

“Scoping Session” Public Comments 3-26-08

1) Presented by Kathryn Gorkiewicz

“I would like to offer some additional comments on the immediate, future and cumulative environmental impacts of this proposed Wal-Mart, specifically as related to traffic, safety and the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Concerning the all-way stop intersection of Carley Jane and Amelia Drive, Wal-Mart’s own traffic study of October 2007 contains the following on page 12:

“Upon full build out of the Quaker Crossing East and West developments (background conditions) the northbound approach will decrease to level of service “E” and “D” during the PM and Saturday peak hour periods. Vehicle queues in the northbound left turn lane will exceed available storage capacity and likely spill back to Milestrip Road, if no improvements are made to the intersection.”

This is a poorly designed intersection which is already under stress, one that any town engineer should be embarrassed to have in his town. It should be noted that this northbound traffic on Amelia turning left into Carley Jane spills back regularly to and through the Milestrip Road intersection at Amelia. Furthermore, this is before the full build out and occupation of Quaker Crossing East and West.

The study goes on to say “the additional traffic from Wal-Mart would further exacerbate the PM peak level of service “E” and Saturday peak “D” on the northbound approach for background conditions to level of service “F” during both peaks under full development conditions.”

It seems to me that we are already experiencing level of service “F” on both Amelia Drive and Milestrip Road. Yet, the Wal-Mart Traffic Impact Study admits that it will get worse and proposes no solution. Is it possible to have an “F minus” rating? What will be the effect of more cars spilling out into Milestrip Road? Will more vehicles be lined up in the travel lane waiting to be rear-ended? Will lanes on Milestrip Road be blocked? We need to know.

Furthermore, since it is likely that there will be pedestrians crossing between Wal-Mart and Quaker Crossing, any traffic signal studies of proposed future intersection conditions should include pedestrian phases.

Concerning another state highway, the 219 Expressway, its ramps begin only 0.2 miles from the proposed Wal-Mart driveway. How will it be affected by left turns into Wal-Mart? Will there be back-ups like there are in the other direction? What will happen if traffic is “spilling “out from Amelia and blocking lanes on Milestrip?

Finally, I want to comment on two town roads, Bieler and Bielak. They have become “cut through streets” leading to the entrance of Quaker crossing off Lake Ave. and have noticed an increase in traffic as a result. The concern here is not so much the seconds of delay or the level of service at the intersections with Lake Avenue. It is about the quality of life, safety and neighborhood character. Both roads are narrow and barely able to handle the width of two cars. There are no accommodations for pedestrians, no sidewalks or even shoulders. The mailboxes are all on one side of the street, so half of the residents must cross the street to get to their mail. All the residents must stand in the travel way to pick up their mail and paper. They must walk in the travel way to visit a neighbor. Children must compete with cars to get to their friend’s homes.

The cumulative effect of all the development that has gone on is negatively affecting the safety and quality of life of the residents on these streets. How much will it worsen when Wal-Mart pulls more traffic through these streets? And how much will their property values fall as a result?

These issues must be addressed.”

2) Presented by Jim Crow

“ORCHARD PARKING LOT!

I have a friend that likes to refer to our town as ORCHARD PARKING LOT.

It used to be funny.

I'd like to offer some additional comments on the immediate, future, and cumulative environmental impacts of this proposed Wal-Mart, specifically, on our neighborhoods, the quality of life we have come to expect living here in Orchard Park and on our property values.

The amount of traffic on Lake Avenue, the 5 Corners, Milestrip Road, Bieler and Berg has become unbearable. It is almost impossible for people living on Lake Ave, to get out of their driveways, and the speed in which the cars travel down Lake Ave, makes pulling out onto Lake Avenue very dangerous. The people living on Bieler and other side streets, have lost the quality of life that they moved into the neighborhood in the first place for. These side streets have become cut through streets as people try to avoid the 5 Corners in order to get to Quaker Crossing, the McKinnley Mall and other destinations to the west. All this has happened since Quaker Crossing. Even though past town boards told them not to worry, they wouldn't experience any increase in traffic. Now with the addition of Wal-Mart not only will the traffic become worse, there will be a cumulative effect on the entire town. The traffic nightmare that we are experiencing in the north will become the village's nightmare as well.

