

From: [Christopher J. Hynes \(Business\)](#)
To: [Collette, Kenneth](#)
Subject: 20 Magee Proposal
Date: Monday, February 18, 2013 3:34:28 PM

Mr. Collette:

I want to register my personal opposition to the proposal for the building of a boat yard at 205 Magee Avenue in Stamford.

My background: I have resided in Stamford with my wife and five children for 27 years. Boating always played an important role in our family life, and sailing remains one of my favorite pastimes. I am in my 14th year on the board of the Stamford Yacht Club, and recently completed my third year as its Commodore. (I do not speak for the Club, which takes no positions on these matters, and mention this only to explain my background as an interested resident and boater.) As a sailboat owner for the past 20 years, and a powerboat owner previously, I was a loyal summer and winter customer of Stamford's 14-acre boat yard. As a member of the City's oldest and largest boating organization, I know the yard played an important role, not only for its resident boaters, but for visiting yachts, a role that no other facility in Stamford Harbor is capable of serving or has served since the yard was closed in late 2011.

I understand that whether a boat yard should be built at 205 Magee Avenue and whether Stamford's traditional boatyard on the 14-acre peninsula should be turned into a hedge fund headquarters CAN be viewed as two distinct issues. But they really are inseparable. They are two steps in a single transaction. The ONLY reason the owner of both properties wants to squeeze some kind of boat yard into the small parcel at 205 Magee Avenue is to create an argument that there is no longer a need for a full service boat yard on the 14-acre peninsula and, therefore, that it can escape its legal obligation to maintain the larger boat yard and, instead, sell that site to Bridgewater Capital, thereby making a lot more MONEY.

The proposed site at 205 Magee Avenue is no more capable of providing the kind of service we have long enjoyed at the 14-acre boat yard than my 27' sailboat is capable of serving as an alternative home for my family. I could point to the bunks and the porta-potty and try to convince you, but such an argument would be grossly disingenuous.

The peninsula was well chosen for its traditional uses more than a century ago. Its proximity to Long Island Sound made it commercially convenient and accessible by boats of all sizes in need of emergency hauling and storage, pump-out or repair, while enjoying the protection of the inner harbor. The shape of the peninsula leverages the acreage's waterfront, i.e., it has water access on its two long sides and one short side. The breadth of the south end of the harbor's western leg allowed the boat yard to further leverage its dockage by extending numerous dock fingers from each side, accommodating many boats of all sizes, without interfering with harbor traffic. The size of the boat yard and the large number of boats that it attracted and served made it commercially feasible for the yard to own the best equipment and hire and maintain an excellent marine service

staff. It also made it commercially feasible for independent marine merchants and service providers to set up shops at the facility, e.g., a sail loft and an electronics store.

The peninsula's acreage provided a great service to SAILING in an area extending far beyond Stamford. When I winter-stored my sailboat on land there, as I did until it was suddenly closed by the present owner in late 2011, most of the land was covered with hundreds of fixed-keel sailboats, and they stood so closely together in their rows that a person could walk from one deck to another. There was no lack of demand for all that space.

The Magee Avenue proposal offers almost NOTHING to compensate for what was taken by the closing of the boat yard. Its principle storage feature is a rack system that can serve only powerboats. In other words, the proposal describes the kind of boat yard that fits in the much smaller space, but not the kind of boat yard that was taken away, not the kind of boat yard that served the proven market. Its only dockage would be a single service dock, impractically squeezed between the land and a busy commercial channel. I expect this extremely limited dockage would be fully utilized by boats being moved to and from the rack system by a travel lift that would, itself, consume much of the available waterfront. There is no room for a fuel dock. The offering of winter space for on-land sailboat storage is greatly exaggerated, at best. It would serve only a token number of the sailboats that resided on the peninsula; the drawings exaggerate storage capacity by ignoring the real need of space for movement of the travel lift, parking of customers' cars and service vehicles, movement of boats to and from the service building and storage spaces, etc.

Even if the proposal is viewed in the best possible light, it does not begin to accomplish its purported purpose, which is to maintain—at an alternate location—what was provided by the boatyard on the 14-acre peninsula.

When the developer promised to maintain temporary boat yard services at the 14-acre site, it went through the motions and, after a couple of months, argued that there was no demand for its services and that it was not commercially feasible to continue them, except BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine the same thing happening at 205 Magee Avenue, perhaps as a prelude to another application to convert that boat yard into another waterfront office building.

We know the developer is financially motivated to escape its legal obligation to maintain Stamford's full-service boat yard (an obligation that was bought and paid for by the citizens of Stamford when the developer was granted huge allowances for the remainder of its project), while those of us who live in Stamford have something much less tangible at stake and have no organization other than our Government to fight for us. We need the protection of our most honest elected and appointed officials, more now than usual. Please stand up for Stamford. Stand up for our children, whose enjoyment of the Harbor and the Sound should not be traded for the excessive enrichment of hedge funds and developers.

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