



PZ Clerk &lt;pzclerk@townofnewlebanonny.gov&gt;

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**Letter for June 3, Tilden Commons Public Hearing**

1 message

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**Joanna Ezinga** [REDACTED]  
To: PZ Clerk <pzclerk@townofnewlebanon.com>

Mon, May 25, 2026 at 6:28 AM

Planning Board  
Town of New Lebanon  
May 25, 2026

Re: Tilden Commons Public Hearing

Dear Planning Board,

As I am unable to attend the upcoming Public Hearing on June 3, 2026, I am writing in advance to express my strong support for Tilden Commons and urge the Planning Board to approve their application.

We've all seen empty strip malls and plazas. They are a common causality of shrinking populations, changing demographics, and shifts in buying habits. Such is the situation in New Lebanon. The long empty Tilden Plaza was once a thriving part of the downtown commercial district. Now it sits fallow. This large, empty property stands out as one drives through town, sending a vibe of a community fallen on hard times with little to offer locals and visitors. Options for creative reuse are scarce.

I welcome the opportunity for redevelopment presented by Tilden Commons. We have a group of local folks with a viable proposal that meets many of the town's stated needs - new commercial and retail storefronts, affordable housing, open space and its walking distance to other businesses, the community center, restaurants and the rail trail.

To my mind, it is very much in keeping with the current Comprehensive Plans' (CP) goals for housing and economic development. The CP states "*housing opportunities will be available to all economic levels and age groups*". It references a 2009 Housing Study by Laberge Group and Community Planning Environmental Associates. Among the issues identified therein are:

1. lack of affordability for low and middle income residents
2. high rental costs and lack of rental stock
3. few options for seniors to downsize

The Tilden Commons project addresses these issues head on with a proposed 41 units added to available housing stock. The range of unit sizes (13-1 bedroom, 15-2 bedroom, 15-3 bedroom) nicely accommodates the needs of singles, couples, and small families and at least 10 units are earmarked for seniors.

With regard to economic development, the CP says the following "*achieve the long-term economic vitality of the Town through constructive growth of existing businesses and attracting appropriate new businesses, consistent with preserving the Town's rural character and environment*".

Tilden Commons addresses that need as well. Since the closing of the IGA many years ago, the town has lacked a full service grocery store. The New Lebanon Farmers Market has filled that gap and like any

successful business, wants to grow.

Additionally, the Farmers Market serves as an economic engine for small businesses in our community. From its inception, it has championed local producers and created visibility for area farmers, growers, chefs, bakers, and crafts people. By offering goods produced here - fruits, vegetables, poultry, pork and beef, soaps, cakes, pies, cookies, prepared foods, jams and jellies, cheese, maple syrup, fresh flowers and more, it connects customers with producers and enhances the local economic infrastructure. What could be more in keeping with preserving a town's rural character than ensuring the farmers don't go out of business?

I urge the Planning Board to approve Tilden Commons and work with them to resolve any outstanding issues.

Sincerely,  
Joanna Ezinga  
63 Kelly Road  
East Chatham, NY