

## Let logic prevail

As a Westport resident I am very unhappy that the proposed Westport/Wilton YMCA to be constructed at the Mahackeno site is meeting with such resistance. I certainly hope that logic prevails and the new facility at Mahackeno is constructed without further delay.

It is clear that the current YMCA facility is inadequate to meet the needs of our families. As the father of three young

children, I find the current YMCA to be nearly unusable. I certainly hope that the need for a new facility is something that everyone can agree on. Anyone that has made the case that the current facility is "fine" and "just needs an upgrade" is obviously not being intellectually honest with themselves, and thus lack credibility in any future assertions they may make.

The question now becomes; where to build the new facility. Mahackeno is the perfect location for the new YMCA. It is easily accessible from the Merrit Parkway and Route 33. The design respects the environment while allowing our children to enjoy playing in a state of the art facility. Safe off-street parking is also a must for any parent concerned with the safety of their children.

Fabricating issues to impede the construction has been the modus operandi of the anti-mahackeno movement from the onset. They thought they scored a death blow when they convinced us all that the current sewer system could not handle the added workload that the new facility would demand. So a plan for a septic system was proposed — a proven system that currently is employed by other facilities of equal scale. Much to their chagrin, the nay-sayers had to go back to the drawing board and come up with new issues. As each issue was addressed with respect and solved, the anti movement just kept coming up with more.

The protesters may not be as rare and unique as they may like to think. Indeed this entire drama may sound familiar to some longtime Westport residents. I allude of course to the heated debates and arguments that arose over the construction of the playground at Compo Beach in 1989. Some may recall an article that appeared in the NY Times March 27, 1989, THE TALK OF WESTPORT; "In a Town That Grew Up, a Tempest Over Jungle Gyms," by Nick Ravo.

The protesters of that time were shouting at town meeting and wear T-Shirts as well. I quote the aforementioned article; "... The opponents also have expressed concern about the playground structures' height (too tall), design (too ugly), construction (too amateurish) and the building materials (too much arsenic in the wood...)"

Does this sound familiar? Think about it; The Compo Beach playground is one of the most wonderful things that our town offers our children. Had the remonstrators (yes, remonstrators) had their way in 1989, we would have been deprived of a true Westport treasure today.

I am reminded of the words of General Colin Powell, Chairman (Ret.), Joint Chiefs of Staff, "... Today, excessive delays in the name of information-gathering breeds "analysis paralysis" ..."

This, my neighbors, is where we are today; "paralyzed." And our families and most importantly our children will pay the price for many years.

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Westport*