

From: Mark Wilson <mark@mgwilson.com>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:05 AM
To: Land use <landuse@cornwallct.gov>
Subject: Ridgeway Cidery Application #257

To the Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission:

As a long time resident and property owner in Cornwall, I would urge the Planning and Zoning Commission to reject Ridgeway application SP#257 for a farm cidery, farm store, and accessory apartment. This application has the potential to damage the character of the area, create considerable traffic, and create incompatible commercial activity in the area. The public and commercial serving of alcoholic beverages in a residential zone should not be approved. This application SP#257 should be rejected.

Regards,

Mark Wilson

18 River Road, West Cornwall, Connecticut

From: neil frauenglass <neilfrauenglass@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 5:08 PM

To: Land use <landuse@cornwallct.gov>

Subject: Opposition to current proposal for Ridgeway structure with tasting room

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to oppose the *current* zoning request for the Cider House at the Ridgeway Farm.

I believe our residential and farming community should be protected from “direct to consumer businesses” such as tasting rooms or retail. While we should all have the opportunity to use our land as it is currently zoned to generate income (residential, farming), exceptions should not be made for businesses that will bring ‘customers’ to our neighborhoods. This will change the landscape of neighborhoods, increase vehicle traffic and lower property values.

I am in support of the proposed structure with facilities for production and an apartment for a residence. The facilities are necessary to produce the product (this is relevant to being zoned for farming). And the apartment is an income generating opportunity (relevant to being zoned residential). But a tasting room and/or use of that building to officially welcome customers en mass is not appropriate based on the current law and/or should not be.

This all said, it raises many questions about our existing commercial/retail centers that currently have empty storefronts, storefronts used for storage (vs retail) and/or storefronts used for commercial businesses that do not require retail spaces. As we spend time looking at laws and holding hearings for new retail/customer-facing businesses in residential and farming communities, we should rather focus our attention on the laws and hearings to make our once thriving retail centers filled with retail once again. Instead, we:

1. Have properties held hostage by absentee owners who use retail spaces for storage. These owners should be fined, encouraging them to use the space as intended – to benefit to the community through small business and taxable sales
2. Create, or narrowly interpret, rules that prevent new businesses to open in antique buildings that were built prior to modern zoning requirements. Not only do we have precedent in our town for this (Ian Ingersoll), but the state of CT allows the use of antique buildings without septic, for example, to encourage their use and preservation. While this is not possible for all empty locations in town, according to Torrington Health, it IS possible for some.

I believe we should allow the Ridgeways to build the structure they need to produce cider on their farm. Full stop. No tasting room. No direct to consumer sales from the property. And I encourage them to bring their direct-to-consumer sales to one of our commercial centers, already zoned and desperately in need of new life and business.

Sincerely,

Neil Frauenglass
46 Scoville Road
West Cornwall, CT 06796

From: Martien Halvorson-Taylor <martienht@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 1:57 PM
To: Land use <landuse@cornwallct.gov>
Subject: Opposition to Cider Tasting Room on Town Street

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal for a commercial store and hard cider tasting room on Town Street, West Cornwall.

Our family has enjoyed Mr. Ridgway's farm stand for many years. I am concerned, however, about the plan for a construction of a sizeable two-story building near the road with a first floor intended for tasting and selling alcohol. Additionally, a parking lot for 10 cars is part of the proposal and raises further concerns about traffic and visual impact. Finally, the proposal for an already large building and parking lot is open-ended for expansion to cover future growth—which raises the specter of changes that could not be limited or rolled back.

While I am an avid supporter of local agriculture and the contributions made by farmers like Mr. Ridgway, as well as the farm stands associated with those efforts, I firmly believe that the proposed project is of a very different character and one not suitable for the residentially zoned area of Town Street. Town Street is a vital part of “The Loop,” a beloved three-mile walking route encompassing Town, Cogswell, Rattlesnake, Cream Hill, and Scoville roads. There are often as many walkers, hikers, and joggers as there are cars along the way. Creating a business and increasing potentially fast-paced traffic in such a setting will compromise the character of the neighborhood and The Loop, as well as the safety of those walking and biking on the road.

While I welcome the development of new businesses in Cornwall, placing such a facility in a residential part of town is not necessary. There are appropriate locations within the designated commercial areas of Cornwall bridge and West Cornwall. I urge you to consider the potential consequences on the character, tranquility, and historical significance of Town Street and its surroundings if this proposal were to move forward. And I respectfully request that you reject the application. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Martien Halvorson-Taylor
56 Scoville Road,
West Cornwall, CT

From: **Peter Canby** <petercanby14@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Sep 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Subject: Town Street cidery
To: <landuse@cornwallct.org>

Hi, I live on 20 Town Street. In no way do I oppose the plan of Ian and Jayne Ridgeway to start a cidery on their property. In fact, I commend the project because I think it's consistent with the agriculture-based economy of the town and might help retain young people who are unable to find other workable jobs.

