

## Costco Fails to Learn: It Is Lying Again - Essentially

[Note: This is a follow-up to the analysis posted here on 23 March, 2015. The author is Webmaster.]

We begin by quoting the last part of the previous report: "But the fact is that S-2863 **was** a war. Or rather it was a battle - part of a war. And - as this report indicates - Webmaster was part of a team that won that battle. But the war is not over. And until the war is over, there can be **no peace**."

This follow-up will be briefer than the earlier report. And what the reader makes of it depends on how the reader understands - essentially - one word: **essentially**. Although the battle is over, the war continues, having degenerated - essentially - to street fighting.

Since the earlier report was posted, a majority of the members of the Montgomery County Council have put forward a new ZTA (15-07) which will supplant ZTA 12-07. It proposes, *inter alia*, that the buffer zone (between any large gas station and certain sensitive land uses) be 500 feet (rather than 300 feet as was stipulated in ZTA 12-07). And it includes "dwelling units" (a curious way to say residential homes) among the sensitive land uses. [The Analyst Packet is available on the County website.] One could call this the Applicants' getting "their just desserts" or a case of the "chickens coming home to roost". For those council members who did not support ZTA 12-07 (or caused it to be watered down) this is also "locking the barn door after the horse has left".

Not surprisingly, Costco (the main part of the Applicants' team) is extremely upset. And they are showing it. They know the rules: All is fair in love and war. And this is definitely NOT love. So Costco is using propaganda - as it did before - as part of its effort to buy "supporters". It is squealing like a stuck pig, which is essentially the sound made by a Goliath whose ox has been gored. Again Costco is - essentially - lying. They lied - essentially - many times during the S-2863 process, so why would anyone be surprised that they are lying again? They have told their "supporters" that the new ZTA "**would essentially suspend the zoning process and keep safe, affordable gas out of Montgomery County**"? [The full message is not worth repeating here. Besides, everyone familiar with this case knows that the only place - in this neighborhood - where one can buy supporters is at Dick's.]

Of course they slipped in that word "essentially". Which gives them some room for slippage. After all, what does "essentially" mean in this context? Why you'd need an expert witness to explain (like the ones Costco paid to testify before the Hearing Examiner in the case of S-2863). Witnesses who are - essentially - experts at testifying. And choosing words oh so carefully. So that no mistruth could stick to them. Rather like teflon.

For the record, Costco could have chosen a more appropriate location for

its gas station (when it filed S-2863). In fact, the Stop Costco Gas Coalition website ([www.stopcostcogas.org](http://www.stopcostcogas.org)) has had - for nearly two years - an article posted on the Home page, entitled ""The Status, The Problem, A Solution". If Costco had taken the citizens' advise, they could have satisfied ZTA 12-07. And probably (essentially) ZTA 15-07. But Costco knows this, because they have real estate experts, one of whom in fact signed the recent letter to Costco supporters. He was accused, in the early stages of the S-2863 battle, of lying to the Planning Board. But perhaps he mis-spoke. Foot soldiers often do that, when they fear loosing their jobs - or worse. Some people say this soldier is a nice guy. Maybe he has actually bought the big lie Costco is selling?

Anyway, you may not see that Costco is - essentially - lying. But many people do - including Webmaster. They can see what is in front of their eyes - even when Costco attempts to block their vision with "essentially".

So now what happens? Well it is like deja vu all over again. Lobbying. Lots of lobbying. Testimony before the County Council; lots of testimony. What will Westfield do? Probably keep a low public profile but urge the Council that the proposed ZTA be rejected. What will Ike Leggett do? Have his house lawyer prepare another shoddy document urging rejection of the ZTA? Maybe not. Maybe now is the time to get out of Dodge.

More importantly, what will Costco's remaining customers do? Boycott? Why not. Webmaster urged the community to boycott Costco a long time ago (2010). In fact he actually urged them to boycott Westfield and Costco. And to vote against Leggett. Of course no one took his advice. Which is too bad. We would have all saved a lot of time, money and effort.

So the Applicants continue to take hostages. They have been holding the pedestrian path hostage for some time now. And they are holding the truth hostage. But they have yet again failed to learn - from history. The Opposition won the battle of S-2863 and will continue to fight this war until the Applicants surrender. And the Opposition will take no hostages.