Wal-Mart is known to increase the burden on a towns' police force. Take a look at the police blotters some time and you will see lots of references to Bally's, Target and Kohls. It should come as no surprise that with the addition of Wal-Mart, crime is going to go up. There will be more shoplifting, vandalism in parking lots, and (has my kids like to say), more sketchy characters hanging around. Not to mention all the traffic accidents that will occur. This will force our police to spend more time over at Wal-Mart and less time patrolling the rest of our town. Any tax revenue that we get from Wal-Mart will easily be eaten up by extra police protection and other public services such as road repair.

As far as our property values go, you don't have to be an expert in the reality market to realize that our property values are going to decrease. With all this traffic, an increase in crime and the loss of our quiet and peaceful neighborhoods don't be surprised when the residents of this town come to you demanding that their assessment values be reduced. How is that going to effect the town's tax base? Will the tax revenue from Wal-Mart be more than enough to compensate for that? Don't count on it.

These are just some of the issues that you must address before allowing Wal-Mart to come into our town. This board needs to do more than to look the other way. This board needs to raise the bar and address these issues before it is too late. This board needs to represent the citizens that live here.”

3) Presented by Ed Flynn

“Impact On Human Health and Safety:

My concern is the cumulative environmental impacts the proposed Wal-mart Supercenter at Quaker Crossing will have on Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety. How much of an increase in traffic volume will be caused by such a development? How will the infrastructure be changed along Milestrip Road to accommodate the increased traffic flow? How will any changes made to the road, number of traffic lanes, number and width of Highway on-ramps affect the ability of people walking, or like myself, riding their bikes along Milestrip Road? What will be the cumulative effect of increased traffic, particularly heavy truck traffic, on Air Quality along Milestrip Road?

As it is now I can safely ride my bike along the wide shoulder of Milestrip Road. One caution taken now is to look over my shoulder watching out for any traffic wanting to enter an on-ramp as I approach to pass any on-ramp riding my bike along Milestrip Road on my way to Quaker Crossing. The difficulty I encounter now is on my return trip by bicycle towards North Buffalo Road. Trying to cross Milestrip Road at the Quaker Crossing intersection is problematic. There is not a Pedestrian Crosswalk present. There is not a dedicated bike lane . There are five traffic lanes to cross turning left exiting Quaker Crossing. The right lane leaving Quaker Crossing is a right turn lane usually full of automobiles anxious to turn right. I therefore do not feel safe waiting to turn left, exiting Quaker Crossing, on my bike. As a result I usually am riding further down Milestrip Road and crossing those four or five traffic lanes when there is a sufficient gap in traffic.

In my travels down Milestrip Road I’ve seen many pedestrians in the same predicament trying to find a safe place to cross Milestrip Road going to, or returning from Quaker Crossing. The problem is exasperated for pedestrians moving slower than someone on a bike, trying to cross five lanes of traffic. The pedestrian traffic I’ve observed are usually younger individuals.

By how much will a Wal-mart Supercenter at Quaker Crossing increase pedestrian traffic along Milestrip Road and pedestrians attempting to cross Milestrip Road at Quaker Crossing? Will there be an increase in Bus traffic? Will new Bus Routes be added to accommodate the increased demand for public transportation to Quaker Crossing? Will new Bus Stops be added? And if new Bus Stops are added, where will they be located? How will the addition of a Wal-mart Supercenter at Quaker Crossing affect the ability to safely bike ride along Milestrip Road? How will any new developments complicate the already difficult task of crossing the Quaker Crossing intersection for Pedestrian and Bicycle traffic?”

4) Presented by Chris Willet

“I wish to offer additional comments concerning the projected adverse environmental impacts of this proposed Wal-Mart, including its toxic effects on community character, residential property values, town services, and the aura of Orchard Park.

Further, I wish to reiterate that this project is absolutely and unequivocally a public controversy - from the dozens who participate online on Facebook and on Ron’s blog to the hundreds who have signed our petition, it is clear that there exists substantial opposition to this project.

Wal-Mart’s EIS must address the impacts of the large vacant structure and acres of blacktop it will surely leave behind when Orchard Park is no longer profitable - a determination that Wal-Mart may have already bestowed upon our neighbor, the Town of Hamburg. As of early 2004, some 350 abandoned Wal-Marts littered the countryside. As communities struggle to reclaim these spaces, they sit idle, magnets for vandalism, crime, safety hazards, and deteriorating property values. The cost of policing these sites continues long after Wal-Mart has moved on to extinguish local businesses in some other jurisdiction.

