

## Do the right thing (again)

For those who are still reading Y letters with such interest and care . . . good for you! It is a historical application and we add our names to the long list of those who "Say Yes" to Mahackeno.

For over 40 years we've enjoyed the Family Y (and supported it for our 250 employees). As a company based here since 1971, we know the town's growth pains and growth plans — decades of detailed studies and good debate. It's such a remarkable town.

We might look back at some riverside developments and historical P&Z applications. For example, in the early 90s, when our family was restoring National Hall and adjacent buildings on that busy corner of downtown, we faced critical environment issues on the Saugatuck River, critical traffic concerns, and critical opposition and contention.

Like the Y, we took painstaking efforts to "do the right thing." . . . with volumes of environmental studies (including Connecticut DEP), top engineers, careful design/location of the buildings, traffic studies, talking with neighbors, prioritizing our precious resources . . . and seeking a positive change for the citizens of the future. Like the Y, we wished to mitigate the impact: for the neighborhood, environment/septic, noise, light, parking and traffic. Like the Y, we respected the process in years of hotly-contested, late night town meetings. The end result was a win-win.

Despite the tough allegations of a spoiled river, a blight on our shore and a snarled mess of traffic by 2000, degradation was not realized: we enjoy a thoughtfully restored, accessible New England corner, a revitalized "West Port," enhanced from a rundown condition, with no impact to traffic or environmental hazards. In fact, more people enjoy the riverside than ever before — a win-win. Thanks to the dedicated town agencies, local top architects, local engineers, good town planners and a "Community that Cares."

While I fully recognize the key differences in this application, I believe that a new Y at Mahackeno will be another win-win. We still bring together the best and the brightest; and the process is more than diligent and thorough. The openness that the Y and vast majority of people have exhibited should result in "the best town enhancement of the 21st century."

Having spent 10 years walking nearly every site, meeting scores of professionals, reviewing dozens of reports, Selectpersons' views and listening during Flood and Erosion, DEP Public Hearings, Conservation, RTM and now P&Z; the facts support the New Y. And we will continue to support and respect the process until a decision is made. Our thanks to the dedicated P&Z, RTM, other commissions and experts, and our thanks to the citizens for showing how much you care; even if just a reader of the debate in the newspapers!

I know the majority (especially those who see the plans) are as excited about the "new downtown" as the "new Family Y at Mahackeno" — both are super enhancements and exhibit good town planning for the residents of Westport and our sister-town, Weston.

*Robin Tauck  
President  
Tauck World Discovery  
Weston and Westport resident*

P.S. Congratulations to the Y Water Rats youth competitors at Harvard. You make us proud . . . of our 59-year Y Swim Team!