

WESTFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC
P.O. Box 373
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
<http://wraMiddletown.org>



26 September, 2008

Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Attorney General Blumenthal:

I am writing on behalf of the Westfield Residents Association, about the issue of the Military Training Facility that the army insists must be built in Middletown. I want to update you on the Army Corps of Engineers' presentation on September 17th, and request your continued help in this manner.

As a result of the many issues surrounding this project and the varied opinions of Middletown residents and the elected officials, Mayor Giuliano put together an advisory panel headed by one of the Common Council members and non-elected resident representatives from different geographical areas of the city. This panel, working with the city's planning and zoning officials, reviewed all available parcels of property that could possibly accommodate the army reserve base. The panel evaluated 15 sites. 11 were completely rejected as patently unsuitable for use as a military training facility. Four were discussed in detail and numerically ranked. The army selected their own four sites for further consideration, three were from the list evaluated by the advisory panel, unfortunately, two of those three were deemed unacceptable by the panel:

1. Ken Dooley/Boardman Lane. This site was evaluated by the panel and REJECTED as patently unsuitable. The evaluation was based on all of the same reasons that the Boardman Lane site was originally rejected. This site is actually WORSE than the original Boardman Lane configuration, more residences will be impacted, the species of concern maps are more significantly overlaid, the terrain is steeper and has more ledge.
2. Bysiewicz Office park (on Middle Street). This site was evaluated by the panel and scored EXTREMELY low. If the army used this site, the city would lose up to \$650,000 per year in tax revenue.
3. Cucia Park. This site was highly recommended by the panel, and the WRA supports that recommendation. Cucia is a little used city-owned park adjacent to the industrial park (on Smith Street). It has access to Rt. 91, it does not abut a residential area, water and utilities are readily available, and it will rid us of the obvious sordid activity that takes place there. There is consensus between residents and City Council that of the four - this is the best site.
4. Mile Lane - a site the army currently owns, but there are discussions of turning it back to the city.

Westfield Residents Association continues to have several issues of grave concern:

- Timeline. The "suitability" determination of potential sites is being driven by the Army Corps' reckless timeline for making assessments and awarding the contract to meet the BRAC Legislation mandate of 2011 occupancy.

- Legal Interpretation of the BRAC Legislation language. At the September 17th meeting, we again asked if the Army Corps would provide any justification for their interpretation that the facility "MUST" be located in Middletown, ignoring the word "IF". Their answer was "NO". They further refused to release any information to your office or to Congresswoman DeLauro's office.
- Gov. Rell's removing of the 250th Engineering Unit from the Consolidation. Governor Rell reduced the size of the required facility to allow the base to move from Boardman Lane, A Governor's representative was in attendance at this meeting, but did not participate. After the meeting, he expressed empathy, but could offer no actions.
- Non-Compliance with local and state ordinances. We remain extremely concerned that the Army claims that they are not "bound" by the municipal ordinances and regulations regarding Inland Wetlands, and our city's Zoning Ordinances. When wildlife and vegetation endangered and/or species determined to be "of concern" was cited - they responded something to the effect that there was a difference between "State-recognized" versus "Federally-recognized" endangered and/or "of concern" species of life. As mentioned above the presence of environmentally sensitive box turtles and sedge grasses have been confirmed.

The citizens of Middletown, working with all of our elected officials, have spoken loud and clear that any site on or near Boardman Lane is unsuitable. Our Common Council and Mayor passed a unanimous resolution against using this location, our state legislators have voiced their opposition, and some of our federal representatives have opposed the site, and the Governor takes significant action of removing a Reserve Unit so other locations can be found. You have stated that the use of Boardman Lane property would require a full Environmental Impact Statement.

The next meeting with the City, the resident and the Army Corps is Tuesday, September 30th in the Middletown Council Chambers. The meeting will be videotaped and there will be a court stenographer present to record every comment. All comments will be part of the Corps' report that recommends and ranks the sites. We hope that you or a designate will be able to attend. We hope that you will remind the Army Corps of your conclusion (from your letter of August 4th to Diane McCartin) that a full EIS is required if the Ken Dooley/Boardman Lane site is selected. We would be very grateful to receive copies of any information you get from the Secretary of Defense regarding the language of BRAC. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen H. Devoto
Acting Secretary, Westfield Residents
WestfieldResidents@gmail.com