Wal-Mart’s EIS must address the social impacts of welcoming this corporation - one whose Culture of Complacency has enabled the abuse of countless employees and suppliers - into Orchard Park. Even Human Rights Watch has criticized Wal-Mart’s long history of disgraceful behavior. This company has lost or settled lawsuits for many crimes, including the employment of illegal immigrants, failure to pay wages, unfair pricing, and discrimination. Wal-Mart has

been a defendant in numerous other suits, addressing allegations of deception, unfair dismissal, health violations, and overseas labor abuse. Given this litany, is this where we want our citizens - our brothers, sisters, parents, and children - shopping and working?

Wal-Mart’s EIS must address what may be the worst environmental impact - that what we build in Orchard Park becomes a reflection of our town. How will the atmosphere of this community change given the cumulative impacts so diligently described here today? Dare I predict that Orchard Park will become another nonplace for which no one truly cares - a location defined and remembered not by its friendly citizens, local businesses, or quality of life, but by sprawl and smog and traffic and vast, sterile strip malls of generic superstores?

The EIS must illustrate what Orchard Park will become if Wal-Mart breaks ground here.

If you refuse this effort, you might as well forego the entire process.”

5) Presented by Richard Arendt

“I’d like to offer some comments on the immediate, future and cumulative environmental impacts of this proposed Wal-Mart, specifically, traffic, as well as the impact on our existing community character resulting from uncontrolled trash and litter.

At issue, of course, is Wal-Mart, but, I would like to address not the “what”, but the “where!” Specifically Milestrip Road. Because I am very well familiar with it, living close by for 19 years.

The Milestrip Road I’m familiar with includes it’s length from Transit Road to the lake shore.

Milestrip Road is a conduit for the burgeoning traffic going to Route 5, to the 219, and to the Thruway. Besides Orchard Park, it handles traffic from East Aurora, Hamburg, and many other south towns. Heading to the Peace Bridge, Buffalo, the football stadium, even the Lake Erie beaches, marinas and parks. Conversely, it is the egress point from these major highways to Orchard Park, McKinley Mall, Quaker Crossing, Sterling Business Park, the more than numerous auto dealers, as well as other businesses.

Okay, we all know that. I’m just trying to make the point that the area is getting busier by the month if not the day!

Now for the “where”! Would a rational person want to see a major “super store” in the middle of all this?? Sure you would, if you made a few million dollars from the sale of the land across from Quaker Crossing!

Along with the mind boggling traffic problems which this scenario conjures up, imagine the trash that immeasurably blows free around huge retail areas. Can’t visualize it?? Go to the McKinley Mall area where plastic bags decorate trees, bushes, and fences. It spreads to nearby residential areas too; much of it has been allowed to disfigure that area for as long as I can remember. I’m aware that Wal-Mart considers recycling by the way, way down the list of priorities headed by profits.

If the Orchard Park Town Board does not listen to the citizen taxpayers cries for common sense on this issue, and allows it to come to fruition, we will have the most colossal, traffic jamming, environment threatening, town character destroying, property value reducing, air and water quality impacting, classless retail operation in New York.

Picture this if you will, a very busy holiday shopping day, roads and parking lots full, rain or worse, snow. Perhaps it’s a weekend and everyone’s out and about; hey, let’s throw in traffic to a football game at the “Ralph”, people trying to cross Milestrip Road between Quaker Crossing and the so called “Superstore.” Traffic backed up onto the 219. (No, it’s not unusual) And in the middle of everything, bam, a serious accident happens - creating havoc.

Wow, the perfect storm!!! Right here on our Milestrip Road.

How can we prevent something like this from happening? That’s why we’re here!”

6) Presented by Pat Arendt

“I’d like to offer some comments on the immediate, future and cumulative environmental impacts of this proposed Wal-Mart, specifically, the impact of stormwater discharges to the South Branch of Smokes Creek.

Just several days ago, while crossing a small parking lot in town with but a dozen or so vehicles in it, I noticed the oil on the pavement from vehicles that wasn’t yet washed away by the rains and melting snow.

Soon after, I gave thought about what happens when the same condition occurs in a large parking lot. I mean a very large parking lot, such as that proposed by Wal-Mart.

It is not difficult to imagine the amount of oil, anti-freeze, etc that would contaminate a parking lot many acres in size from hundreds of vehicles at any one time and thousands in the course of each day. (Including hundreds of trucks

delivering merchandise and produce to the so called “super” store.)

