

Statement by Councilwoman Susan Siegel
Why I voted against the Spectra License Agreement

May 19, 2015

I believe that, in general, the Town Board has negotiated a reasonable deal in terms of getting \$1.5 million as consideration for the temporary use of 7.5 acres parkland at Sylvan Glen and Granite Knolls, plus allowing Spectra to make some long term improvements to Junior Lake Memorial Park in order to meet its off-site mitigation requirements.

I have no problem with Spectra constructing a temporary access road into the temporary work space off Stoney Street just north of its existing easement for its temporary use during an 11 month construction period.

And I sincerely appreciate Spectra's willingness to work with me and the town attorney to modify some of the language in the License Agreement to address concerns I had about certain environmental and road protection issues.

That said, I voted against the resolution for one fundamental reason: The License Agreement includes a provision for Spectra to build a permanent road, to town specifications, approximately 160 feet long, into our parkland. Spectra is providing this permanent road not because it needs it, but because there is a difference in priorities among members of the Town Board.

This is a 160 foot permanent road that would go nowhere. It will dead end in the park. For the foreseeable future, will not provide any benefit to the town.

Let me make it clear. I would have voted for an agreement that would have required Spectra to restore the entire temporary work area north of Stoney Street once construction was completed and, in lieu of the dollar value of constructing a permanent road, give the town cash, cash we could use to pave our roads. Something that all our residents would benefit from immediately and each and every day, every day of the year.

What it boils down to is priorities. At this point in time, as a community, what is more important: assuring the public's safety by fixing our crumbling roads and bridges or building a road to nowhere.

The 160 foot permanent road would serve one purpose, and one purpose only: it would be the beginning of a roughly 800 foot road into a new second major sports complex, a complex for which there's no documented needs study, no environmental review and no short or and long term financial analysis.

I'm not against sport facilities. For me, it's an issue of priorities.

Much has been said —and will likely continue to be said — in the months ahead about the Granite Knolls sports complex. The supervisor has already stated he intends to make this a political issue and blame the Democrats for what he considers was a lost opportunity to get a much needed sports facilities at, in his words, no cost to the town.

With all due respects to the supervisor and my colleagues on this board who voted for the resolution, the public has been grossly misinformed and grossly misled for more than a year about the true costs of the Granite Knolls plan.

For starters, Spectra never, never once, publicly committed to contributing any specific dollar amount towards the construction of the sports complex. The only commitments Spectra made, in writing, were to

- 1, Restore the existing practice field it destroyed during construction to its pre-existing condition; not improve it
2. Grade, not finish, an area for a 90' baseball field, and
3. Leave a gravel , not paved, parking area.

Who did the supervisor think was going to foot the bill to finish the 90' baseball field? Create two state of the art multi-purpose fields? Install lights? Construct bathrooms and viewing stands? Pave the parking area? And of course, it would have been helpful if the supervisor had told taxpayers what it was going to cost them, not Spectra, to maintain the new facilities, year after year after year.

Absent a community wide dialogue that gathers input from ALL residents on whether or not they are ready and willing to pay for a second major sports complex at Granite Knolls, I see no purpose in permanently destroying some of our valuable parkland to build 160 feet of road that may never serve a town purpose.

I also had wanted a sentence added to the brief resolution voted tonight to reflect the board's discussion at last week's executive session that the \$1.5 million would be deposited in the General Fund to be used for town-wide purposes.