

August 28, 2020

To: Town of Washington Planning Board
Re: Ruge's Automotive Inc., Application for Site Plan Approval
Premises: 3 & 7 North Mabbettsville Road, Millbrook, NY

Dear Chairman Schwartz, Secretary Caul, and Members of the Planning Board,

Thank you for your service to our Town and for your role as stewards of our Zoning Code. I support the applicants' right to improve their property and the community's right to respond to the application as submitted.

I note these Sections in our code apply to this application:

1. (Sec 107) 'To assure privacy, freedom from nuisance, unsightly obtrusive noisome land uses & operation'
2. (Sec 485, 7d) 'Parking facilities shall be landscaped and screened from public view to eliminate unsightliness and the monotony of parked cars'
3. Hamlet/Mixed Use designation, defined as 'mixed residential and non-residential use in which historic and rural character predominates, pedestrian activity is encouraged, and suburban "strip" development is discouraged'
4. (Section 391) 'no non-conforming use of land shall therefore be changed to be less conforming'

I have walked both the westbound and eastbound sides of Route 44, observing what the applicant seeks to improve. On August 19, there were 63 vehicles parked in this gravel and lawn lot. I understand the applicant would like to park +/- 135 vehicles after the area is improved.

In Rhinebeck, Town Supervisor Elizabeth Spinzia is quoted in the Daily Freeman about Ruge's Automotive plans to move to 3718 Route 9G that are before their board, expressing *'the agreement they are reaching is an effort to support a longtime community business while maintaining the rural character of a largely undeveloped area'*.

I see the same opportunity for an agreement before our Board, and would request your consideration of these things:

1. Map #3 of the Zoning Series for our Aquifer Overlay District indicates the applicant property is part of this area.
2. The Short Environmental Assessment Form answered Part II, with 11 questions regarding project impact, as having "little to no impact" and answered none of the

questions as having “moderate to large impact”. Is there documentation to support these answers, and who will be the lead agency to sign this form?

3. Surface asphalt parking lots, submitted in the application, are a dominant landscape feature. Expanses of asphalt generate coal-tar sealant and salt run-off, and create excess heat. Traditional storm water discharged through a connected underground piping system increases the rate and velocity of stormwater leading to downstream flooding, erosion, water impairment, and environmental harm.
4. When existing parking areas are reconstructed and improved, using sustainable design is the current and future standard.
5. Sustainably designed parking areas use permeable pavers, percolating gravel systems, and maximize shade by using planted areas within the parking lanes. The entire parking design integrates into the natural environment. These designs manage water as a resource, promote infiltration, retention, and protect local water.
6. The planting plan should be required to include native species (Serviceberry, Amelanchier canadensis, for bioretention and salt resistance, for example).

I urge the Board, with respect, to ask the applicant to provide paving options other than asphalt for review. Changes to this +2 acre area will significantly alter the character of Mabbettsville, particularly affecting neighboring properties, down stream water, & aquifers which supply the Village of Millbrook. The air, land, and water we share is connected and finite.

I urge the applicant to continue collaborating with the community as is the norm and tradition here.

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