

August 14th, 2025

Town of Salisbury Planning and Zoning Committee.

Dr. Michael Kilemens.

Taxpayers and citizens.

Subject matter equals. Wake Robin in application. And process.

This letter is my attempt to express my feelings on the application for the Wake Robin Inn application.

1. The Planning and Zoning Commission is to be commended for conducting. A very open and transparent process on the application of the Wake Robin Inn.
2. Abby Conroy and her able assistant Miles are also to be commended for their stellar work -and the incredible number of hours not only putting the information together but making it accessible on the web and through the webinars as well as. Posting the minutes, videos, application, supporting documentation, letters from the public and on and on. I wonder how many remember the days prior to her arrival in the land use office. Stellar job and worth everything and more that we pay them!
3. After listening to the numerous people expressing their opinions during public comments I pondered and asked myself what is a public hearing as far as it relates to a planning and zoning Commission?
4. Is it a popularity contest? Meaning the more people that speak in favor or against any application is really what determines the outcome? I don't think so. Sure, it's important to gauge the community's thoughts and concerns, but more for "have we missed anything" about this application. My understanding as far as the process of planning and zoning is concerned is that an application is submitted, examined for completeness, code, or regulation compliance, and deliberated in an open and fair manner. Then they approve it or deny it. Simple as that until lawyers get involved.
5. If one were to listen to the hearings, and I have listened to two of them now, with the third coming this evening at 6:00 PM, I think you'd conclude that the overwhelming consensus is not in my backyard. Too "mega" for our town which is now filled with mega mansions. To think denying this application will "save" Lakeville, is not only a major overreach but misleading at best. Lakeville was "lost" in terms of its former appeal back in the 1970s when the Lakeville village businesses were razed in favor of "open or green space". It was further exacerbated by the appeal for second homeowners from wealthy NY suburbs. And finally, the nail in the coffin was Covid which bought the working wealthy to our town which has the lowest mill rate in Connecticut and simultaneously the

least affordable place to live in CT. In July of 2025, the median listing home price was \$1.3 million with its real estate consistently ranking among the most expensive in America. We still have beautiful land, preserved open space, a beautiful dying lake, a huge grand list, numerous expensive restaurants, banks, and remarkably successful real estate firms not to mention the non-profit institutions in our town that pay for no property. The point is, if one would like to “save” Lakeville, donate \$10 million to housing in Salisbury.

6. It's important to consider some of the other aspects of the application and what a successful implementation of their project would mean to the town of Salisbury, the village of Lakeville.
7. So, while I'm not going to express an opinion one way or the other on project approval, I would like to suggest to all the following:
 - a. Approval of this application should only happen if it clearly observes the code, which it seems like it has done.
 - b. The applicant has presented an amazing amount of detail. I think it has been acting in good faith and made meaning changes to their original project. But that's an opinion.
 - c. Approval of the application would mean taxes paid into the Town of Salisbury through property tax something that the numerous nonprofit organizations who have endowments exceeding ½ billion dollars make no contribution to the town in terms of tax payments. The Wake Robin Inn owner would clearly have to do that. They pay approximately \$16,000 now.
 - d. Another benefit of approval of this application would mean that there would be another place to accommodate the multitudes of people that have discovered Lakeville and Salisbury and put money in the coffers of restaurants and other businesses.
 - e. It would also provide jobs.
 - f. It would also address some of the concerns that the public citizens have expressed with regards to better at egress to and from the site, IE improving sight lines. It would also deal with a storm management issue that has been a concern for many years.
 - g. They've taken into consideration acoustics with an extensive acoustic study and attempted to address night light issues. I just wonder if some of the other mega mansions that have now been built underwent this scrutiny whether they could meet the same standards about noise tree cutting, Inappropriate expansion etc. But obviously they followed the process to enable them to build. That again is an opinion.
 - h. Another benefit? To allow an existing business started in 1914 to continue. I'm sure it hasn't gone unnoticed that we have very few businesses in the

town of Lakeville. Those with institutional knowledge in the 70s, sixties and 70s, they'll remember the slew of stores that were here in Lakeville. And with that perspective one could imagine a completely different town. Now the town of Lakeville is. Primarily restaurants and art galleries. And great outdoor spaces. The lake being the jewel. I support businesses but I don't believe, and again, this is an opinion, that the Town of Salisbury and its citizens have been particularly receptive to businesses ever since John Harney and Bill Barnett left in the 1960s, 1970 and Bill Barnett.

In conclusion, I commend the applicant for extensive amount of information, professional patience, and the willingness to make changes not only in their plans based on feedback. I don't think I've ever seen an applicant do as much as they have done to address concerns. I only write because I think there's been an unfortunate imbalance in the commentary of public citizens, and I understand they don't want this. And if it were our left up to simply the popular vote, they would vote it down. Legally, 96 is the responsibility that the Planning and Zoning Board and its Commission members will sort through the voluminous information on this project and make their decisions simply based on fact, the law, the code, nothing more and nothing less. I have every confidence that they will do this because this is exactly what they have been doing at least since Michael Clemens and company and most importantly, Abby has been doing since Abby's arrival. May we all embrace change in a positive, and constructive manner.

Sincerely yours. Bruce Palmer. Lakeville, CT