

42 Lake Road
West Cornwall, CT 06796
December 12, 2023

To Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission,

Thank you for listening to Cornwall residents' concerns about the Ridgway proposal to create a venue for agritainment in our quiet residential neighborhood. The Ridgways have been good neighbors around the corner from me. I have enjoyed the farm's produce; I've carried gallons of maple syrup cross-country for friends and relations; and I even had a quiet backyard visit from a couple of Ridgway cows. I have a great appreciation for the farm and how over the years the family has served Cornwall.

That makes it difficult for me to understand how it is possible that the Ridgways are proposing a project that would result in a radical transformation of our quiet community where farmers and residents have peacefully coexisted for over 200 years. I've had the joy of experiencing this for 22 of those years.

Growing apples would be terrific on the farm. Turning them into cider or hard cider – a fine idea for another farm business to complement its maple sugaring.

But I am extremely concerned about the proposal's vision to invite the public into their Town Street farm for alcohol drinking and events. We all know the expression "Build it and they will come." At this point, neither the Ridgways nor P&Z can predict accurately how many people might come. But we can foresee the adverse effects a public venue serving alcohol would have on our community's safety and well-being – particularly given their projection for their venue's growth.

I also am concerned that with P&Z approval of this permit, the Ridgway property would be deemed an events venue for future buyers who might have larger ambitions.

Research previously submitted to P&Z by Chad Cooper shows that other CT cideries and wineries are not situated in residential areas. Yet their towns now are encumbered by lawsuits resulting from problems that have led to major expense for their local taxpayers.

I ask that P&Z consider the precedent that approval of this proposal would set for Cornwall and for farms throughout Connecticut and reject the proposal. Should Cornwall be blazing a zoning trail for farms in small towns to double as party venues?

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Spence
North Cornwall Neighbors Coalition

Submitted
12/13/2023
to K...
P...
copy of
AZ

December 12, 2023

To the P & Z Committee,

Dear Committee,

We are writing in response to the Ridgway request for a special permit to operate a cidery/farm store at their farm on Town Street. We like and admire the Ridgways, and we have always supported their farm stand with pleasure. But we do not feel we can support this plan.

We believe that a project involving the sale of alcohol in a residential neighborhood, especially one involving public events that will attract crowds, is not appropriate for this area. North Cornwall is a quiet place, and everyone who lives there enjoys this quiet.

Property values here are dependent on the peaceful rural beauty of the place. A real estate broker has advised us that the introduction of a commercial venue selling alcohol and drawing crowds would adversely affect the values of the neighboring properties to a significant degree. The Town regulations direct the Committee not to permit uses that would diminish the value of neighboring properties.

We take this issue very seriously. We would respectfully ask you to follow the guidelines in your regulations, and to deny this request for a venue selling alcohol and drawing public crowds. Many thanks for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
John and Anne Coffin
Cogswell Road
North Cornwall Neighbors Coalition

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Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Andree Gibson

90 Town Street

North Cornwall Neighbors Coalition

12 Popple Swamp Rd.
December 12, 2023

To the Planning and Zoning Committee,

We believe that granting the proposal submitted by Ian and Jane Ridgway for an alcoholic cidery and events venue on Town Street would establish a legal precedent that would be damaging to the community in the future. As Ian Ridgway has indicated in his revised proposal, the only way for this project to succeed would be through increasing the cidery hours and expanding the events.

Granting a permit for an alcoholic cidery and events venue, even a small one, on Town Street would pave the way for other permits for larger event venues. We believe that this path is contrary to the spirit of Cornwall. Large, noisy, alcoholic-fueled events are deeply inappropriate in a quiet residential area, and would fundamentally change the nature of North Cornwall. The committee should encourage commercial activity in commercial zones. We recommend that P&Z reject this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Bart and Debby Jones
North Cornwall Neighbors Coalition

My simple, unscientific but thought-provoking survey:

1. In the past 7 days who has personally consumed a glass of wine or knows someone who has consumed a glass of wine?
2. In the past 7 days who has personally consumed a glass of beer or knows someone who has consumed a glass of beer?
3. In the past 7 days who has personally consumed a glass of hard cider or knows someone who has consumed a glass of hard cider?

I would contend that the answers to questions #1 and #2 are 100%. Everyone knows somebody who's had some wine or a beer in the last week.

I would contend the answer to #3 is 10% or maybe 15% at best.

And that my friends sums up the situation.

Survey
referenced
by Richard
Brandy