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From: **Lori Brault** <[lbrault@gmail.com](mailto:lbrault@gmail.com)>

Date: Sun, Oct 24, 2021 at 10:49 PM

Subject: CHS proposal

To: <[michael.wrinn@wiltonct.org](mailto:michael.wrinn@wiltonct.org)>

Mr. Wrinn,

My name is Lori Brault. I own North Wilton Animal Hospital, located at 555 Danbury Road. As I stated at the end of the last Planning and Zoning meeting, many questions and concerns have been raised for me regarding the Connecticut Humane Society's proposal for the parcel at 863-875 Danbury Road. I was advised to send these to you via email.

1. Traffic:

Mr. Cipolla stated that there had been no accidents at the New Street intersection in the past three years. Has anyone looked at the accident history for the stretch of Danbury Road within one half mile in either direction? As a driver travelling this area of Danbury Road to get to work, I have observed accidents and their aftermaths during my morning commute. As a business occupying a nearby stretch of the road, there have been several times where traffic has been snarled in front of my clinic due to an accident or other road issue. I wonder if just the immediate intersection of New Street was included in the traffic study.

In addition, when discussing expected traffic to/from the facility, it appears that Westport was used for comparison. Did anyone look at Newington's traffic patterns? This should be more representative of what we can expect at the Danbury Road property. Does anyone truly believe traffic will be unaffected or minimally affected by this facility?

For reference, it takes on average three to five minutes before I can safely turn northbound to merge onto Danbury Road when I leave my clinic at 6:30 pm.

2. Noise:

Ms. Geary stated that daily exercise eliminates dogs' need to bark. I respectfully disagree with this statement. I have lived with dogs my entire life, worked with them for the last 34 years, 24 of those as a veterinarian. A well exercised dog will still bark if excited or startled. Outdoor play time, even supervised, comes with noise and barking.

Mr. Pagliaro, when discussing the proposed addition to Cannondale Animal Hospital, stated that he heard dogs barking from across the street on a Sunday. As pointed out during the meeting, this was most likely coming from Passage East, the kennel approximately 1/4 of a mile away from that animal hospital. I have clients who live a mile away from Passage East that tell me they can hear the barking. For anyone to say there will be zero noise impact to the neighbors from barking dogs is naive. As I have no background in HVAC, I can't speak to the noise level from heating and cooling units running on the roof of a building 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

3. "Animal Row"

Mr. Tomasetti, also during a portion of the meeting leading up to the CHS discussion, asked the members of P&Z to take a look at the projects that have been and are now being presented for this stretch of Danbury Road. He described the area as "animal row" and asked if that is what everyone wants. How is CHS different from the taxpaying animal centered business entities in perpetuating this concern?

4. The rest of my questions are for Mr. Bias

- a. What is the square footage, respectively, of the Westport and Newington facilities? It was mentioned at the meeting that the average number of dogs housed in Westport is one to five at any given time. Is this the expected number of dogs that will be at the new facility? How many dogs are housed at the Newington facility, on average? (both before and during Covid as this number is likely to have changed)
- b. What is the intended purpose of the proposed facility? During town discussions, great emphasis has been placed on an adoption center, however in your letter to area veterinarians dated November 12, 2020, and in our over one hour phone conversation that followed my receipt of this letter, the emphasis was on building a subsidized veterinary hospital similar to the Fox Memorial Clinic in Newington. Has the focus of the project changed? Has this proposal process been an accurate representation of the primary goal of the project?
- c. When Mr. Peterson conducted his noise study, he stated he was at the Westport adoption center with very few dogs present. Was a similar noise study done at Newington? If the scale of this facility is most similar to Newington, then would it not make more sense to gauge the noise level there than at Westport? I believe the average medium sized dog barks at approximately 120 decibels. Was a noise study done simulating the combined barks of multiple dogs to determine how far the noise from such a group of barking dogs travelled at the proposed site?
- d. With the current labor shortages in many industries, veterinary medicine included, how does CHS plan to staff this facility? It is my understanding that animals have been turned away from CHS recently not due to lack of space, but due to lack of staffing. With this large of a facility and the increased volume that comes with it, how will you make sure the animals are cared for properly? This also raises another concern - You stated that the hours of the facility will be 8am to 6pm. Does this mean that any animal housed on site, including hospitalized patients, will be left alone for 14 hours? Currently in the veterinary industry, leaving an animal alone and unsupervised for that amount of time is well below the standard of care.

I realize that as a veterinarian speaking in opposition to this project I put myself at risk for public scrutiny. I can assure you, I am not a lone veterinary professional in opposition. I have stayed silent thus far, hoping that CHS would be fully transparent with their intentions and that P&Z would hear the concerns of neighbors and conclude that this site makes little sense for this project. That does not seem to be happening.

I support the efforts of the Humane Society. I don't know anyone who is against helping animals find their way to safe and loving forever homes. When I went through Wilton's zoning application process in 2018, there were significant concerns about noise and waste impacts to my neighbors. I am not allowed to board animals for this reason. This is not an issue as there are several great boarding facilities nearby. However, hospitalizing patients is a necessity for me, and the zoning board had concerns for this as well. They wanted to make sure that any hospitalized patient would be supervised, either directly or remotely, and that someone would be available to return to the clinic should a noise concern arise. I rarely hospitalize patients as I feel they recover from illness and injury better in a familiar environment. Any patient requiring overnight care either comes home with me or is transferred to one of the local 24 hour facilities for their own safety. I wonder why the CHS is not being held to the same standards as I am regarding overnight care.

If this facility is intended to be a subsidized hospital meant to serve the needs of pet owners "in financial crisis" (A direct quote from the previously referenced Nov 2020 letter introducing the project to

local veterinarians) is this area of Danbury Road, not convenient to major highways or public transportation, the best place to reach that subset of the pet owning population? CHS's goal is noble, but this location makes little sense for it. I believe the proposed site on Danbury Road, in a residential area, is not the place for this facility. The Connecticut Humane Society can and should do better.

Thank you for your time.

Lori Brault, DVM