

October 25, 2021

Dear Commissioners and Town Planner Mike Wrinn,

Owing to technical issues, I am unable to participate in the public comment portion of tonight's zoom meeting concerning the Fuller LLC application for #141 Danbury Road. But I ask that you please read this comment aloud at the appropriate time.

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While I agree that Wilton needs to add multi-family housing stock, I find the Fuller LLC application for #141 Danbury Road is inordinately large for the 4 acre lot it occupies. I also think it is completely inappropriate that a developer is drafting the regulation for a new zone that will affect 36 other properties. That kind of impact is huge and it seems to me ought to emanate more properly from a dialogue between the commission and residents, such as we would have during a Master Plan exercise, but which seems to have unfortunately lagged behind, placing us in the unenviable position of the proverbial cart before the horse.

Additionally, the aesthetics seem 180-degrees opposite more visionary design that is complementary to Wilton's low slung landscape and scale, prompting me to marvel at this cognitive dissonance moment; the commission wants to elevate standards of the built environment, yet approving this would send a powerful message to future builders that we settled for brutalist architecture.

An article in Bloomberg from 2019 on the sudden popularity of this same style of construction reads: 'Why America's new apartment buildings all look the same: cheap stick framing has led to a proliferation of blocky, forgettable mid-rises and more than a few construction fires.' The article goes on to describe what may likely explain this trend. Writer Justin Fox states that this stick podium style is much cheaper, as much as 20-40% less expensive than building with concrete, steel or masonry.

Is that what Wilton wants to look like?

I don't think so and the residents were not polled. If they were, I doubt they'd agree on this direction. One Wilton resident, a former city dweller pleaded in a recent letter submitted to *Good Morning Wilton* to 'keep Wilton beautiful with housing that isn't hulking and ugly.' (GMW 10/21/2021). So that makes me wonder, are we really to believe that for Mr. Fuller to gain an acceptable return on his investment, that his project must have as many as 173 apartment units ?

That much density crowded on to an area that our current DE-5 regs restrict to only 50% site coverage, but will now be permitted to occupy as much as 75% of the land strikes me as more of a mini city than a community development...something more akin to Norwalk, Stamford or New Haven, but not Wilton. As a comparison, the project that was just withdrawn from the commission farther north on Pimpewaug featured 10 fewer units and that would have been situated on nearly 7 acres.

Since there appears to be no limit on the number of living units a DE-5R property owner could propose, what might be the unintended consequences of approving this amendment? A lot of overdevelopment

of South Wilton and possible white elephants? I note the lack of forward activity at 300 Danbury Rd which also involved a developer drafted modification to our regulations and the monstrously large apartment complex in Norwalk by Grist Mill Rd.

Both serve as cautionary warnings as our Town strives to redefine what we will accept in our built environment.

So it seems we are at an important crossroads with many eyes on this decision. If this commission wants to make Wilton both more beautiful while promoting new growth, you can do that by recognizing that this project and its regulation change do not offer that without threatening to brand Wilton's new architecture as cookie cutter and capitulative to outside developers.

Residents weighed in during the POCD with rightful expectation that we would be permitted the opportunity to address the particulars of Wilton's new growth through the taxpayer funded Master Plan process. Please give us the chance to accomplish that before allowing changes that will irrevocably alter what so many said drew them to settle here in the first place.

Better applications will come and some already have.

Sincerely,



Vicki Mavis

208 Ridgefield Road

Bloomberg article: [https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-02-13/why-america-s-new-apartment-buildings-all-look-the-same?fbclid=IwAR3xP5DwLeZI9hDhgv6HS6-hw\\_wbJT6IijkBO7aIkHR9NdX-35GgDdST-TQ](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-02-13/why-america-s-new-apartment-buildings-all-look-the-same?fbclid=IwAR3xP5DwLeZI9hDhgv6HS6-hw_wbJT6IijkBO7aIkHR9NdX-35GgDdST-TQ)