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Madison

January 8, 2010

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Expensive, But Worth It

Published 01/07/2010 12:00 AM Updated 01/07/2010 11:05 AM

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I plan to vote "Yes" on Jan. 26 for the creation of a coastal park at the former Griswold Airport site, though it seems from some recent letters there is still confusion over cost of the property and the source of funds for the purchase.

The purchase price for the town was negotiated at \$9.7 million. It is true that LeylandAlliance paid \$4.4 million in 2000, but property values have increased since then and Leyland expended money on development. Professional appraisals have confirmed the property's current value for the many housing units that have been approved, whether condominiums or private homes.

To pay for the property, the town is pursuing an \$8 million bond issue and an additional \$1 million for decommissioning the airport, creating a park, and building athletic fields. Non-profit organizations such as TPL, Audubon of Connecticut, and SGOD have partnered to raise \$1.7 million from generous private donors to give Madison to help offset the cost to the town as they strongly believe this property is worth preserving for future

generations of Madison residents.

I realize this is an expensive project, but if Madison does not purchase this property, yet another irreplaceable natural resource will be consumed by development. Preservation and appropriate use of the Griswold site will make Madison a better place in which to live-just as purchases of the Town Campus and the Surf Club did. Once lost, that opportunity will be gone forever. Let's seize this significant opportunity and vote "Yes."

Mary Jean Hale

Madison

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06443-Madison

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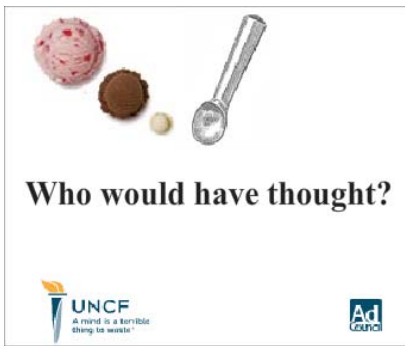
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