

27 April 2020

To: Mr. Mark Witmer, Town Supervisor
Caroline Town Board
Caroline Planning Board

Re: Proposed Local Law to impose a Moratorium on Actions Subject to Site plan and Subdivision Review for a Period of One Hundred and Eighty (180) Days.

I am unable to attend the Public Hearing of 28 April 2020 due to prior commitments and wish my comments to be read during Privilege-of the- floor, so I am emailing them to the Town's Clerk, Board and Planning Board. Please have them read, Thank You.

I am adamantly opposed to the Moratorium for several reasons. This appears to be a knee-jerk reaction to petitions sent to the Board against one person/one project concerning the development of a small retail store on Route 79. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan is currently a Plan, not a Law, that anyone wanting to develop in our Town, whether residential or commercial, can use as a guide for that development. That Plan has been in existence for 14 years. In 2015 and 2018 surveys have sought out residences' ideas to update this Plan. The Planning Board has admitted to working for six (6) years, with all kinds of information from residences, to revise the Plan and have not finished. I believe it is unfair to anyone for the Town Board and the Planning Board to want to back track in order to change the Plan that is the present guide, just to suit their needs. Please finish the Plan and work with those that come afterward to keep our Town's rural character.

Individuals that have signed petitions may have been misinformed about the project on route 79. The Review Board had not presented any details of this project before petitions were signed (3/20/2020), so how do those individuals have current and correct information for which to make any protest?

Several individuals have recently moved into the area of Lounsbery and Landon Roads as renters or new home owners. Now that they have moved in, they, as well as others that are longer time residences, seem to have come up with a NIMBY attitude shown by signing a petition. They certainly have the right to voice their opinion and they are within their right to shop elsewhere. I am a veteran of this country that served to protect the Freedoms that are afforded everyone. I cannot then condone the NIMBY attitude that portrays a bigots and racist type of attitude toward other's Freedoms. It always seems to be OK in my yard if I'm for it, but not OK if I don't like what you want to do in yours.

The old barn on Landon Road may be some 100 years old and for the past 30 years the owner has wanted to replace or resurrect it into a useful farm building. The farmer wanted to stay with the rural look, keeping it pleasing for the neighborhood, instead of a modern pole shed that would be half the cost and more than twice the size of the current barn, stretching across the frontage of Landon Road. The past few years poor weather has hampered the farming business and stressed finances. In times like these farmers look to sell unwanted or useless assets, hence the sale of some unproductive land. Selling land for a small store will support the family, keep the farm running and be instrumental in finishing the barn. That's survival. Hopefully the Board understands the financial need for supporting this project, because it won't come from the neighbors. It's

shameful that the neighbor's attitude of NIMBY is against the farmer, when his thoughts have been on them and rural character.

A small retail store will be a great asset for the community and the environment. An excerpt from the current Comp Plan:

“at least 90 businesses now operate in the town. Most are small, employing one fulltime equivalent person or less and tend to be scattered over the town. Retail stores within the hamlets has shown less vibrancy, with traffic on Route 79 currently supplying the steadiest customer base in Slaterville. The retail stores in Brooktondale and Speedsville do not have this conduit for delivering customers. While Route 79 traffic will likely sustain several retail businesses in Slaterville, the future of retail businesses in Brooktondale and Speedsville is less certain.”

Less fortunate people will have a place closer to home to purchase economical necessities they need. This is important to their dwindling budgets. They will save money on the items needed and travel less than the 10 to 20 miles they currently travel now to shop for necessities. This will also lower their carbon foot print by not traveling greater distances. Less fuel used and less pollution. In short time a small retail store will become embraced and a vital part of the community.

Another benefit of a small store, especially during the current Pandemic, is the advantage of social distancing when compared to big box stores. Let us all hope that another crisis is not in the near future.

The location that I've seen for this retail store from the Town's website will not hinder the view of the beautiful valley that passersby on Route 79 get of our rural community. By the way, does anyone have a definition of rural character? I haven't seen one in the Plan in order to know just what to expect.

Lastly, with all the advantages above, the prospect of local jobs, local community spirit, property taxes, school taxes, and sales taxes will also promote the Town of Caroline.

Please vote NO on the proposed Moratorium for the good of all residences.

Please excuse a quick note to the Planning Board:

The Planning Board has had numerous suggestions as to how they might be able to assist farmers and agriculture in the Town of Caroline, yet have not acted. When will you act? To date Caroline has lost from my count at least 7 out of 8 dairy farms, or more. I know one farmer that rents some land for crops along with his own land that has lost in one way or another 100 acres of agricultural lands. If you are looking to maintain a rural character in Caroline, look at what you can do for agricultures' future. By the way, the barn project above will also lower the carbon foot print the farmer produces.

Thank You
Ken Miller
131 Landon Rd.