

My name is Nick Patch. I am here as a concerned citizen of Ferrisburgh. I have lived and owned a home in Ferrisburgh for 24 years. I work as a teacher at a Ferrisburgh non-profit organization, my wife has taught at the Ferrisburgh elementary school for 14 years and my daughter has been in the local school system for 8 years.

One of my goals in testifying today is to dispel the misperception that most Ferrisburgh residents support the effort to weaken the 9L criterion. Ferrisburgh is a town split right up the middle on issues of growth and how to define our town for future generations. You only need to look at the recent flurry of postings on Front porch forum about sprawl in the Rt 7 corridor where opinion is split right up the middle or look at a recent survey of Ferrisburgh residents done by the Ferrisburgh planning commission working with a consultant from the ACRPC. 73 % of respondents believe that development should be limited in areas of town to maintain natural and scenic resources. 63% believe that design standards (size, scale, style) should be instituted for development in the Rt 7 corridor. In response to the question :What are your biggest concerns about the future of Ferrisburgh 48% voiced concern about uncontrolled development.

In the last year in the Ferrisburgh Rt. 7 corridor we have seen the completion of a truck stop, convenience store, fast food restaurant with 2 acres of asphalt, the building of a dollar general store with phase 2 to be a predatory rent to own business, and we came close to the approval of Tom Deneckers car dealership with a 200 car parking lot. While it is impossible to know that 9L caused his withdrawal as he pulled his application well before the Act 250 process was complete , the fact is he ended up moving the car dealership into an existing dealership in the region. If 9L influenced that outcome I would say it is a positive one.

Ferrisburgh's progress in planning and zoning has been glacial . Our town plan update is well overdue. And our zoning by laws are archaic Our current zoning is weak and has no teeth to control the scale or quality of development in the Rt. 7 corridor. The selectboard has offered no support ,financial or otherwise to the planning commission to update the town plan or zoning bylaws. We are the low hanging fruit for developers with deep pockets whether it be Dollar General or the Champlain oil Co. or whatever developer is next. 9L offers at least some hope that the impact of sprawl will be considered in the process of permitting new

development. Honestly at the local level right now we have nothing. You don't need to drive far north to see what the end result of uncontrolled RT 7 development looks like. Do we really want to fill in the rural gaps on Rt 7 with the example set by south Burlington, Shelburne or Rutland.

It is all a matter of finding a balance between maintaining some of the rural character and view scapes of our town with appropriately scaled development. We need growth but it needs to be thoughtful. It needs to honor the rural character of our state . It needs to consider efficient use of the remaining open land in the Rt 7 corridor, preserve views and provide pedestrian access.

Some of us have been encouraging the Ferrisburgh selectboard to allocate a small amount of funds to get professional planning help in determining what would be the best use of the Rt 22A/ RT 7 property in the context of 9L and target that market for the sale of the property rather than squander limited time and resources fighting this much need criterion. They appear to have chosen the latter.

Ferrisburgh is a poster child for a community that needs 9L to help regulate uncontrolled sprawl development while it tries to figure out what it can do on a local level to reach a balance. Strip development is incremental and as each step is taken down that road it becomes harder and harder and then impossible to reverse the course. It is way too soon to judge the results of the 9L criterion. Give it a chance to do what it was designed to do, which is to find a balance promoting commercial development in our most visible transportation corridors that doesn't destroy what we love about our great state. Vermont and Ferrisburgh needs 9L.

Thank you

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