It is my understanding that all storm water discharges, including contaminant loads, would be directed into a retention pond. From the retention pond, the storm waters would be discharged (perhaps untreated) into the South Branch of Smokes Creek. While this Creek is classified as a Class “C” stream by the New York State DEC, (lets just say, you wouldn’t want to drink it), it happens to be identified on the list of impaired State water bodies, also know as the “Section 303 (d) list”. I believe that stormwater discharges to impaired water bodies have additional DEC stipulations and requirements.

Now, add to that, run off from the huge parking and road areas of the nearby Quaker Crossing area, and it is easy to visualize thousands upon thousands of gallons of polluted water entering the stream and eventually Lake Erie, each time it rains or when snow melts!!

This is blatant pollution at its worst! This can’t be allowed to happen!”

7). Presented by Dean Kroll

“I would like to offer additional comments on the immediate, future and cumulative environmental impact of the planned Wal-Mart as to Town services, infrastructure and funding. It’s imperative this project be evaluated not as a single decision, but one of totality as the consequences are far reaching.

As a sales professional, I’ve learned to ask a lot of questions and this Scoping session is no different ... except I’ll offer some responses ... so here goes ...

What is the burden on police, fire and other emergency services? What have other communities experienced with their new neighbor? What does the 1-3-5 and 10 year Town’s financial Pro Forma look like relative to this proposal? Is a project of this magnitude worthy of the risk based on the return on investment ... what do the numbers tell us ... our numbers, not the retailers? What contingencies are we building into the agreement? Who’s paying for sidewalks on Milestrip and a pedestrian walk over Milestrip to get to Quaker Crossing ... is this an accident waiting to happen. Once our new neighbors are in town, can we stand firm or will we be bullied ... future tax assessments come to mind? I bet they have more lawyers and deeper pockets than we have. What experience do we have with the retailer ... if not, have we investigated other municipalities? Why will the proposed Wal Mart have curb cuts on Milestrip and the guy at Southwestern and Milestrip can’t? Why did we spend half a million dollars fighting unsightly bill boards, place a building moratorium on North Buffalo, put McDonald’s through numerous architectural reviews, make Benderson Development renovate the old Super Duper before building their life styles plaza across the street all while Quaker Crossing and the planned Wal Mart haven’t experienced the same level of scrutiny?

Regarding services, many towns and cities have reported big box retailers like Wal Mart are generating large number of police calls. Reasons are many, but the one that stands out is Wal Mart will involve police in every incident, no matter how small. The fact that every incident will be reported will cost the Town hours of police time responding to calls, completing paper work and possible court appearances. Vista CA reports 24% increase in calls, Dallas police noted their new Wal Mart dramatically increased workloads resulting in longer response times ... is our safety compromised? ... Beech Grove, IN hired an additional officer at a cost of \$75K to handle the additional burden. There are many more municipalities to reference ...

OK, so the Town hires another police officer as the taxes Wal Mart pays will more than compensate for this added expense ... right? It has been noted the gross receipts from the Wal Mart project after the State, County and Schools share has been deducted is ... \$42,000! Lets see, \$75,000 for the additional officer hired less \$42,000 ... seems we have a problem. Maybe this is why the residents of Amherst are living tax free. Kindly prove us wrong.

As for infrastructure, we’re all familiar with the four way stop in Quaker Crossing ... if not, try it some Saturday afternoon ... developer Gerry Buchhett is on record that the intersection was upgraded from the initial specs and any modifications will be the Town’s expense. Let’s learn from this experience and plan for it. So who’s paying to modify Milestrip to accept an additional 7,000 cars a day? I sure with this traffic there will be damage to the surroundings ... who’s paying to correct? There’s a lot of trash at the Hamburg location, who’s paying to clean it up? What happens after 10 years when Wal Mart moves on ... with some 300+ vacant stores something tells me they will ... what about \$4M in escrow to tear down the store ... or \$10M to cover all possibilities? What about a requirement that the building can not be converted to warehouse space ... only retail?

Lastly, for a retail project to flourish there must be population growth or unique value that can not be found anywhere else. Erie County’s population has declined some 20+% since the census high point of 1970. Quaker Crossing and the planned Wal Mart shopping venue is no different than Amherst, Clarence, Hamburg or Tonawanda. So we have nothing unique to pull shoppers from outside the area and a declining population ... not a good start for a successful endeavor.

