

Westport Y's relocation a sound environmental move

To the Editor:

It is with great pride that I am writing in support of the Westport Weston Family Y's application to build a new facility on the Y's Mahackeno property.

As chairman of the Westport's Green Energy Task Force, but speaking here as a long-standing Westporter, I am acquainted with many of the complex energy issues that builders of new construction face in today's environment.

Fact: The new Y will be the only public building in Westport that is LEED certified to date. The board of directors, of which I am a former member, has shown its commitment to environmentally sensitive design by including several features in the new facility that will produce

increased energy efficiency, including nesting the building against a hillside to reduce the number of exterior exposures. The energy inefficiencies of the Y's current facility present an impractical burden on the Y's operations costs. Valuable funds are diverted to pay for excess energy uses instead of increasing and improving programming. In addition, the Y plans to add outdoor education programming for children to enrich their lives through access to 25 acres of open space.

Fact: The new Y will sit on seven acres. That means 25 additional acres will be preserved and valuable open space will be preserved for decades more.

One more important reason to approve the Y's application: The

140 children attending on-site day care plus 50 additional children attending after school programs plus all the additional children enrolled in programs are the ones that will be deprived of invaluable life experiences and skills that will shape their lives to come. And the families who rely on the Y's day care, a limited resource in this area, will not be left scrambling for other options.

So, for all the reasons above, I respectfully ask members of Westport's Planning and Zoning Commission to consider approving the Westport/Weston Family Y's application to build a new facility on its Mahackeno property.

Kimberly Lake
Westport