

To the Editor:

For the past month or so, the RTM has been reviewing the approvals – in a 4-1 decision by the Flood & Erosion Control Board and a 6-1 decision by the Conservation Commission – of the permit applications for a new Westport Weston Family Y at Mahackeno. It is our understanding that there will be a vote by the RTM, perhaps as early as August 6, to decide whether these approvals should be upheld.

We know that the full record of the lengthy board and commission public hearings and work sessions, as well as the substantial documentation submitted by professional consultants working on behalf of the town and the Family Y, have been made available to you. But we respectfully suggest that you focus on the following key considerations as you make your decision on this issue:

- The plans submitted by the Westport Weston Family Y are not only socially and environmentally responsible, but also reflect the efforts of some of the best professionals in the fields of hydrogeology, stormwater handling, wastewater treatment, civil engineering and architecture.
- These plans have undergone more than a year of scrutiny by members of a board and a commission who have extensive environmental and technical knowledge in this subject matter area; members who voted overwhelmingly to approve these plans.
- The FAST system is a proven technology which was originally designed for marine (water) applications, has the approval of the United States Coast Guard, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and – for use by the Family Y – the approval of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. In fact, in two separate efforts to block approval by the DEP, there has been no finding that credible evidence had been presented to warrant a negative determination on the FAST system permit application.
- Measures have been established, by the Family Y and the Conservation Commission, to preclude any negative environmental impacts as a result of wastewater handling or stormwater runoff at the new Mahackeno facility.
- The Westport Weston Family Y, one of more than 2,600 YMCAs in the United States, has been a good neighbor for more than eight decades – working to enhance the quality of life for people of all ages and abilities – and wants to continue its tradition of community service for generations to come. The notion that this organization has plans to build a facility that would cause harm to the neighborhood, the town or the environment is simply without merit.

Doomsday scenarios and lawsuits notwithstanding, you – as a member of the Westport RTM – have the power to ensure that the Family Y stays in our town.

The programs and services provided by the Westport Weston Family Y are part of what makes our community uniquely appealing. The Family Y is no less important than the Arts Center and Country Playhouse, the Senior Center and the Library, Longshore and Compo Beach, our

excellent schools – all of which were met with some form of opposition when it came time to acquire, upgrade, enhance or move these facilities to continue meeting the needs of our community.

We urge you to let stand the Flood & Erosion Control Board and Conservation Commission approvals of the new Family Y facility at Mahackeno.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa and Craig Carnahan
Members and Child Care Parents, Westport Weston Family Y