No growth and nothing unique makes the retail market in Orchard Park and surrounding areas relatively fixed in size. The strategy of Big Box players such as Wal Mart is to saturate the market and squeeze the independent merchant out of existence ... hum, we have the Hamburg Wal Mart moving to Bierwood ... seems like their strategy already in motion ... just add Orchard Park. In no growth markets, 84% of all new Wal Mart stores come at the expense of existing businesses. We don’t have the population to absorb Wal Mart ... local business will suffer, relocated, close and what we don’t want to happen will happen ... we lose our tax base ... which then forces the Town to increase taxes ...

This is why it’s imperative the Town evaluates the entire Scope as a comprehensive plan ... not just Wal Mart’s proposal. The Village of Orchard Park is concerned about a report which demonstrates savings by combining Village and Town function ... Wal Mart may just accelerate that plan against their wishes as costs will spiral out of control with loss of business.

In summary, the project will generate \$42,000 in revenues to the Town, has the potential to increase expenses for police and safety, risk closing local businesses, which will in turn raise taxes to cover these losses ... is there not other projects more worthy of this site? In my opinion, doing nothing is a better option.

Members of the Board, we have elected you to represent us ... do your homework and ensure we are not compromised.”

8). Presented by Deborah Yeomans

“As elected and appointed public servants, your job is to represent the residents of this town.

We have come here to make clear to you how we want to be represented. Please note how many of us are here.

During my tenure on the Town Board, I received 26 letters expressing similar concerns and we received a petition signed by 500 of our residents. It is now time for you, as lead agency on this project, to respond to these concerns.

You have heard here tonight about the impacts we want addressed: on our community; on traffic, on the safety of our residents, on the tax burden that our residents have historically had to bear, on reduced property values, on decreased support of our community efforts from local businesses that will be negatively impacted by this project, on environmental damage that will effect drainage and quality of life; on the tax burden that will be shouldered by our residents due to increased drain on our town resources and services.

Your job is make certain that our Comprehensive Plan is upheld and implemented. This plan states that the quality of life and the character of Orchard Park are to be protected. We are a Quaker town - a town that was created on the ideals of community, connection, and simplicity. The character of our town - our entire town - must be preserved.

Your job is to address the issues of the effect on our residents of increased emissions from the additional cars and trucks.

Your job is to anticipate the abandoned building we will be left with, as our neighbor Hamburg is being left with, when this company follows it’s history of leaving vacant eyesores in it’s wake as they move on to bigger and better profits.

Your job is to protect the residents of this town from the negative tax impact when Wal- Mart applies for a reduced assessment, as their history predicts, and when the resident’s of this town march into our assessor’s office, asking for our assessments to also be reduced due to Wal-Mart’s presence in their neighborhood.

We have a history of mistakes in planning and foresight that have resulted in problems that we will live with for who knows how many years.

We have the navigational nightmare at the Tim Horton’s/Wendy’s/Moe’s labyrinth.

We have the Quaker Crossing Plaza where Mr. Buckheit has done more that what was asked of him, yet it remains a traffic problem requiring changes that are now the Town’s responsibility - at the residents’ expense.

We have a history of denying a curb cut for Reed’s Jewelers for months due to concerns about the traffic on Milestrip, and are now faced with negative traffic impact tremendously greater than that caused by a small gift shop.

It is undeniable that the Walmart project will have a serious negative impact on that corridor - a corridor where we have a recent fatality of one of our residents; a corridor that our Safety Committee has asked for State input on because it is so problematic, and they don't know how to correct - without the addition of Wal-Mart.

We are imploring you to act with greater foresight and greater care for our future. We have a history of lack of foresight in this town, resulting in traffic problems, decreased property values for our residents, and drainage repair bills in the hundreds of thousands of dollars being passed on to our residents long after developers have taken their profits and gone home.

We all know about the tragic deaths of teens in Amherst trying to exercise on overly trafficked streets. We all know about the death in Cheektowaga of a person trying to cross a thoroughfare poorly planned. It would be negligent to not anticipate the dangers to our residents that this project will bring.

We are imploring you to look beyond the superficial payout, and establish a structure that will require this business to carry the burden of the increased costs to our town for police, and all the other town systems that will quickly eat up the gross gain of \$45,000 in tax dollars.

