

STATEMENT FROM MR. ROY PLISKO RE: PITCH PERFECT APPLICATION

I made a statement at the public meeting about Article 16 last night but I was told that the cell phone may have cut out several times making the statement unclear. I am pasting the text of that statement below. I was told this may be helpful for you to have a clear record in the meeting minutes. I really appreciate everyone taking the time to hear me out. Even though I did not agree with the outcome, I hope my full statement can stand on the record for others to consider.

Thank you

Roy Plisko

What follows is the statement I read:

My name is Roy Plisko, former long-term Canterbury resident, and co-owner of Pitch Perfect at Canterbrook, which is one of the campgrounds under review. I grew up in Canterbury, at Canterbrook farm, on Old Tilton Road. We have been a horse farm for many years in one form or another. I will also be handling the responsibility for the property when my mother, Virginia Laplante, can no longer take care of it.

I have been following the permitting and review process closely because my sister, LeeAnn Mackey, has been the one working to get our campground project through it. And I'm speaking today because we have studied this issue very deeply in an effort to find a good use of our property that keeps us from needing to break it up.

While I agree that we need an orderly process for examining the impact of the way land is used in town, I now have some serious concerns. NOT ONLY about the ordinance changes being proposed here tonight, but also with the planning board's approach to this subject matter in general.

While we are still early in my statement, I want to point out that the subject tonight is not just about camping. In the case of Canterbury, and the state of NH, the subject is agricultural tourism. The campgrounds currently under review are not typical holiday campgrounds. They are agritourism campgrounds on agriculturally zoned land. Agritourism has a clear definition under state law passed in 2016.

RSA 21:34-a

“agritourism [means] visitors to a farm to attend events and activities that are accessory uses to the primary operation, including but not limited to, eating a meal, making overnight stays, enjoyment of the farm environment, education about farm operations, or active involvement in the activity of the farm.”

This law has additional sections written with the intent to stop towns from creating arbitrary ordinances or zoning restrictions trying to keep farms from either creating OR expanding their

agritourism on agricultural land. If you are not familiar already, I suggest that everyone present tonight look up the details of agritourism, the protections in place for farms trying to expand into agritourism, and the caselaw around existing farms in NH who have gotten into litigation with their towns because they were interfering with agritourism

One of the big issues I hear being tossed around is the burden of traffic. I would like to point out that farms and forestry are expected to produce a certain amount of traffic just by virtue of being farms and forestry. There are workers driving in and out daily, tractors, machinery and large trucks used, there is livestock to be tended, crops to cultivate, fields to mow and any number of contributing factors to both noise and heavy road usage. We also have farm stands, farmers markets, logging, haying, hayrides, corn mazes, pick-your-own crops, clubs, workshops and any number of activities open to the public and/or generating traffic. We also have hunters, equestrians, hikers, apple pickers, blueberry pickers, meat and egg purchasers driving on our roads on a regular basis.

When it comes to traffic, do we want people using our roads to access our farms and forests or not? If we do, then why specifically pick on OUR type of agritourism business and not any of the others going on in town?

This is still agricultural land. **Building houses in agriculturally zoned areas does not put a burden on the farms to stop being farms. It puts a burden on the residences in that zone to tolerate farms.**

Are we still a rural community? Or have we become a suburban one? I ask because according to the state, the heavy machinery and population increases associated with development are the #1 contributor to creating road issues and increasing traffic. Farms and landowners in Canterbury really have two choices if they are having a hard time holding onto large properties: They can make money with the property, to help support it or they can create more housing lots and sell it off. Which way does the board prefer for us to use our farmland and forests? Which way do you suppose creates less traffic?

Roads going through agriculturally zoned areas should be EXPECTED to support agricultural traffic. This is their purpose. The town should continue to support these activities

The ordinances proposed here tonight are not moderate. They are crippling to this one specific agritourism business without demonstrating how it is different from any other business that relies on people coming to visit.

If this is all about stopping traffic, when should other agricultural businesses in town start getting as concerned as we are? Should they worry that the town will only allow a certain amount of apple trees or berry bushes in our orchards to reduce the number of pick your own customers on our roads? Horse stalls are like campsites for horses. When will we tell horse farms they can only have 4 horse stalls in their barns because running a profitable boarding stable creates too much traffic?. When will we tell farmers that they can only have 6 cows or 6 pigs because manure can hurt the environment, or too much livestock smells bad?

More to the point, when does a farmer wake up one morning and discover that their farm in Canterbury is just a giant suburban housing lot that they can't do anything with except build more houses?

This brings me to my next big concern. I don't think most people properly understand what kind of campground operation we are proposing.

There is a HUGE distinction between the kind of campground that develops land so that it could no longer be in current use, and the kind that is primitive enough to maintain current use status. Our campground is the lowest impact form of primitive camping. It completely maintains the integrity of the land and there is not a single element of our proposal that is permanent, obtrusive, or extraordinary as compared to other agritourism businesses. If we went out of business tomorrow, it would take very little time before nobody would ever be able to tell it was there to begin with.

The kinds of ordinances you are proposing are not only harming our ability to create and expand a business as compared to other agritourism businesses in town, but they actually produce the opposite effect I believe you are going for.

They are pushing campgrounds in the direction of becoming more developed, not less. Nobody could make any kind of profit with primitive camping under the proposed changes. Our choice to be primitive is conservation based with low cost low impact campsites. We don't want more plumbing, more pavement and swimming pools so we can charge more. This is what we would have to do when the number of sites is limited so severely.

The board does not appear have a good grasp of the scope and intent of our applications. They seem to view us as hostile opportunists threatening the environment and the tranquility of the town. As someone with lifelong roots in Canterbury, I find this offensive.

Finally, the most concerning factor to me is the fact that they are posing these crippling changes *before* two of the applicants have even had the courtesy of making their case in a formal review.

We DO have good intentions for Canterbury, and we have law supporting these plans for our land. What we do NOT have yet is the opportunity to address concerns, answer questions, or make our intentions clear.

The public *does* have a right to know. And they also need to know who we are and what we propose. We would prefer to take an inclusive approach to that... rather than an adversarial one. However, the appropriate place for all types of discussion is a review at a regular meeting, not sitting here under the pressure of objecting to premature rule changes in a public hearing.

But unfortunately, here I am and I must now object to both the mischaracterizations our proposal has been given... in town... through the grapevine.. and the ordinance changes it has inspired.

The Article 19 regulations were posted such a short time ago the ink is still wet and here we are

at a public meeting on the issue. What is the need to rush this process? Are there alarming studies and considerations you can share with all of us? If not, this is being rushed with too much urgency. It is an over-reach based on an over-reaction. You are taking a well thought out opportunity for the town and replacing it with a poorly thought-out response. Please treat each application individually and drop these changes for now.

Thank you