That said, I understand the reservations of some of my neighbors and wonder if there isn't room for either moving the proposed barn to another site on the Ridgeway property or maybe moving the retail aspects of the business to West Cornwall, where it would be a welcome addition to the town's revival.

Best regards,
Peter Canby
cell: 914 539-1427

From: Severn Taylor <severn@switzer.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 1:56 PM
To: Land use <landuse@cornwallct.gov>
Subject: Cider mill

Severn Taylor
56 Scoville Rd
West Cornwall CT 06796
severn@switzer.org
347-461-5523

Concerns Regarding Proposed Cider Mill in Residential Neighborhood

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my deep concerns about the proposed cider mill that is set to be opened in our residential neighborhood of West Cornwall, CT.

As a long-standing member of this community, I strongly believe that the establishment of such a facility within a residential area could have negative implications on our community's overall well-being and quality of life.

While I understand the importance of economic development and local businesses, the decision to establish a cider mill in a residential neighborhood raises several concerns that need to be addressed before any such endeavor is approved.

Traffic Congestion: A cider mill is likely to attract a significant amount of vehicular traffic, especially during peak seasons. Our neighborhood's infrastructure might not be equipped to handle the increased traffic flow, leading to congestion, safety hazards, and inconvenience for residents.

Noise and Odor Pollution: The cider production process can generate noise and odor that may disrupt the tranquility of our residential area. The enjoyment of our homes and outdoor spaces could be compromised by the constant noise and potential unpleasant odors emanating from the cider mill.

Property Values: The presence of a commercial operation like a cider mill could potentially impact property values in the neighborhood. Residents have invested in their homes with the understanding that they are in a primarily residential area, and the introduction of a commercial establishment may alter the character of the neighborhood.

Environmental Impact: Depending on the scale of the cider mill's operations, there could be environmental concerns such as waste management, water usage, and potential chemical discharge that could harm the local ecosystem and nearby water sources.

Community Atmosphere: Our neighborhood thrives on its close-knit community atmosphere. The introduction of a cider mill might change the dynamic by attracting outsiders and tourists who are not invested in the well-being of the neighborhood.

Considering these factors, I respectfully request that the local authorities and relevant stakeholders carefully reconsider the decision to open a cider mill in our residential neighborhood. I urge you to conduct thorough studies on the potential impact of such an establishment and to engage in open dialogue with the residents to ensure that our concerns are heard and addressed.

I believe in the power of collaboration and compromise, and I hope that by working together, we can find a solution that benefits both the business interests and the well-being of the residents. Our community's voice matters, and I trust that you will take our concerns seriously as you make your decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Severn Taylor.









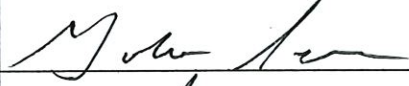




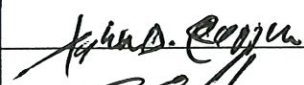

* individual letters also received as of 9/13/2023

Petition to Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission

We support farmers, agricultural-based businesses and efforts to boost Cornwall's economy. However, we wish to express our opposition to the farm cidery and farm store components of the project as it is currently located on the front part of the Ridgway farm.

We believe a retail and commercial establishment that includes alcoholic consumption on the premises (and to go), that is positioned very close to the road and to other houses, presents a host of deeply concerning issues (e.g. noise disturbance, increase in traffic, street parking, public safety, quality of life) to the deeply loved pathway and neighborhood that is Town Street/North Cornwall.

We implore the Ridgways and the town to give their fullest consideration to these concerns, and to consider alternate locations as well as clearer, firmer rules/ordinances for this establishment.

Name	Address	Signature
Laura McMullin	43 Town	
AESM TABER	43 TOWN	
CARIS SAMPSON	8 TOWN ST.	
* Anne Zinsser	15 Town St	
* Andrea GISSER	90 Town St	
Yvonne Dutton	108 Town St.	
Alison Dutton	108 Town St	
Charles Brewster	37 Lake Rd	
GORDON SEWZER	37 Cogswell Rd	
Gretchen Calsu	66 Cogswell Rd.	
Nita Colgate	102 Lake Rd	
Leslie Elias & Larry Saed	29 Lake Rd.	
Kevin Brown	80 Lake Road	
JOHN COFFIN	83 COGSWELL Rd	
Tim Coffin	..	

received
9/12
@ 8:03 am

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Name	Address	Signature
* Ian Ingersoll	136 TOWN	[Signature]
* DIANE ENGERSOLL	136 TOWN ST.	[Signature]
* William L. Berry	45 Lake Road	William L. Berry
* Nancy G. Berry	45 Lake Rd.	Nancy G. Berry
Dave Dolinsky	73 Scoville Rd.	Dave Dolinsky
Sandy Dolinsky	73 Scoville Rd.	Sandy Dolinsky
AMILTON ROBINSON	218 TOWN ST	[Signature]
* Barton Jones	12 Popple Swamp Rd	Barton Jones
[Signature]	12 Popple Swamp Rd	[Signature]
Fred Scoville	256 Town Street	[Signature]
Claire Ellis	150 Town Street	[Signature]
* JOSEPH A. ELLIS	158 Town Street	[Signature]
* Barbara I. Ellis	158 Town Street	Barbara I. Ellis
Jon Ellis	150 Town St	[Signature]
DAVE CADWELL	67 YELPING HILL RD	[Signature]

Petition to Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission

We support farmers, agricultural-based businesses and efforts to boost Cornwall's economy. However, we wish to express our opposition to the farm cidery and farm store components of the project at the Ridgway farm, as it is currently proposed.

