Outlook

Proposed Wake Robib Project

From rich@richshanley.com rich@richshanley.com <rich@richshanley.com>
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To Land Use <landuse@salisburyct.us>

1 attachment (20 KB)
WAKEROBINletter.docx;

Pleas find attached my letter to the Salisbury P&Z Commission regarding the Proposed Wake Robin project
Rich Shanley
Lakeville CT 8/31/25

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Dr. Michael Klemens, Chair

Salisbury Planning & Zoning Commission

Town of Salisbury

PO Box 548

Salisbury CT 06068

August 29, 2025

RE: PROPOSED WAKE ROBIN INN PROJECT

Dear Dr. Klemens:

First let me say that my observation is that all the principals have spent an enormous amount of time, energy and money on the two proposals for the Wake Robin expansion for which I express my appreciation. Having said that, in listening to several of the recent P&Z meetings I was struck by the amazing level of detail brought out by the various consultants regarding noise, light, environmental impact, traffic etc. My reaction is as follows: this level of detail is incredibly tedious, inaccurate at least in part to anyone with a lick of common sense and an iota of knowledge and appears to be "missing the forest for the trees".

As an example we have been told by a traffic expert that the traffic in the vicinity of the Wake Robin was greater in 2006 than it is now. As I commented at a recent hearing, I challenge the applicant's traffic expert to poll every resident of Lakeville. I would put money on the outcome: everyone knows that the traffic is MUCH greater now than in 2006 and especially since the COVID era began in 2020. This is not a close call. It is so far off that in my opinion it partially undermines one's belief in the experts in general which is unfortunate.

In addition I would argue, yes subjectively, in a bow to common sense, that the question of whether the development plan would result in a nuisance is also not even a close call. Everyone who has gained any insight into the magnitude of this project knows that it will create a large and ongoing nuisance. The P&Z commissioners know it; the Townspeople know it. For pity's sake even the applicant knows it.

In a move to shove the project down the throats of the Townspeople, the applicant's attorney spent several minutes at the August 26th meeting essentially proclaiming that the only opinions that should be given any credence were those of the "experts" and that the "subjective" observations of those of us who live in Lakeville should not be given any weight. I realize that the applicant's attorney is an advocate for his client, but really, dumping on the collective observations of the local citizens is insulting. I would hope and expect that the P&Z commission would not be persuaded by such an obviously biased argument.

I am impressed by the revised plan in one sense. The applicant has obviously spent a lot of time, effort, and money developing it. The two Aradev operators are knowledgeable and well spoken. It's a lovely plan. I would argue just not for the Wake Robin property.

I know that we don't ordinarily get to choose our neighbors. However, in this case the applicant is seeking special permission to develop a non-conforming property inside a residentially zoned area, enabled by a change in the zoning. Before we give special permission and permanently change our zoning, I maintain that in such a situation the Town should be able to learn more about who is behind Aradev. Is it the two applicants who have appeared before the commission or are there silent partners whom the Town knows nothing about? I am not suggesting anything nefarious. Just that Aradev LLC as a privately held entity has no public reporting requirements, such as a publicly held entity would have, and is thus opaque. Who actually owns Aradev? I believe this is a fundamental and legitimate question which needs to be answered before the Town grants a zoning change to an unknown entity.

I also have some comments relating to density and precedent.

DENSITY

The Wake Robin property is about 10-11 acres without the adjacent Granberry property which is being proposed to be merged into the current Wake Robin property.

How is it possible that a 10-acre, non-conforming Inn property inside a residentially zoned area, through a change in the zoning designation, can be allowed to construct four 2000+ sq ft houses (which are being called cottages and being counted as 1 room in density calculations), in a town with 5 acre residential zoning? Even if the zoning redesignation is upheld, I do not see how such housing density can be allowed. Just because they are being called cottages does not change the fact that they are defacto houses. How can such a property be allowed to build 2 let alone 4 houses on this property in the Town of Salisbury?

What would stop Aradev or a future owner from subdividing and selling off one or all of these houses? I imagine that once built they would be grandfathered and a future owner could lucratively sell them individually.

PRECEDENT

If the Wake Robin property is allowed to merge in an adjacent residential property, doesn't that open up a precedent to allow other adjacent residential properties to be added in the future to the "New Wake Robin Hotel Zone"?

Also, wouldn't such a merger open up a precedent for the entire town to be forced to allow other residential properties to be pulled into adjacent future commercial developments?

In conclusion, I strongly feel that the massive outpouring of local residents' opposition to this project is justified and can and should not be ignored, and that in addition for reasons of nuisance, density and regarding precedents created by and for this project, the permit should be denied.

Very truly yours

Richard P Shanley