



76 Riverview Ave.  
Noank, CT 06340

January 21, 2021

Dear Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

I am speaking today on behalf of Groton Conservation Advocates to raise our deep concerns about the size of the proposed Respler development at the old Oral School or Mystic Education Center. In our view, this proposal, in its present form, will alter the character of the Mystic area and have severe impacts on our quality of life.

We were concerned a year ago when Respler staff presented a concept to the Groton public proposing approximately 750 rental units for the property. Now Respler has come back with a proposal of 931 units, a nearly 200-unit increase. How many people will this development likely bring to the hill overlooking downtown Mystic? One can assume probably close to 2,000 as most units will have two people, some more and some fewer. This amounts to a new town in Groton.

This concentration of additional people in Mystic/Groton presents a serious threat to the quality of life of those who live in the nearby neighborhoods, and to the Grotonites who already experience long delays driving through Mystic and can't find parking in downtown Mystic to do a little shopping. This development is incompatible with the existing residential land use of the area and flies in the face of existing zoning regulations that call for neighborhood compatibility:

*9.4-6.C Neighborhood Compatibility The design elements of the proposed development are compatible with the development in the district and the surrounding area(s) and do not hinder or discourage the orderly development and use of other properties within the area or alter the essential characteristics of the area.*

At last night's Respler presentation, we listened to the many statements of neighbors, who expressed very legitimate concerns about blasting, water usage, sewage disposal, heavy traffic in the area, impacts on downtown Mystic and more.

The problem with our permitting system is that the developer hires all the experts to do the studies to answer the questions raised. This development is so huge and will have such a tremendous impact that the Town of Groton should hire experts to get an impartial evaluation of the carrying capacity in at least the following areas: traffic, run-off control system, sewage system, water in-take system, impacts on downtown Mystic. While there were other development proposals for this property presented to the town, the Planning and Zoning Commission was only shown one—the Respler proposal. We suggest that looking at others might help inform you about the appropriateness of this one.

This is not just another development in Groton. This one has potentially seismic consequences for our town, and we urge you to proceed with great caution.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Raisbeck and Eugenia Villagra  
Co-chairs, Groton Conservation Advocates