

Mailbag



Say 'Yes' to resort

By Marjorie Miller, Supervisor
Town of Middletown

When I ran for office in 2011, I was openly in favor of the scaled down Belleayre Resort. Today, I am even more adamantly in favor of the project, having spent the time since 2011 getting better informed, working in Delhi and at town hall on longstanding challenges to our county, including our epidemic lack of good jobs. This lack of employment opportunity hits our teens and young adults hardest, especially those who are choosing to start a family, who want to raise their kids here because they have experienced and value our small-town rural way of life.

In 2011 I also supported and continue to support a rigorous and transparent process toward all development of any type or size that occurs within the Town of Middletown, development that is overseen by independent review boards and a planning department whose integrity, knowledge and thoughtful adherence to all legal requirements is unquestionable.

Visions of the collective future of this segment of the Catskills may differ in ways big and small, yet no one can honestly deny that our past was built in large part upon hospitality and outdoor activity with thousands of visitors staying at the Grand Hotel, the Takanassee, the Palace, the Pinewood, Strawgates, Ritters and many more. To deny what we were, ignoring our past as a thriving destination, is to deny the realities of who we are in 2013, and where we have come. Worse yet, this blind and stubborn denial attempts to negate what we can become again: a must-see, must-stay place where who knows how many families, friends, business folk and especially those who do not yet know how great the Catskills are, can come to gather, meet and stay to hike, ski, bike, swim, play golf, dine out, shop on our local Main Streets and kayak in our reservoirs – among the many other good things to do in and around our gorgeous mountains and valleys.

Make the smart choice

As a local leader who is all too well aware of the need we have to find meaningful work for our full-time resident population, I am continually impressed by the endless creativity and diligent hard work of my constituents. But, cobbling several jobs together, seasonal jobs, part-time jobs, full-time jobs that will survive if, if, *if* we have a good summer or fall season, all while struggling just to put dinner on the table, is no way to sustain an economy or guarantee a future for the next seven generations. Generations who demand we make smart choices right now, finding and fully accepting civil compromise as a foundation for their futures. Whatever concerns we may have over the inevitable changes we face in our lives and in this world, we are strong and resolute, knowing we'll be okay, here in the Catskills. We are strong.

But, are we, and are our those who oppose this project, strong enough to be honest right now and admit we are and have been struggling to survive as our youth abandon the area in droves along with all hopes of growing our local volunteer fire departments or simply putting down roots minutes away from grandma and grandpa in a world where you can fish and hunt as well as know, love and be embraced by two or more generations of your best friend's family? Can we be honest, now, and admit the heartbreak of knowing our children must find opportunity and build lives elsewhere, or potentially live on the economic margins if they chose a local life next door?

It is time to say yes and yes and yes once more to the Belleayre Resort and a return to our deserved place as a world-renowned destination for those who seek clean air, stellar views, quality accommodations and four-season activities here, where we live. This return includes, as it must and shall, renewed prosperity for those of us who have known the not-so-secret wonder of this amazing place, our home, all along. Please support this vital investment in our region, in our future, in our kids, in our selves. The time is now.