

New Paltz Times

4/24/08

Local project

As a member of the Town of New Paltz Planning Board, I have followed the Rivendell Winery application with interest. It has not been an active application during my tenure, but it has received considerable coverage in the New Paltz Times as the owners and neighbors demonstrate decidedly unneighborly behavior.

I have avoided reviewing the application or forming an opinion about its merits, because if the planning board must make a decision on it, I want very much not to have that review colored by the logical fallacies that have been included in the coverage in this paper, such as appeals to probability, bare assertions, fallacies by necessity, false dilemmas and the like. Consequences ranging from children dying on the streets to cows going unmilked throughout the town litter the landscape, and inspire people on both sides, but only those arguments with scientifically prepared data backing them up should actually be considered.

The only aspect of this matter that convinces me to comment at all is the recent statement by the owners that they hired a "world famous landscape architect" to create designs. I know several very talented landscape architects who live and work right here in the Hudson Valley, and I would be very pleased to see one of them get this work over someone in New York City.

The issue of local business involvement is close to my heart, and more and more often I see firms from as far as Philadelphia being hired to coordinate projects in New Paltz.

Not only does it directly support our local economy to hire local people to work on local projects, it increases the chances of local support. A local resident understands the needs of this community far better than someone a hundred miles away, no matter how famous he is. The New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce, which publicly supports the Rivendell project, has three landscape architects as members, and were I in a position to do so without losing impartiality, I would recommend one of those in particular.

This case sadly pits a local business against local residents. If Rivendell wishes to work out those issues with its neighbors in a neighborly fashion, I do hope they consider making this a local project, from plans to construction.

Terence P. Ward

New Paltz