

January 30, 2010

Town of Vernon
Planning & Zoning Commission
Rockville, Ct 06066

Commissioners:

As a long time resident of the town of Vernon, I am concerned about the many negatives of having TicketNetwork Forest's outdoor rock band venue in town. The purpose of this letter is to consider just one of the related problems, that of sound.

Difficulty in forecasting sound levels and effects;

There are not easily forecast effects in the carrying of sounds, effects not demonstrated by the one time sampling used by the applicant's engineer. People living along the Rt.84 corridor, and not necessarily particularly close to it, are aware of the variability of the noise from one day to the next or from one neighborhood to the next. Variables such as transmission by wind and reflection, both land topography and atmospheric. TN's consultant's measurements certainly do not preclude places or other times than those sampled not meeting the standards.

As a specific illustration of how a sample DB level measurement does not necessarily apply to even close by locations, drive along Whitney Ferguson Rd. (the road feeding the on and off ramps at exit 66 onto Rt.84 west). The development there is the closest to the concert stage on that side of the highway. The rather high, rock outcropping which is in front of some of the houses may protect them but certainly doesn't protect the houses at each end, which are not behind the bank. As reported at the meeting, the sound sample there was taken from the top of the bank. Sound alleyways probably exist at the ends of the bank.

Crowd vocal noise and applause:

The acoustics consultant and applicant have stated that the sound system will focus the performer's sounds into the audience and so minimize the distribution into the town. The crowd vocal and applause noises however are not directed and will escape the area and as people outside a stadium know audience noise is a large component. As the applicant has stated the testing done did not include crowd noise.

Rock band and crowd noise compared to highway noise:

People along the Rt.84 corridor have lived with the increasing traffic truck tire and engine noises for years. The droning, while irritating when an individual is considering them, particularly on an otherwise quiet summer evening, do eventually tend to sink into the background. The rock band performance noises however in their varying pitch and amplitude, particularly the beat and rising swell of audience participation sounds will not.

Undoubtedly the PZC is planning to hire its own acoustics authority, at the applicant's expense as is permitted. The University of Hartford has the reputation of having a good acoustics program with professors acquainted with urban sounds study. They should be considered as a capable resource.

A final point is that the town has an ordinance against outdoor motion picture theaters. Although not perhaps coinciding with this application, which is worse in most people's minds and might even have movie components, the ordinance shows intent and precedent. I recommend that when this action is concluded that the ordinance be rewritten to bring it up to date. Also that the town adopt sound standards in line with other towns rather than relying on the state's less restrictive law.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Lyle
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