



Talk

Viewpoints

Cape Cod Times Viewpoint Columns by Chuck Carey

Good Neighbors

From *Cape Cod Times*
Chuck Carey

Let's say you buy a house next-door to a commercially zoned lot and you knew it was commercially zoned when you bought it but you bought it anyway. Ten years later, they develop, or upgrade the buildings on, the lot. Do you complain and place every obstacle you can to the business people involved ? Or do you admit that you made a certain choice and accept the fact that these are the repercussions ?

There's a growing number of recent cases where the bad neighbor has turned out to be the abutting homeowner who complains fiercely to the powers that be and, like the furbish lousewart, a famous worm that stopped a power plant from being built, blocks the commercial landowner from proceeding within the rights granted under the zoning by-law.

All this is going to sound very strange to you since you've been fed a steady diet of media which values all else in the world, including insects, higher than the business person. Business people have become the lowest of politically incorrect life forms. A sort of human junk fish. They are overtaxed, over legislated, over controlled and taken for granted. In a time when the competition is merciless in almost every category of business, the town raises the permit fees.

Dennis - A legal permit granted by the town to rejuvenate a complex with rental boats, restaurant, mini-golf and retail is challenged by a distant property owner who happens to live on Rt. 28 who takes advantage of the right to appeal for any reason within 21 days from issuance. The homeowner's property does not abut the complex but fronts directly on Rt. 28 on the opposite side from the complex about 50 yards away. The project is stalled and the restaurant / mini-golf sits closed for the season.

West Yarmouth - A homeowner with a property one lot back from Rt. 28 complains under the same 21 day appeal period when a permit is granted for a commercial operation. The appeal has no specifics. The result - with the season approaching the business people simply pay the man off. He drops his appeal. The project goes forward. Sound fair to you ?

How about Home Depot where the neighbors who bought when the site was dormant but commercially / industrially zoned now rise up over the expansion plan.

Consider this - over the past 10 years there has been far more residential development on the Cape than commercial. But on and on residential building goes at 115 homes per month (see Capetrends 1996) without regard for the same issues that are applied to new or upgrading commercial enterprises - traffic, water, etc.

Are we having a paradigm shift or are we just hindering the ability to earn a living in our effort to make a Norman Rockwell village ?

Some people on the Cape (alot of them were here first) still need to work to feed the kids. A lot of them use a business or commercial property as a tool to that end.