

9 October 2025

TOWN OF BRISTOL
COMMUNITY DEV.
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From: Jim.Farley@me.com

Subject: Comfort Inn, A travesty that could have a long-term negative impact on Bristol's future.

Gentlemen and Ladies,

I was hesitant about attending the TRC meeting today, but it might be a good idea, considering the impact it might have on the town, both positive and negative. Of course, it's a matter of opinion, but with over 30 years of experience in planning and development, I thought it seemed appropriate to add my two cents.

First, the idea of a new hotel in town is an excellent and long-overdue concept. However, location is the primary item to be addressed. I cannot think of a worse location. Success is contingent on location, and this site is not the case. Gooding Avenue neither meets the requirement nor has a positive impact on the surrounding area.

Second, the hotel's entrance is situated in a primarily commercial area, which is not conducive to the proposed use.

Third, the area south of the proposal is residential and includes the new Mount Hope High School, which is currently under construction.

Fourth, the area under consideration is also located in or near a water flow issue that has existed or remains a concern. In either case, it is causing consternation. The problem is that the proposed development will have a more adverse impact on the area.

Fifth, among several items discussed, I was particularly concerned about the reduction of rooms: from 80 to 40. Just the thought is ludicrous and shortsighted. Unfortunately, number 40 is not practical and compounds the problem. Quite frankly, it plays right into the developer's hands. The potential result: low-income housing or worse. A replica of the Metacom nightmare.

Sixth, it is interesting to note that this project, that's been around for several years, was rejected. Now, a few years later, the project is before us again. The most likely reason has a great deal to do with the new Mount Hope High School construction. An issue that has had a negative outlook for quite some time. Which, in turn, is expected to alleviate the Silver Creek overflow. The continued negative impact on the neighborhood exists. If that is the case, it would seem only appropriate that the developer share in the cost of eliminating the problem. And the burden of one issue that consistently hinders the proposal.

Seventh. On the other hand, the town continues to lack sufficient accommodation, and little has been done to alleviate the problem. From an economic development perspective, the lack of rooms has hindered our ability to accommodate potential guests and attract customers to town. Consider this: we have several venues in town that rely on weddings and other events that accommodate hundreds of guests. Most people are required to stay out of town due to a lack of available rooms. So where do they end up? Seekonk, Providence, Middletown, Newport, and an array of other locations that benefit from our events. What does that mean to the community, including restaurants, gift shops, bars, historical sites, museums, and others, that lose the opportunity to sell their wares and stay in business?

Eighth, whether this proposal is good or bad for Bristol has yet to be determined, but looking at it in a long-range perspective, how do we deal with failure? The conjecture: low-income, student housing, something similar to the complex on Metacom Avenue. Would it be fair to subject the neighborhood to another nightmare?

Ninth, as an alternative to Gooding Avenue, how about the consortium involved in this project shift its focus? Purchase the tower and use the existing site for the Comfort Inn.

Tenth, in a project this size, and as a result of today's Technical Review Committee, it is essential to have all the i's dotted and t's crossed before Final Approval.

Eleventh, do not rush this project through. There have been solid reasons why it has taken so long. The original proposal was closer to Metacom Avenue and has gradually moved down over the years. Ever hear the expression: "If at first you don't succeed, try and try again." Which, quite frankly, gained life when it could take advantage of the construction of a new high school. This would result in improved Silver Creek water flow, which has hindered any development. What evidence do we have that the proposed changes to the area will improve it? Lastly, who has the responsibility for failure? If it's the town of Bristol, we need to think about what we are committing to.

Twelfth, leave no stone unturned; there are far too many variables to do otherwise.

Thirteen, there is no doubt that this project would not have made first base had it not been for outside political influence. It was a bad idea when the project was first submitted, and despite efforts to move forward, it does not work. If anything, it compounds the problem and increases the environmental impact. Do we need more hotel space? Absolutely, but in an area that is conducive to increasing local shopping. Not on a side street, that is not a good location.

**Respectfully submitted,
James W Farley**

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