station cause increased traffic congestion (and traffic incidents) but we would be inviting late night highway drivers into our neighborhood. As residents we fear increased crime would deteriorate the value of our homes and more importantly, make this suburban area less safe for our children.

Moreover, I see no need for ANOTHER gas station on this stretch of the Post Road since there are already six stations within 0.5 miles of Exit 13. The 24-hour gas station is right where IT SHOULD BE... ON I-95. Let's keep it that way and keep our neighborhoods safe.

Sincerely,



John M. Sartorius

From: Lou Converse <lou.converse@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 6:17 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy; DarienZBA; Anderson, Don; shredders@darienct.gov; Huffard, Kim; Cunningham, Kevin; Hayes, Brent; Stevenson, Jayme
Cc: Jim Conley
Subject: Proposed Dutchess Re-development

Greetings. We hope you are well and safe in spite of the not so great headlines around COVID locally.

We are writing to you today to voice our opposition to the application to re-develop our local Dutchess.

We have been residents of the town for 28 years and have lived in the area near the proposed redevelopment site for 22. We are terribly concerned about traffic, safety, crime, our local business community and the lack of benefit to our community overall.

On the traffic front, a 24 hour retail establishment of any kind at that location will certainly attract significantly more traffic from I-95 to Exit 13, which is an area that already suffers from tremendous traffic congestion.

Even now we are frequently left waiting long periods trying to safely take a turn in to or out of Birch Road from / to the Post Road. We have a similar problem entering / exiting the parking lot of the small shopping area adjacent to Birch (Darien Nails, Darien Discount Wines and Spirits and Crescendo Music). We also walk frequently and can tell you that the area around the site also has plenty of pedestrian use, including clients of another local business Dynamic Fitness/Athletics - which is located directly across from the site. The added traffic raises risk for both local drivers and pedestrians.

We agree with the point noted at the P&Z meeting on 11/10 that the traffic impact study is quite suspect.

In terms of safety concerns outside of those created by increased traffic, the transient activity that would be attracted off of I-95, especially given a 24 hour establishment, would also certainly increase crime, reduce neighborhood safety and certainly increase use of local police resources.

We would also like to speak up for our local shop-keepers, restaurants and the family owned BP station which will certainly have business siphoned away by the 7-11 chain. 7-11 appears to actually be owned by a global company based in Tokyo Japan. In terms of gas stations, why do we need yet another one let alone near Exit 13? There are at least 3 in close proximity to both the southbound and northbound exits already. Let's not forget that Darien is sandwiched between two major service plazas on I-95!

It's really difficult to envision how allowing so many variances to local zoning requirements (which presumably are meant to benefit our town) and approving this plan would benefit the actual residents of the town of Darien.

In summary, given the increase in transient traffic, crime and safety issues that will certainly result, it will prove to be a detriment, particularly to the surrounding neighborhood.

Please do not approve this, or any similar proposal.

Respectfully, and with the greatest concern,

Lou Converse & Jim Conley
9 Point O Woods Road, Darien, CT 06820

From: Tamsin Sickinger <tmsickinger@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 6:36 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Subject: 7-Eleven proposal

Dear Jeremy,

We were disheartened to hear that the Duchess Family restaurant is closing after 50+ years in Darien and that they intend to lease the property to the 7-Eleven Corporation.

As a 30 year resident of Birch Road, we have witnessed the increase in traffic both on our road and on the Post Road. Pre-pandemic it was difficult to make a left turn out of or onto our street during the morning and evening rush hours as well as whenever there was an incident on I-95 which increased traffic on the Post Road. (This was a regular occurrence.) Constructing a 12 pump gas station, convenience store and a restaurant operation will most certainly add to traffic safety issues. Frankly, we believe that a comprehensive traffic study is not feasible in the current environment.

Is there a need for such a large, 24-hour operation when there are two large interstate rest areas within 1 mile of this location? We firmly believe the answer is NO. There are approximately 20 pumps between the Norwalk line and Brookside Road. Do we need more? It is also our understanding that most service business (perhaps with the exception of restaurants/bars) are not allowed to operate past 10 or 11PM. We support the intentions of our 10-year town plan which encourages specific architecture, specific hours of business, as well as specific business zones. How does 7-Eleven's business model conform to the zoning regulations of Darien? Why would we even consider any type of variance? Weren't the regulations reviewed and revised in 2019?

The businesses that surround our neighborhood are small, mostly family owned enterprises. All of them have been good neighbors. The services we frequently need are well met by the businesses currently in operation nearby. We feel that a national franchise convenience store/gas station with a low budget restaurant, in no way enhances our neighborhood and potentially could adversely affect the safety of our neighborhood.

Finally, the amount of information presented at the hearing on November 10th regarding safety procedures was a bit alarming. The property is literally located on the entrance to I-95. If a crime were to be committed, it is a quick jump on to the highway. Isn't that the probable scenario which resulted in the death of Officer Bateman? It would also suggest that crime is a major consideration/issue for the corporation.

