

53 Mercer St.
Albany, N.Y. 12203
April 30, 1980

Honorable William J. Dickerson
Administrative Law Judge
N.Y.S. Dept. of Environmental Conservation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, New York 12232

Dear Judge Dickerson:

I have meant for some time now to get to the Crossgates hearings in order to make a statement. However, my schedule keeps making that impossible, and when I did manage to leave work early last Friday, I discovered to my chagrin that you do not meet on Fridays. Therefore, the following will be a written statement presented as if I were able to deliver it in person.

My name is Karl Felsen. I work for the New York State Assembly. I live at 53 Mercer Street, and I am a member of the McKnownville Improvement Association.

On March 18, 1980, I attended a meeting of the McKnownville Improvement Association, and I was quite disturbed about what happened there concerning the Crossgates hearings. Dangerous and inflammatory demagogic statements seemed to be the order of the day.

After telling the group that "Pyramid gave Carey \$33,000," Mr. Donald Reeb, the president of the group, went on to say we were in this fight alone. He stated, "We don't know who's playing ball downtown." "Has Carey told Flacke, 'I don't care what the truth is, I don't want Crossgates stopped.'?"

Similar aspersions were cast upon County Executive Jim Coyne and Mayor Erastus Corning.

Now I work for the Legislature. Part of my job is trying to increase citizen involvement. On my own time I serve as governmental advisor to the Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf. This last summer, I put on a lobbying seminar for the Empire State Association for the Deaf. I will have an article appearing in Cosmopolitan on how to effectively contact your elected representatives. In short, I'm kind of a nut when it comes to citizen participation and involvement.

However, participation in the process carries with it a responsibility, a responsibility that has been ignored by Mr. Reeb and a few of Mr. Reeb's loudest cohorts. I should make it clear that I do not object to Mr. Reeb's ends, merely his means.

We do not need demagogues in my community. We do not need individuals obliquely implying that honorable public servants are taking bribes. We do need concerned, involved citizens. So I would say to all parties involved, tone down the rhetoric. Let both sides use logic and reason, not innuendo or shouts.

And I hope to God I never see statements such as the one in the Mcknownville Improvement Association notice. Speaking of these hearings, the notice states "But we need a larger cheering section."

Now I have what is close to reverence for the law. I have seen how slowly, carefully and painfully it is built up. And it is my understanding that these hearings are an Administrative Law Proceeding. It is not a football game or a circus. Law seeks the truth. There is no place in the law for cheering sections.

I am personally incensed that someone in my community would imply and attempt to generate support for the idea that a cheering section can, or should be used to, bend or influence the law.

I have seen damage done to the community, to the concept of democratic participation and institutions, and to the integrity of the law itself. IT HAS TO STOP.

To both sides testifying here the most important issue is whether or not a mall is built. The outcome of that question pales to triviality in comparison with the integrity of the law and the principles of the democratic process.

I would close by saying to all parties concerned, seek the truth and be guided by the law. Forget about spreading innuendoes concerning honorable public servants. Forget about telling people there won't be a house in Guilderland worth \$15,000 if the mall goes through.

Character assassination, innuendoes and scare tactics may help win a few brief battles, but they will end up doing more permanent harm to the community than if you blacktopped every square inch of it.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views.

cc. Mr. Donald Reeb ✓
Mr. John Shea
Mr. Robert Ungerer

Sincerely,


Karl E. Felsen