

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Models for Children, (in) Appropriate Conduct in Y Debate?

So much for civility, decorum or historical awareness. Though these qualities are hopefully engendered within the families and schools of Westport, it is evident that some members of the adult population do not hold themselves to this standard. It reminds me of the old "Do as I say not as I do" adage.

Furthermore, specific groups within this broader category of Westport's adult population, as elected officials, should be held to

a higher standard. As visible representatives of the Town of Westport, it is that much more important that elected officials maintain the utmost civility and decorum since they will be experiencing greater scrutiny if (and when) they fall short.

In this case, the 10 RTM members who submitted a letter to the editor outlining their opposition to the Mahackeno plan as well as their proposal for Baron's South clearly overstepped their bounds. In response to the criticism that was levied not only by letters to the editor, but by the editor himself, Jonathan Steinberg (RTM District 8) writes, "All we've done in our letter is add some specifics regarding the benefits of siting the Y on Baron's South." Notwithstanding the disingenuous tactic of offering a proposal as elected representatives supposedly speaking for their respective districts, I scream and wring my hands as I read this absurd statement specifying the purpose of their letter.

I remember as an 11-year-old member of the swim team talking to my coach, Bill Krumm, about the plans for a new Y at Baron's South. He said that it would take time and that there were still many hurdles to clear, but that it might happen within four years in time for my sophomore year.

I remember following the story for the next few years as the Baron's South Planning Committee that was created by Diane Goss

Farrell voted resoundingly against building the Y on this property. It became abundantly clear, despite exploration of numerous other properties, that building the Y on town property was not going to happen.

I remember sitting on the Board of Directors as the youth advisory member during my junior and senior years of high school (2002-2004). It was clear then, in 2002, that the Y could not be placed on Baron's South, or Winslow Park, or any other piece of town property. If it was clear as day then, why is it unclear now?

Obviously, I would not expect all Westporters to be as intimately acquainted with this process as those of us who have been directly involved. However, what irritates me is when the opposition brings up "possibilities" as if the Y had not looked into these before. There is nothing new about the debate over whether or not to place the Y at Mahackeno and claiming that there are other options that the Y has not legitimately explored is a slap in the face to the hard work of so many individuals in the more than a decade-long process of finding a new location for the Y.

Yes, people are entitled to their opinions, but when they share an opinion that is not rooted in the historical context of the issue or misrepresents that historical context, they are engaging in indecorous behavior that we might expect from children but certainly not

adults. Moreover, upholding the position of elected representative necessitates a modicum of civility in the expression of opinion that, of late, has become downright nasty.

Though I currently reside in Vermont as a senior at Middlebury College and will be moving to Philadelphia following graduation, this issue is near and dear to me. I applaud the Y, its Board of Directors and Trustees for their diligence in this process that began so long ago. You all have endured the utmost scrutiny to make it to this point and I hope that your efforts will be rewarded. To the opposition, I respectfully disagree, and I hope that as the weeks unfold prior to the P&Z's decision that you would keep in mind the

need for civility, decorum and historical awareness in all aspects of daily life, but particularly on this especially volatile issue.

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*Stuart was on the Family Y
Board of Directors from 2002 to
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~~A Place to Live~~

~~Talking to Barbara Butler a few days ago about housing for seniors took another day to synthesize the depth of the word housing.~~

~~What would solve it? It really isn't a mathematical problem and yet connected to it, just like the~~

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