We are encouraging you to VOTE NO on the Zoning Application dated August 20, 2020 by the 7-Eleven Corporation.

Thank you for your time.

Tamsin and Tim Sickinger

17 Birch Road

203-655-0220

From: Letty Helgans <letty.helgans@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 9:15 PM
To: Ginsberg, Jeremy
Cc: Stevenson, Jayme; david.helgans@gmail.com
Subject: 306 Boston Post Road Site Application

Mr. Ginsberg,

Having been a town resident from 1988 to now with a two year job transfer to Manhattan Beach CA (1994-96) I have grown to love our town for its charm and the friendly and caring people who obtained residency here. In fact, while we lived in California my husband and I and our two young toddlers came back for Christmas and stayed with my sister, another town resident. We went to the Good Food Store for last minute xmas baked goods. While walking in to the store, a young college-aged kid held the door and struck up a conversation with another customer, "Hello Mr. Johnson, Merry Christmas, nice to see you..." That exchange cemented for me the importance of returning to this town to raise our children here. In Manhattan Beach you rarely saw generations of people. It was so transient.

Since returning here back in 1996, our town has changed, for the most part, for the better. Commercial real estate has generated local retail investors who recognize the importance of retaining its charm.

Allowing a 7-11 to be built in our town will detract from the First Selectman Jayme Stevenson's mission "to maintain a highly desirable small New England town with its quality of life."

Our town has ample number of gas stations. In fact, if you surveyed the town you'd realize most people are actually quite loyal to their local gas station. It's not nearly price driven but it's "charm driven." People today need to maintain social connections especially during a pandemic. I have witnessed firsthand gas customers leaving their car at the gas pump to run to Starbucks to buy a quick cup of coffee asking the attendant if he'd like one as well.

~ 7-11 with 12 gas pumps will not only generate transient customers, but will also congest traffic on the Post road and its adjacent side streets.

~ 7-11, with 24 hour operation, will require more police oversight taking away from other important responsibilities in our charming town.

~ 7-11 will not have the "charming appeal" that our town continues to build. (e.g. looming illuminated 24 hour signage)

Please do not approve the
306 Boston Post Road site application. The risks far exceed the potential rewards.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your service to our charming town.

Sincerely,

Leticia Helgans

9 Sunset Road
Darien, CT 06820

November 22, 2020

Dear Planning & Zoning Commissioners,

We are writing in opposition of the proposed 7-Eleven that is to replace Duchess at 306 Boston Post Road.

Our chief concerns are threefold: a potential increase in traffic volume off Exit 13, the potential threat to Darien's aesthetic, the potential for an uptick in late night, anti-social behavior that can result from a 24 hour convenience store.

Exit 13 consistently backs up due to high volume traffic. Large retail stores like Costco, Walmart and Home Depot can cause significant wait times for northbound Darien residents exiting the highway at Exit 13, especially on weekends. Also, the intersection of the the Post Road and Birch Road can already be difficult for drivers trying to make a left out of Birch.

Darien is a town known for its charm. Many efforts have been and are being made to beautify the downtown area. We worry that the large signs and bright lights associated with 7-Eleven stores and gas stations would impact the character of the town.

24 hour stores can sometimes leads to an uptick in late night, anti-social behavior. The potential increase in noise and litter are among our chief concerns.

In addition, there are already plenty of gas stations on the Post road - do we really need another?

Respectfully submitted,

Marc & Helen Del Bene, 19 Birch Rd.

From: Stephanie O'Malley <scomalley95@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 9:09 AM
To: Olvany, Stephen; Leahy, Jennifer; Warble, Larry; Rand, James; Gately, Cara; Reilly, George; Ginsberg, Jeremy; Anderson, Don; Shreders, Robert; DarienZBA; Huffard, Kim; Cunningham, Kevin; Stevenson, Jayme; Hayes, Brent
Cc: Jim O'Malley
Subject: 7-11

Good morning,

I am writing this morning to express my concern with the proposal to have a 7-11 "supercenter" in town. I am from Long Island and am very familiar with 7-11. My issue is with then over the top addition of the gas station and signage. Our town has made it challenging for small businesses to advertise-lots of rules about signage. When Shake Shack wanted to open in town, there was signifiant discussion about their signage and the word "eyesore" was most certainly used. Please explain why 7-11 proposes should even be considered.

I love on this side of town and traffic need there is a nightmare on a weekday-let's also consider weekends and holidays. The traffic study done during a pandemic should be found laughable. This type of convenience store/gas station configuration does not exist along CT's 95 stretch. All gas stations/rest stops are not in the midst of the town and other businesses. They do not intersect with the Post Road. They are self contained along 95. Why would we accept this drastic shift in configuration?

Since Darien is sandwiched in between 2 cities and the Post Road and 95 act as connectors, are we providing an easy place for drug deals to occur with 24 hour business? Let's not make it easier for crimes to be committed in our town.

I will keep this brief since I am sure you have many letters to read, Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Stephanie O'Malley
21 Circle Road
Darien