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# Journal Tribune

## Readers' Forum

**July 31, 2014**

### **Lower Village hotel proposal is a Trojan horse**

**T**here is a Trojan horse galloping through Lower Village and its name is Kennebunk Harbor Hotel. At the Kennebunk Planning Board meeting, Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, the proposal for the Kennebunk Harbor Hotel situated on the Kennebunk River within the Coastal Residential and Shoreland Overlay Zones was met with skepticism by Board members and by the public.

The proposed Doane's Wharf Contract Zone, if approved, would permit the erection of an 80 room high-end boutique hotel and multiple condos with a car link onto a one-way Doane's Wharf Lane.

Comments of Planning Board members echoed the concerns of residents and abutters: "What is the benefit to the Town? Are we becoming the 'Miami of Maine'? After all hell has broken through in recent years, is this the overdone thing?" A resident said, that the proposed hotel would be the equivalent of putting the Narraganset Hotel on this harbor site adjacent to Federal Jack's.

The developers seemed unfamiliar with the local culture and recent controversy in Lower Village: the lack of parking, the fact that all area hotels and B&Bs lack full occupancy and are struggling to survive, and that the newest luxury hotel on Chase Hill has already lost two of its tenants. The developers seemed ignorant that the nearest Amtrak station is in Wells, not

Portland, and that the residents do not embrace the concept of "Corporate Kennebunk" catering to the 20% high end tourist market.

The residents were deeply moved at the plight of a new home owner on Doane's Wharf who just learned of this hotel proposal after he and his wife bought their house two weeks ago, and of the cart blanche plan for the developer to rewrite the zone requirements for a Doane's Wharf Contract zone. He stated that the value of his new home and that of all abutters just plummeted.

This Trojan horse must be stopped at the stall. Adapting the words of Henry David Thoreau when he scolded those who would defile Walden Pond: "That devilish Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout Kennebunk, has muddied Lower Village with his foot, and he it is, that now would seal off our harbor shore, that Trojan horse, with 80 guest rooms in his belly, introduced by mercenary developers. Where is the town's champion, to meet him at Doane's Wharf and thrust an avenging Do Not Enter barricade in the ribs of the bloated pest?"

**Robert F. Lyons**

**Kennebunk Lower Village**