

I want to say just a few words on behalf of The Westfield Residents Association. We are grateful to be part of this meeting, and to Congresswoman DeLauro for arranging it. We want to thank Secretary of State Bysiewicz, Senator Doyle, and Senator Kalinowski for their support, and all of you for your efforts to make Middletown a wonderful community. The Westfield Residents Association has been in existence since 1981, as an incorporated organization with dues paying members who represent 16,430 people living in the Westfield area of Middletown. We work hard to make all of Middletown a better city. At almost every single Planning and Zoning Meeting, at almost every single Inland Wetlands meeting, and at almost every single Common Council meeting, one of us (usually Arline) is there, monitoring and speaking on the developments and zoning changes in all of Middletown.

On Friday, Councilman Klattenberg, asked me what took us so long to protest this decision. Let me say simply, that we were STUNNED to learn in the news media that the army had decided to put its military base on Boardman Lane. This was on June 11th. However, the Westfield Residents Association is not an organization that just runs around, protesting every city decision we can...we have supported many developments in Westfield. We do take the time to study, explore, and ask questions before we do anything.

In this case, we first asked the Army Corps of Engineers for a meeting with the WRA executive committee. They presented their plans for the facility to us and let us ask questions. We also examined the Corps of Engineers' own requirements for site selection.

Secondly, we looked into the budget implications of this base: what might it do to our taxes? What sorts of city services would be required for this base? Would the Westfield Fire District would receive any compensation for the increased need for services? What would the water requirements be for a base of this magnitude, and who would pay for the necessary improvements to supply this need? What would be the environmental consequences of this construction, and what would the permitting process be? Would there be any economic benefit to the Middletown business community?

Finally, we did some investigation into the property, into the character of the neighborhood, the local streets, the geology of the land, the extent of the wetlands, and the effect of this base on the safety of the citizens of Middletown. Over a hundred of us

met in Smith Park on July 14th to review the information we had gathered, and by this time we knew enough about this project to know that it would be a disaster for Middletown. We have here copies of all this information for you.

On July 16th, we had even more people at the Common Council meeting, and those of you who were there, or watched it on TV, know how much passion was in the room that night. It is two weeks later, and the passion has increased. The language of the BRAC report is very clear and very simple about what conditions need to be met if the facility is to be built in Middletown. It's to be built here "if land suitable for the construction of the facilities can be acquired." The land on Boardman Lane is not suitable, from just about any angle you care to look at it.

We want to express our heartfelt thanks for your support in our efforts. We have a very simple request of you, we ask you to use your considerable power to urge the commanders of the army reserve and the CT national guard to direct the Corps of Engineers to recognize that the Boardman Lane site violates not only the Army's own site selection criteria, but also Federal, State and City laws that require responsible development of our lands. We ask you to ensure that they re-read the BRAC report, which clearly says that the facility should be built in Middletown ONLY if there is land suitable. Thank you very much.

Stephen H. Devoto
Acting Secretary
Westfield Residents Association