

To: Wilton Zoning Board
CC: Wilton Select Board, Wilton Planning Board
From: Wilton Economic Development Team
RE: Proposed Quinn Asphalt Plant
Date: August 28, 2019

The Wilton Economic Development Team has reviewed mounting resident and citizen's concerns, read through documentation and arrived at the conclusion that, although we'd like to see more businesses in Wilton, they need to be the right kind of industry for this historic, rural town. An asphalt plant, with its associated risks is not in keeping with the character of Wilton. It could actually put at risk the future businesses and services our residents have told us they want.

What Voters Want

The largest respondent base of voters surveyed to date (550) were at the voting exit polls and they rated residential development and 101 corridor expansion the lowest of all six potential projects. They cast their votes for more downtown businesses and more services, the return of the tourist train and the riverwalk. Those sentiments have been confirmed at town meeting warrant article votes. Subsequent research, conducted by NRPC, has validated these types of value-added projects as the type of investment that will help revitalize our downtown and have a positive impact on property values.

Economic Development Recommendation

It is the position of this team that an asphalt plant at the proposed location or any other location, is not aligned with the desire of most residents or appropriate for our roadways,

bridges, or in keeping with the protection of our natural resources. The risk to future development and our ability to attract a restaurant, a brewery, a café, and other downtown attractions and services is already a hard sell due to the lack of foot traffic. Adding a fleet of trucks carrying asphalt is not going to help convince these desirable businesses to take a chance on Wilton.

Image

When considering the request for variances and conducting site reviews, we would hope that the image of our town is also a consideration. Studies show the reason people move here has everything to do with safety, open spaces, clean air and water, minimal traffic and peace and quiet. Admittedly, maintaining and protecting these characteristics can be challenging as the pressure for more revenue sources builds.

ZBA

However, it is the hope of this team that the ZBA will see a way to decline this request and make a wise decision in this matter that will actually help encourage appropriate future economic development and protect our environment.