

Eleanor G. Kinnaird
207 W. Poplar Ave.
Carrboro NC 27510

12 December 2009

Dear Dan,

You were not at the Carrboro Economic Sustainability Commission meeting last Wednesday where I gave a presentation on why Carrboro needs a Costco. I will write the reasons I gave to the Commission in this letter.

First, Carrboro and Orange County have a great need to provide a more equitable property tax. Right now, our tax base is 80% property tax. As you saw from the visit with the Carr Court neighborhood, we are severely impacting the lower income families in our town. They cannot afford our high taxes and will soon have to leave Carrboro entirely.

The only way to make our taxes less of a burden to home owners, is to increase the tax base by developing a vigorous commercial tax base in Carrboro.. We all believe in shopping locally and supporting our small locally owned businesses. But that benefits only the owner of the business because they hire few people at low wages and provide no health insurance for their workers. The fact is that there is very little to buy in Carrboro necessary for daily living except groceries. All our grocery stores are doing well: Harris Teeter, Weaver Street Market, Food Lion, Cliff's Meat Market and the various tiendas. Fitch Lumber is also doing well but has a limited offering. The restaurants and coffee shops are not only doing well, but pull in shoppers from other towns and areas as does our wellness industry. But most of the other businesses are specialty, "boutique" stores that one only uses occasionally, if at all. For instance, I shop at the North Carolina Craft Gallery when I am buying a wedding gift, a rare occurrence. These small stores are barely sustainable which is evidenced by the frequency they come and go out of business.

More importantly, those small businesses cannot pay a living wage or health insurance to their employees. The small workforce they hire is therefore deprived of both.

Costco, on the other hand, paid \$18.00 an hour some years ago, and I suspect pays more now. Every employee, full and part time is provided with health insurance. Costco has committed itself to be socially accountable to its workers, the environment, and the area where it is located.. Costco takes food stamps. It also employs a large work force, which could provide decent employment for Carrboro citizens. In other words, it is exactly the type of business we want in Carrboro.

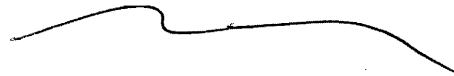
Costco will not compete with any existing Carrboro business. Indeed, it will pull in a large population of shoppers into Carrboro. Costco is compatible with all the types of businesses we have in Carrboro. The Costco shopper fits the profile of Orange County:

educated, sophisticated, socially and environmentally conscious, and with disposable income.

Finally, it will be environmentally advantageous to have a Costco in Carrboro since people will not be driving to Durham to shop, thus not polluting the air. We are losing millions each year as shoppers drive to Southpointe, New Hope Commons and the Durham Costco.

I would be glad to talk with you further about this. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellie Kinnaird". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ellie Kinnaird

copies: Mayor and Board of Alderpersons
Economic Sustainability Commission
Planning Board