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Comments on PZC #25-17
416 East Haddam-Moodus Road
Reconstruction of an Existing Gas station / Convenience Store with a Drive-Through Window.

East Haddam Zoning Commission Meeting
February 10, 2026

I'm Nicholson Baker, 406 E Haddam Moodus Rd, right next to the property at issue. My wife Margaret and I moved to Moodus in May of last year. At the last meeting I talked for a while, and was grateful for the opportunity. Today I want to make six brief observations about this proposal.

First, it's totally wrong for this pleasant, residential part of Moodus, especially when the town, according to its Master Plan, is moving in the direction of walkability and hoping to jazz up its traditional village flavor.

Second, it's completely unnecessary, because there's a 7 Eleven right up the road.

Third, a gas station with drive-through fast food is not allowed under current zoning regulations in this C-3 Plains Road zone.

Fourth, the idea of a fast food convenience store gas station isn't viewed favorably by a number of local citizens, including neighbors and people who work at or own several existing businesses, such as Moodus Coffee Roasters, Hometown Market, 7-Eleven, Higher Grounds, and Two Wrasslin'

Cats. I know this is true because when Cody Annino and I circulated a petition against the proposal a few weeks ago, we got 76 signers. You can read the petition in your packet.

Fifth, the traffic flow of cars threading their way into and out of this property will make an already worryingly dangerous intersection worse. Just this month a guy totalled his car right across from where the gas station would be.

And sixth, let's look at the name of this proposal. It's called "PZC #25-17, Reconstruction of an Existing Gas Station / Convenience Store with a Drive-through Window." This is a confusing way of talking about what's really going on. A more accurate name would be "Substantial Expansion and Sales-Volume Escalation of a Long-Abandoned Gas Station along with the Addition of a Commercial Kitchen, a New Access Road, and the Creation of a New, Precedent-setting Drive-through Fast-food Business."

The East Haddam zoning laws say that if there are modifications to the structure or function of a nonconforming property, then the new owner/ applicant must start from scratch and submit a brand new application. It can't be called a "reconstruction" or a continuation of a pre-existing business use when there are quote "substantial changes" to the activity going on, or to the structure itself; and a substantial change is defined in the regulations as a change in business intensity or scope, or the addition of other activities or equipment, or the "extension into additional land or building area." All of these types of substantial change are going on here. The proposal envisions a 78-foot canopy, three times larger than the canopy that was there before the old Cumberland Farms gas station was abandoned. The canopy is wider than

the building itself, and it's 19 feet high, higher than the building. The plan calls for a two-lane road and retaining wall cut into the land behind the building. It calls for six gas pumps, whereas the abandoned Cumberland Farms business had four. It calls for a commercial kitchen. It's not a continuation, it's an expansion, and an entry into new territory.

To approve this plan would not only be a mistake—indeed, a major wrong turn for the future of Moodus. It would also be illegal. Thanks very much.