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### **Biodiesel Proponents Did Job Right**

Due to the steady demand for growth in our communities, local planning boards, conservation commissions and concerned citizens are constantly reviewing new development proposals. Some projects are on a small scale with little impact on our environment, and some are on a scale that can have significant community impacts.

The review process for these proposals can either move quickly or be delayed in drawn-out debates and requests for project revisions. For large-scale projects with lengthy reviews, the process can also result in major financial expenditures for developers and major time commitments for projects reviewers.

For this reason, I feel that it is important to congratulate the proponents of the recent biodiesel plan in Pittsfield for taking the time to meet with people in the community before submitting their formal proposal.

They took the time to explain their project, the potential impacts, and also listened to the concerns from citizens, community leaders and various local organizations. This process allowed the applicants to consider and then address the public issues that were raised and also allowed the project reviewers to develop a better understand of the proposal and of community concerns before having to decide on the application.

The approach was open and positive. It established direct communication among potential protagonists, and the end result was a relatively smooth application and permitting process. Their approach allows for the healthy growth of our area while also maintaining the necessary environmental protection for the local communities in a much less antagonist manner.

The ability to discuss this proposal before the formal application helped considerably to minimize potential misconceptions and answered concerns of concerns. For instance, the Housatonic Valley Association had concerns over the impacts to the east branch of the Housatonic River and water use at the plant, but our concerns were alleviated once we were able to review the proposal directly with the project developers. Although this approach seems like a logical process, unfortunately that is not always the case.

No matter what your opinion is on the specifics of this project, the proponents of Berkshire Biodiesel should be commended for their efforts to maintain an open dialogue with the community.

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