We implore you to not pass on the price tag for this project to this town's Seniors and those without children in our schools, while we offer tax breaks to this wealthy corporation.

Please learn from the mistakes of others: if retail development was the answer, Amherst would have lower taxes than Orchard Park.

Your job is to make sure that Final Scope of the Wal-Mart DEIS includes our concerns, and that our concerns are properly addressed and answered to the satisfaction of the entire community you represent.”

9). Presented by Jane Shumaker

“I will speak tonight to the cumulative impact of Wal-Mart, particularly on traffic and property value impact.

In excess of 47,000 cars a week is a Wal-Mart result in OP, the staggering number will not include trucks. A Supercenter requires more trucks simply due to the perishable unit of the center. Clearly increased traffic lowers residential property value, estimates are 8 to 10% lower. Noise alone from truck traffic lowers property value 150 times greater than cars simply because a truck 50 ft away emits noise at 90dBA while cars at 50dBA.

Simple math - 100 homes at estimated value of \$175,000 each = \$175 million in real estate reduced by 8% equates to a real property value loss of \$1.4 million. The homes on Lake, Abbott, Bieler, Bielak and California just to name a few will suffer this loss.

The increase revenue of Wal-Mart is phantom one it that it appears to be positive and disappears quickly as citizens will certainly have a case to lower their assessments. You must seriously evaluate this.

Next is Wal-marts property tax assessment . What this company does not disclose is the extent to which, once your new neighbor, they retract contribution through systematic reduction of their taxes via assessment challenges. A cost cutting giant they pride themselves on routinely belittling the value of their own property.

Given that this company has filed challenges to property tax in at more than one third of its stores and two fifths of its distribution centers it is clear that this is far more than an occasional disagreement.

This centralized system of challenge is not the corporate Wal-Mart that comes to town begging to be your best friend. It a Jekyll and Hyde move, the litigious arm of Wal-Mart throws a mean punch.

There is no such thing as free growth, and once we have counted on the revenue, little that there is, the cost of road work, emergency police and fire calls, and residential growth, quickly turn into deficit. Tax reduction behavior adds insult to injury, and is a legitimate impact concern.

For Orchard Park to overlook the kiss of death on traffic, diminishing value of residential property and corporate cost cutting risk, in tax reductions, would further squeeze town profit; a figure already too little for too much impact. Failing to completely assess these impacts will result in a failed impact study.”

10.) Presented by Carol Schuster

“Last August, I spoke before the Town Board to express my opposition to the proposed Wal-Mart Superstore on Milestrip and explain how ‘big box’ retailers like Wal Mart fail to support community based activities like the Boy Scouts.

I have been involved with the Scouts for many years and served on the Who’s Who Phone Directory Parents Committee for 5 years. Our son’s experiences in completing his Eagle Scout Project reflect an important aspect of the economic impact of local businesses versus big box retailers such as WalMart.

He was lucky enough to have the support of 2 local businesses, Arthur’s Hardware and City Fence. Mr. Joe Wales at Arthur’s donated paint for his project, and took time to discuss Erik’s project and make suggestions so that the painting part of his Eagle Project would be successful.

Mr. Jim Hewson at City Fence met with Erik on several occasions to help design a dumpster surround that was the other part of his Eagle project, explaining in detail any pitfalls that might occur, and then offering a below retail cost for materials.

When a ‘big box’ store was approached, the comment was made that they ‘consider the Boy Scouts to be a wealthy organization, and would not help.’

What happens when local businesses fail, or are hurt so much by unfair competition from a mega-conglomerate such as Wal-Mart that they can no longer afford to make donations to Scouts who are working on their Eagle projects? What happens, also when their expertise is gone? Will the transient work force at these ‘big box’ stores be able to offer the advice and encouragement to help these Scouts along? Any proposal before the Planning Board that might jeopardize the solvency of these essential local businesses should be dismissed.

At the August 10, 2005 Planning Board meeting, when asked about the impact of the extended plaza on village businesses, Mr. Buchheit stated that “the types of businesses that would occupy Quaker Crossing *do not seem to interfere* with village businesses” and “noted that the Target store was a concern for Arthur’s. ..”

If Target was a concern, a Target AND a Wal-Mart Supercenter are not a concern? I doubt that.

