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Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission
Town Hall
84 South Main Street
Cheshire, CT 06410

March 9, 2007

Dear Chairwoman Flynn-Harris,

When W/S Development announced its desire to build a shopping center with forty stores and five restaurants in West Wareham, Massachusetts, a lot of West Wareham's residents were very concerned about the shopping center's potential impact.

At the beginning of the Planning Board's shopping center hearing process, Lou Masiello, representing W/S Development, addressed concerned residents. He emphasized W/S Development's commitment to both the town of Wareham and to the project. "We want you to be comfortable with the project and pleased with its outcome," he said. "We want to be able to say to Planning Board's in other towns, talk with the people in Wareham, and ask them how they feel about their shopping center and about W/S Development."

As the shopping center's hearings progressed residents raised a seemingly endless list of concerns, among them: traffic, environmental impact, architectural design, signage, lighting, and parking.

I was the most verbal resident, combative, and determined to prevent the shopping center from ever being built. I'm sure that at times I must have been W/S Development's worst possible nightmare, but, if I was, they never let me know.

W/S Development responded to issues that were raised, addressing them one by one with patience and a problem solving determination. When necessary in order to promote better understanding, they scheduled supplementary studies and had architectural drawings redefined.

As time passed the attention that W/S Development gave to input from residents and members of the Planning and Zoning Boards became increasingly more evident. Concerns about the signage, landscaping, parking, and the flow of traffic were addressed. And, perhaps most importantly, an area of stores was redesigned creating a village shopping concept which residents felt better reflected Wareham's personality.

Feeling included in the process, seeing my impact upon the shopping center's design, I grew to feel quite differently, more like a contributor to the process, than like its opponent. When the shopping center received its permits and the trees began to fall, I didn't feel sad. I felt like I had a part in what was happening and like what was happening was a part of me.

A few weeks before the shopping center's official groundbreaking, I received a phone call from Mr. Masiello. He told me that I would be receiving a formal invitation to the shopping center's groundbreaking ceremony, reminded me of my contribution to the hearing process, and said that he hoped I would be able to attend.

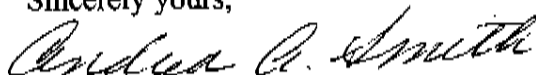
At the groundbreaking I had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Masiello and Tom DeSimone, Executive Vice President, W/S Development,. We talked about the transformation of my attitude, about opposition, and contribution, and feeling valued as a participant.

During the conversation, turning to Mr. DeSimone, I said, "You know, way back in the beginning Mr. Masiello said that W/S Development wanted Wareham to be happy with this project. He said you wanted one day to be able to tell planning boards in other towns to talk with Wareham's residents and to ask them how they feel about W/S Development and their shopping center."

I paused for a moment, and then, feeling somewhat in awe of a very good experience, I went on to say, "Standing here at this moment, at a groundbreaking that I never imagined I would want to attend, I just realized I'm that person, the one that planning boards in other towns should talk with."

Please know that if, at any time, it would be helpful for me to come and talk with you, I am available to do so.

Sincerely yours,



Andrea A. Smith

cc. Louis Masiello