

## Town Clerk

---

**From:** Rebecca Sue Schillenback <wildandpreciouslife@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 10:16 AM  
**To:** Town Clerk  
**Subject:** Concerns regarding Proposed Commercial Development

Hello, I am a Caroline citizen. I was deeply saddened and alarmed to hear that plans have been submitted for a Dollar General store on route 79. Though threatened and compromised by micro and macro economic and social issues, such as the patterns of systemic corporatization, so-called global free trade, and virtual commerce that have gutted Main Streets and towns across the country, our town is populated by a good number of people like myself who can envision a thriving local community, rich in social capital and the circulation of goods and services produced and traded here. For example, we could have our own general store, our own hardware store, locally owned. Many of us do what we can to limit our participation in a global industrial capitalism that extracts wealth from struggling localities everywhere, all over the world, deliberately pitting people against one another in a race to be exploited for the meager benefits massive corporations based elsewhere are willing to share. Character-less sprawl, such as that proposed by Dollar General, aesthetically incongruous and carrying cheap products, cheaply made, by exploited workers far away, is emblematic of this despair-inducing economy, which has swallowed up our country in my lifetime. This vast system has placed communities like ours in an impossible situation, both starving us and requiring our participation if we wish to meet our basic needs. Always such stores are owned and proposed by people who live outside the towns they seek to extract wealth from. Always they are proposed for towns such as ours, where it was once possible to meet basic needs locally. Always there is a subtle or overt reliance on the deep class divisions that are tearing communities across our country apart. Always those who object will be accused of elitism and classism, as if those who have been left behind by the global economy do not also hunger for community and beauty.

Many of us sense that another, more beautiful world is possible, that we could find ways to meet our basic needs within a smaller radius, as we once did, such that we could value one another's efforts, skills, and time, and in so doing both foster the community that is fraying all over the country and preserve and cherish the beauty that makes towns like this such a wonderful place to live. I wish we could come together, ask one another what kind of town we want to live in, and work together to preserve and build that town.

If we cannot prevent this outside-of-our-community, wealth-extracting corporation from making a grab here, can we at least insist that they not forever destroy open space? I ask that if this is inevitable, as much of the corporatization has seemed over these last 30 years, can we at least insist that they somehow make the empty industrial/commercial space at the top of Brooktondale Road work for their purposes? That would be far less wasteful, less destructive of beauty and open space, and would prevent another already 'developed' property from falling into disrepair and even greater blight.

Thank you,  
Rebecca Schillenback

--

*Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in. — Leonard Cohen. "Anthem"*

*If we look at all the wars of history, we'll see that God has unwillingly been enlisted on both sides of the fight. It's easy to wonder what God does when both sides are praying for God's protection. Trusting the rabbi Jesus as an archetypal pattern of God's presence and participation on Earth, I believe God is found wherever the suffering is. I believe this because that is precisely where Jesus goes. He makes heroes of the outsiders and underdogs in almost all his parables and stories. To miss that point is culpable and chosen ignorance. The awakened and aware ones—like Jesus and Francis of Assisi—go where people are suffering, excluded, expelled, marginalized, and abused. And there they find God. —Richard Rohr. "Changing Sides," July 4, 2018*