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PZ Clerk <pzclerk@townofnewlebanonny.gov>

Fwd: The story of the Tilden Pharmaceutical factory is New Lebanon

1 message

Elizabeth Brutsch [redacted] Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 6:00 PM
To: PZ Clerk <pzclerk@townofnewlebanonny.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **margaret robertson** <[redacted]
Date: Wed, Aug 19, 2026 at 3:43 PM
Subject: The story of the Tilden Pharmaceutical factory is New Lebanon
To: <nlpb.brutsch@gmail.com>
Cc: <nlpb.carroll@gmail.com>, nlebpb3@gmail.com <nlebpb3@gmail.com>, nlpb.hanna@gmail.com <nlpb.hanna@gmail.com>, nlpb.muse@gmail.com <nlpb.muse@gmail.com>, nlebpb2@gmail.com <nlebpb2@gmail.com>, nlebpbalt2@gmail.com <nlebpbalt2@gmail.com>, nlebpbalt1@gmail.com <nlebpbalt1@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Board members,

As a lifelong resident of New Lebanon, I knew of the Tilden pharmaceutical factory that stood in the field behind the Hitching Post. As a young child I frequently went into that building with my father to get our vitamins and salt tablets from the chemist Robert “Bob” Peck, who was a friend of my father’s. The smell of the herbal medicines is still in my memory, as are the stairs going up to a dimly lit hallway, with rays of sun streaming in the windows high up. That factory produced 100s of pills, tinctures, syrups, and powders from a large variety of herbal medicines. As the medicines were bottled up by the caseloads, they had to be stored somewhere before being shipped out of town. Henry Tilden, brother of Samuel Tilden -who should have been president- donated land for the Lebanon Springs Railroad to build a train depot closer to his factory in order to ship his medicines more efficiently. Tilden pharmaceuticals were shipped by rail to Chatham and then to NYC for shipment across the country and overseas. We became world famous because of Tilden’s pharmaceuticals. Sadly, the factory shut down operations in 1964 as the Lebanon Valley/Chatham Railroad went out of business after the interstates made transporting goods even faster and easier. In early April 1970, the factory itself was burned to the ground. However, the foundation remains and perhaps even pipes in the ground.

When I heard of this Tilden Commons project I was alarmed because blacktop pavement and an enormous building would forever erase any remnant of our town’s story. I asked one of the project investors about putting a plaque there to mark what our town had. Her response was a short, clipped negative that they weren’t going to advertise it as historical! My wish is that the apartment building be solely built on the foundation of the Tilden factory’s and a plaque attached to the building highlighting the significance of that property and how New Lebanon impacted the economies or our country and the world.

Truthfully, that parcel of land is the most important historical piece the town has. We could tell generations occupying apartments on that site that New Lebanon made an amazing contribution to the health and welfare of people around the world. Allowing that apartment building’s current design to cover that foundation and beyond forever, would be a tragedy. Building an apartment building solely on the factory’s footprint and making it a pseudo historical site would be something we could be proud of and appreciate forever.

The water and sewer issues would also be significantly less impactful to the environment as well and a yard could even be created for the children living there.

I’m fully aware the Planning Board cannot tell a developer to change their plans, but if something subtle could be suggested perhaps we won’t see something so important to the town’s story be paved over forever.

“They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot.” (Joni Mitchell)

From a different perspective,
~ Meg Robertson
Lifelong resident
Lebanon Valley Historical Society, secretary

President of the Friends of the New Lebanon Railroad Station, Inc.