We believe a retail and commercial establishment that includes alcoholic consumption on the premises (and to go), that is positioned very close to the road and to other houses, presents a host of deeply concerning issues (e.g. noise disturbance, increase in traffic, street parking, public safety, quality of life) to the deeply loved pathway and neighborhood that is Town Street/North Cornwall.

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Name	Address	Signature
Wendell SAMUEL COFFIN	83 Cogswell	S. Coffin
ANNE COFFIN	83 Cogswell Rd	Anne Coffin
James Stewart	19 Town Street	James Stewart
Janelle Stewart	19 Town Street	Janelle Stewart
JANE STEWART	19 TOWN STREET	[Signature]
Christopher Suffredini	21 Town Street	[Signature]
KRISTIN RODRIGUEZ	21 TOWN STREET	[Signature]
* JANE GARMY	106 COGSWELL RD.	Jane Garmy
* BIANKA LANGNER QUAGS	55 LAKE ROAD	[Signature]

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Name	Address	Signature
Jennifer Selendy	147 Town St	
Philippe Selendy	147 Town St.	
Erica Prichrome	182 Town St.	

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Name	Address	Signature
Sue Johnson	263 Town Street	Sue Johnson
Janet Savin	67 Scoville Rd West Cornwall	Janet Savin
* Brian Savin	67 Scoville Rd West Cornwall	Brian Savin
Patrick Anjiff	55 Lake Rd West Cornwall	Patrick Anjiff
* Roxana Robinson	218 Town Street	Roxana Robinson

RE: Ridgway Proposed Business Location

The community has long supported Gordon in his farm, maple smokehouse by the road, and farmstand. It is unfortunate that the Ridgway proposal has incurred controversy.

I concur with the Ellis assessment in their "Opposition to Ridgway Proposed Business Location" as presented to the planning board. Their document makes many strong points objecting to the proposal.

I wish to add that when I met with Jayne, Gordon and their son, Ian, at their farm I suggested to them that, instead of their proposed plans to import apples and ferment and sell alcoholic cider in the residential area, they do so in a building in the West Cornwall downtown commercial district.

Cornwall has its commercial district, which actually needs more development, and so the most sustainable course, both from the standpoint of protecting the community and its property values, and for the future, is to locate the proposed pub/restaurant in its proper venue, not in the middle of one of the quietest residential areas in town, and close to the historic church.

This solution would provide a means to meet some of the Ridgways' objectives, while preserving the integrity of the homes and church in the area in which the Ridgways have their farm.

There has been a very strong effort to preserve the character of the land and homes in this quiet area, including by the purchase and preservation of many acres of land, and there is no reason to destroy that for the creation of a new business when the town already has a business district.

Respectfully yours,

Janine M. H. Selendy
137 Town Street
West Cornwall, CT 06796

September 12, 2023

Sept. 12, 2023

Dear Members of the Planning & Zoning Commission,

It should be enough that since 2019 Cornwall's zoning regulations have allowed the right to farm anywhere in town, including farmstands and tasting rooms, to carry the day and avoid this public hearing, as well as arguments against this application by Ian and Jane Ridgway. Long have citizens of Cornwall been concerned over how to keep our young people here, how to attract other young people to town, and how to help the few farmers we have left. Small farms today need to diversify to survive.

Here we have a young man, raised in Cornwall, who has an idea for how to diversify, and wants to stay here. Yet, here we go again with the people who think this is all well and good as long as it's not next to their house. The idea that a hard cider tasting room is going to result in drunk drivers careening over Cornwall's roads and inebriated people lying about is absurd. What one gets at any tasting room is just that, a "taste", certainly not enough to affect one's equilibrium. Oh, and I have news for these folks, drivers under the influence of alcohol are already on our roads. Perhaps they are returning home from a local restaurant or a gathering in one of our neighbor's homes, and they haven't had just a taste.

Hard cider used to be part of the fabric of rural communities, and considered part of the deal when working as a laborer. If an employer could not provide a supply of hard cider, usually produced on site, it was very hard to hire someone.

I fully support the Ridgway's application for a building to house a hard cider production facility, tasting room, and accessory apartment. I applaud Ian's entrepreneurial spirit and ambition. Something we could use more of in Cornwall. Cheers!

Sincerely,

Jean D. Bouteiller