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**Subject:** Partrick / NGG Update - Town Plan., 580, Sylvan, Y  
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HI Folks and again more newcomers, the list keeps growing.

I wanted to get in an email before people head off for winter break. There are a bunch of things going on, the biggest of course is the Y's pending hearing at P&Z.

Let me get the other stuff out of the way first.

#### TOWN PLAN -

The town has set up an implementation committee to oversee, just that, implementation. Their first meeting was Thursday. I did not attend, but was told it was informational and discussed procedure and some initial issues. There are 2 RTM members, a Board of Finance member, Selectpeople, heads of departments and of course P&Z representation.

The RTM Long Range Planning Committee is also looking into implementation. I am on that committee. P&Z is of course following up on what they created as well. Hope toes don't get squashed and something does come of all this.

#### TEXT AMENDMENT 580 -

This is a strange one that I have not gotten my head around yet. Nor do I actually have an opinion up or down on it. The Christ and Holy Trinity Church wants to expand. Why not. But instead of going to the ZBA or ask for a special permit they are seeking a text change to the Business Center District / Historic. This is actually text 578 which seeks an increase of density per lot. But... the Church is in a residential A zone and wants to change to the BCD/H. That is text 579.

So what about 580? They are proposing to change the Baldwin Parking Lot, which they abut, that is also Residential A (yep it is) to the BCD/H. The premise is so they don't have to have a large setback. Our First Selectman has agreed to allow the Church to ask for this map change.

The Baldwin lot is in play. People are talking about double decking it, or building on it. So what does this mean to change it? What effect does this have on the other abutting property owners or the Town. I'm not sure, but its something that the ARB and HDC are going to hear soon as well as P&Z on March 6th. So if this gets your spidy sense up, check it out. I am sure curious.

#### SYLVAN ROAD -

The mansion near the Post Road looks like it's ready to meet the wrecking ball soon. What a shame. Of greater concern is what will happen to the 17 acres the house sits on? Will another mansion take its place or are we looking at a subdivision, or worse a huge 8-30g development. The owners are not saying a word. The Town should buy it if they could. Its bigger than the Kowalsky property and seems to have a smaller price tag, but who knows. It would be nice to be able to save all these properties. Let's keep our eyes and ears fixed on this and see where there might be an opportunity to save some or all of this land.

#### NOW THE Y.

First off P&Z hearings have been set for March 13, 18, 25 and then later in April with work sessions in May. If this is a subject you want to weigh in on, then you need to come out listen and then tell them what you think. Maybe you might write some letters to the papers to get the juices flowing.

If you want to read up on the application and issues the YDowntown group has scanned the Y's application and posted it on their website [www.ydowntown.com](http://www.ydowntown.com). They have other information as well. So if you can't get down to P&Z before the hearing check out what's on-line.

On thing to read is the Town hired Traffic Consultant's first blush and issue with the Y's traffic information. He said it was not sufficient. More interesting is the response by the Y's consultant. He's not happy and his note to Larry Bradley is not kind. What's really funny is he blames the opposition for the problem, not once, but twice. I'm sorry, but this is America and people are allowed to disagree and actively oppose something, especially if there is a valid reason. But this is all part of a not even thinly veiled campaign to discredit any questioning of the Y and their proposal.

There have also been a bunch of letters in the paper and things posted on-line that have been quite disturbing both in tone and basis. I have discussed this before, but need to again.

Again the women who lead YD have been singled out. Questioning how one of them can be a Y member and have her kids swim on the team and still oppose the proposal. I'm sorry, but this is not something to cast dispersions at. On the contrary this shows tremendous integrity and fortitude. It is not easy to oppose from within. Throwing rocks from afar is safe, it's easy, but standing face to face and not backing down takes guts. It's a trait to admire. I want to personally thank Debbie McGinley and Indy Goldberg for putting their ideals on the line and not flinching at signs of adversity and letting personal attacks roll off their backs. We all should take pride in how these women have handled themselves and never once compromising their ethics during this process. (Read their latest position, published in both paper and available on YD website.)

One issue that is arising and has been tossed out by Mahackeno supporters is that Northwestern Westport deserves this proposal and its impact. Old Hill, Redcoat, Partrick and other folks are you hearing this? They are saying the rest of town has traffic, the rest of town has schools and churches so why shouldn't you. This is a repugnant position, the idea that if one has ills (traffic) everyone should. This shows a sincere lack of empathy for fellow citizens and a selfish desire to succeed at any cost.

The funny thing is at the same time the argument is being made that Sunny Lane is not residential because the cell tower, Exit 41 and the Red Barn are there. I'm sorry, but I don't see the cell tower bringing a thousand plus extra car trips to the area. And just because there is one non conforming use does not mean commercial encroachment should expand like a cancer.

This brings me to the last concept, commercialization. A recent letter to the editor which got an undue amount of play bemoaned the labeling the Y as commercial, going so far as to say it was not an like an office building. Actually it's worse, running longer hours and 7 days a week. Let's not be deluded here, what the YMCA is building is a huge fitness and events center that will bring hundreds of paying individuals to their facility each and every day. That is commercialization, non profit or not, of what is now a residential road and neighborhood.

But here is the kicker, the letter went on to say that even if true why should any of that matter, the Y is a wonderful organization. I'm sorry, but this such posturing does not outweigh the land use and planning issues at hand. Whenever confronted with the obvious, that this is a bad proposal, the PR campaign kicks in and they say, but we are the Y and we have no place else to do. Yes, a fine organization, but the facility should be built where it is accessible to all and the infrastructure already exists. Maybe if the YMCA directors were willing to modify their plans to suit the needs of the greater community this could be accomplished. Exactly what the ladies of Y Downtown said in their letter.

Those of you going on vacation enjoy yourselves. Those of you staying put please guard the fort and also enjoy yourselves.

Matthew  
PWPF / POSA