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Members of the Planning Board of the Amherst Community:

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak. When my husband and I moved from New York City to Amherst, we brought four companies with us and made a conscious choice to invest our lives and our livelihoods here. What I didn't share last time is that, in addition to owning those businesses in New Hampshire, I also manage two family farms in northwest Missouri that have been in my family for well over one hundred years.

People sometimes describe Amherst as rural, but farming is not really a lived way of life for most residents here. Because of that, I want to offer real context from an actual farming standpoint. The farms I run total more than three hundred acres of rich, productive soil that consistently yields strong crops year after year. I have years of experience planting, harvesting, terracing, managing crop rotation, and participating in federally run conservation restoration programs. We have worked with corn, wheat, soybeans, milo, and hay. I just completed my own harvest this season, so these numbers are not theoretical to me. They are real.

At the previous meeting, statements were made suggesting that the farmland included in the Transformation proposal could financially sustain the proposed community. I'd like to speak to that with facts.

We were told this development would have six farmable acres. To put that into perspective, the average 2025 corn yield is approximately 188 bushels per acre. For anyone unfamiliar, a bushel is roughly eight gallons. The average price of corn in New Hampshire this year was \$3.96 per bushel. That equals \$744.48 per acre, or about \$4,466.88 per year for all six acres combined.

If we assume hay instead of corn, the numbers are even lower. An acre typically produces two to three tons of hay per year. Using an average of fifteen total tons across six acres, and an average New Hampshire price of \$178 per ton, you're looking at roughly \$2,670 per year.

These numbers do not include the actual costs of farming: nitrogen and fertilizer, seed, fuel, repairs, machinery, equipment replacement, or the cost of labor. And if the land is sharecropped, which is extremely common, the revenue is cut in half from the start.

The idea that this amount of farmland can financially sustain an entire community is simply not grounded in reality. Math is fact, not fiction. We owe it to the people of Amherst to base decisions on what is real, not on promises that sound good on paper but fall apart when you apply actual agricultural economics. Misleading the public into believing this project can be self-sustaining through farm revenue is not just inaccurate; it risks long-term financial harm to the town.

As newer residents, my husband and I may not have generations here, but we do bring deep experience and a sincere desire to contribute honestly to the community we chose. Accurate numbers matter. Transparency matters. And protecting this community from false assumptions matters most.

Sincerely,



Susan L Combs