

Planning Board Reprimanded for Following the Rules!

Planning Board Reprimanded for Following Town Zoning Laws & Codes! To: Town and Planning Board Members

From: John Razzano

Subject: Planning Board Complaints

Date: October 17, 2006

As supervisor I spend between 25%-75% of my time, on any given day, speaking to property owners about their Planning Board experience or application. I defend the Planning Board actions as best I can. At times, such as today, it becomes extremely difficult. The common sentiment among applicants is that our Planning Board has a blatant disregard for the applicant's time and money. While the Planning board should never concern itself with an applicant's potential profit, it should be cognizant of the fact that every request or recommendation costs the applicant time and money. Every meeting costs the town time and money. Jealousy has no place on any board. If someone has more than you or I, God Bless them. I wish them well and hope they prosper with their project. While we all have rules and regulations to follow, the words reasonable and fair need to be used as guidelines. Many items are discretionary, and you can choose to cost some one more time, money and aggravation, or be reasonable and fair. Every week I'm here, I am telling someone how much our town would welcome their new business or commercial development here, and every week I field complaints about how the Planning Board is "saying they like the project" and then proceed to kill the project through unreasonable requests.. In closing I'm requesting the Planning Board member's phone numbers so when an irate applicant calls, you can explain your reasoning. You can be the ones to tell them why they "should have to" spend tens of thousands of dollars more and many more months to open their business. I no longer have the time and energy to defend the Planning Board; I already have many jobs to do around here. -I promised change when I ran. Many changes for better have already occurred. Our Planning Board needs to become reasonable, fair and compassionate. While this one may not lower your taxes, good news travels fast. If businesses perceive that we truly want them, more will come. If businesses tell others about their horror stories, I assure you, none will come. P.S. If any Planning Board member says "I've never heard of any of these problems here", let me remind you, applicants, engineers and attorneys have to bite their tongues at times. It's hard to criticize a board you ultimately seek approval from and you have to work with on an ongoing basis

And the response from Councilwoman Gail Soro:

TO: Supervisor Razzano, Town Board Members and Planning Board Members FROM: Councilwoman Gail Soro SUBJECT: Planning Board Complaints DATE: October 23, 2006

Supervisor Razzano: I would like to respond to your recent memo regarding what you saw as complaints leveled against the Town of Wawayanda Planning Board. As a duly appointed board, the Planning Board assures a community that all their town zoning laws and codes are enforced. It would appear that you, Mr. Razzano, are using bullying techniques and harassment of the Board to advance your own personal agenda and that of your supporters. As a duly elected member of the Wawayanda Town Board, I cannot tolerate this blatant attempt to control the Planning Board's actions and decisions. Below is my response to this memo as well as some questions that you, Mr. Razzano, need to answer. The people of this town and I demand to know exactly what you mean by your accusations and why you have resorted to threats and harassment against those who do not see things YOUR way.

Mr. Razzano, you claim to spend 25-75% of your time talking to people about their experiences with the Planning Board. Have you kept phone logs of the calls, and what was the nature of their problem? Why are you speaking to them at all? You should graciously point them to the Board chairman or her designee to handle any complaints or questions. You accuse the Board of wasting an applicant's time and money. Why are requests that assure that our town's zoning laws and codes are complied with a waste of an applicant's time and money? Do you suggest they allow applicants to ignore our laws? If the Planning Board does not enforce those laws, who will be left to pay when the builder moves on and problems develop? The idea of a personal grudge by members due to jealousy is totally inappropriate, slanderous and shows a blatant distrust of the members. Many of the Board's members have served for 10 years or more. Through Democratic and Republican administrations NO SUPERVISOR has ever leveled such accusations against them. Mr. Razzano urges Board members use their discretion and to be reasonable and fair when adhering to the law. Please give me your definition of discretionary, reasonable and fair when it comes to the public's health, safety and standard of living. Also which laws do you suggest we ignore? If an applicant is not willing to follow our town's laws and codes, do we really want them in our town? Mr. Razzano you plan on obtaining the phone numbers of Planning Board members and give them to complaining applicants. This would constitute promoting harassment of Board members. These people deserve your unwavering support as they attempt to make decisions that affect all our lives. They do not deserve your condemnation, bullying tactics and disrespect for protecting our town's interests. Mr. Razzano you state that you no longer wish to defend the Planning Board as you have too much to do. It sounds like you are way in over your head. Maybe it's time to resign, as you clearly cannot take the heat required by the office. Do not blame others for your shortcomings or your inability to carry out YOUR agenda. Mr. Razzano you say you promised change and declare you have gone good things for this town. Are allowing special interests to run over our town the changes you promised? Are the good things you talk about the avoiding of laws by developers? If applicants want the Board to look the other way, are they the people YOU want doing business in our town? Mr. Razzano your last statement makes the accusation that applicants do not speak

freely at Planning Board meeting for fear of retribution. If you can prove any of these accusations please do so, if not, an apology in writing from you should be forthcoming to all Planning Board members. Please leave the Planning Board to do the job they were entrusted to do! They should be applauded for holding fast to our laws and codes, not condemned. You should be condemned for suggesting other than the Planning Board's strict adherence to our town laws and codes.