And what about other businesses in the Village who support the Scouts through the Who’s Who phone directory? A Wal-Mart pharmacy won’t interfere with Anthony Brown’s? A Wal-Mart optical department won’t interfere with Hogenkamps? A Wal-Mart tire and lube won’t interfere with Bodden’s or Terry Young’s?

All of these businesses support the Who’s Who, which is the major fundraiser for 3 Troops in Orchard Park. In my position on the Who’s Who Parents Committee, I had to sell advertising to businesses in Orchard Park as well as seek food donations for Distribution Day in April. I was always impressed with the willingness of so many local businesses to help the Scouts. Take a look through that book and you will see the names of so many who support the work of the Scouts.

Since coming before the Town Board in August, I have paid close attention to the businesses who support town and school events such as Quaker Days, Town Recreation activities, and the recent production of Kiss Me Kate. Support of these events did not include existing big-box retailers in Orchard Park.

Big Box stores do not add to our quality of life, rather they can have significant, costly and often unforeseen adverse effects on our community.

I respectfully request that you consider the impact on town economics and local businesses of a Wal-Mart Supercenter, and more specifically the effects on the viability of established local businesses.”

11.) Presented by Dave Schuster

“I am a fourth generation citizen of Orchard Park and have lived here all of my life.

As a child my parents took me to Craig’s Shoe Store for my P .F Flyers, The Paragon Shop for my school clothes, Galza’s dry goods store for oil cloth to cover my desk in first grade, Anthony Brown’s Pharmacy for a milkshake, Arthur’s Hardware for paint brushes to paint my model cars, Dick Baldwin’s Barber Shop to have my hair cut, bought home repair items at K&B Lumber and groceries at R. Lottas.

At one time the village satisfied every need.

Some of those stores remain and others have been replaced by specialty stores that pay their taxes every year, hire local citizens and participate in local events.

Now all are threatened by the addition of a Wal-Mart Supercenter. For every job created by a Wal Mart 1.4 jobs are lost.

Two weeks ago I received a flyer from the Orchard Park Republican Committee to tell me that they are “the type of representation that will safeguard the character, integrity, civility and stability of Orchard Park as a community .” How does Wal-Mart fit in with that philosophy?

It goes on to say that without the Republicans in control we will be faced with the “abolishment of the Village, and degradation of Orchard Park’s image and reputation as a premier residential community in Western New York.” How will Wal-Mart protect the Village, and enhance Orchard Park’s image and reputation?

A study in Mid-coast Maine in 2003 of economic impact of locally owned businesses vs. large chain stores showed that the local businesses spent 44.6% of their revenue within the surrounding two counties. Another 8.7% was spent elsewhere in the state of Maine.

The big box retailers returned just 14.1 % of its revenue to the local economy, mostly in the form of payroll. The rest leaves the state, flowing to out of state suppliers or back to corporate headquarters. The survey also found that the local businesses contributed more to charity than national chains.

The city of Concord, New Hampshire according to a study in 2001 provides an example of what can happen when a community allows massive commercial growth while failing to protect its existing economic assets.

Over the last 12 years, Concord added 2.8 million square feet of new commercial and industrial development. Yet tax revenue has actually declined by 19%. To make up for lost revenue, the town now has one of the highest property tax rates in the state. The study found that new retail development, primarily big box stores, had harmed local businesses. Property values, and subsequently tax revenue, in the older shopping areas had declined sharply.

Another factor was that the new development had eroded the value of residential property, probably due in part to increased traffic and noise. The end result was that the city actually experienced a declining tax base despite all of the new growth.

You can argue that Wal-Mart is just another big box store, but they are the biggest, and their philosophy is to eliminate all competition and drive surrounding wages down so that only their goods can be afforded.

New York taxpayers spend 61 million dollars a year to finance health care for Wal-Mart employees, in effect using your tax dollar to underwrite their low cost. The town and village governments constantly complain about Albany and its unfunded mandates yet are considering welcoming a Wal-Mart Supercenter in to our town.

In a previous issue of Forever Young, the cover story highlighted shopping in the East Aurora Village shopping district. I would like to read to you one of the opening paragraphs in that article. ‘Having beaten Wal-Mart into submission, East Aurora has evolved into a tourist destination with a bustling little downtown full of trendy shops etc.’

East Aurora saw the threat and acted accordingly and this is the result. Why doesn’t Orchard Park’s Town and Village

Boards see the same threat and act to protect that which is Orchard Park.”

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