

Good Evening. My name is Charlene Jacobi. You may know me as an owner of Town Center Pharmacy. I am more than that; I am also your neighbor. In 1995 I moved here from New Jersey with my husband and two sons shortly after realizing a personal goal by purchasing a local Pharmacy in North White Plains. In our quest to find a new home closer to our new pharmacy we searched out numerous other towns in the area until an acquaintance suggested we look for a home in Armonk. The first time I drove through this town I knew that this was where I wanted to live and raise my family. It immediately reminded me of the town that I grew up in upstate NY. I still remember the day back then when I was driving through town with Elyce Bauer, my real estate agent, and I was telling her that someday I would love to own a pharmacy in Armonk.

In 1999 my dream became a reality when then Supervisor Lombardi brought the Garson Bros to meet us. They were in the process of building the Town Center and were hoping to put in a pharmacy. As a long time customer of ours, Supervisor Lombardi knew the care and kindness that were given to the communities of North White Plains and White Plains by my husband. The then existing pharmacy in Armonk had fallen on hard times, and was no longer able to properly fill the needs of this community. The Garson Bros had already contacted some drugstore chains but The Supervisor wouldn't hear of it. No chain stores were going to be located in Armonk so long as Jack Lombardi had his say. Needless to say, in Nov 1999 we opened our doors to the community.

Mrs. Rhoda Silverman brought in the first prescription, and of course she had the only insurance card that we didn't have loaded into our computer. My husband spent 3 hours on the phone with her insurance company and our software company. His efforts paid off. Mrs. Silverman told her friends how nice she was treated by our staff and pharmacist, and her friends quickly told theirs. It took some time, but eventually the community realized the personal care and attention they could expect when walking in our doors or calling us on the phone. When the original Armonk Pharmacy finally closed its doors and sold their remaining customers prescription records to CVS, just like today, their customers didn't want to go there. Instead, they came to us and we helped get all their information transferred to our store. Some of them came in apologizing that they didn't come in sooner. But I welcomed you and praised you for being loyal to your pharmacist. In my heart I knew that they would continue their loyalty with us

As the years passed I witnessed as our children grew up together. If there was illness in your family we tried to make things easier by being responsive to any special needs or issues that existed. Our customers have been there for us as well. When I brought letters from my youngest son begging me to rescue him from sleep away camp, you comforted me. When I lost my parents you consoled me. This is what this town is about. This is what neighbors do.

That sense of neighborhood and community is why a year and a half ago we expanded and redesigned our store to reflect our

growing town. Even in the darkest of economic times, when other stores were closing around us, we were committed to serving you better and better.

But at approximately 2 o'clock on the afternoon of April 19, my dream was about to turn into a nightmare. Michael Fareri came into my store looking for me. With great joy in his tone and a smile on his face, he asked me to follow him outside to hear some news. Once outside, expecting to hear good news of some sort, Mr. Fareri delivered the bombshell that CVS had just signed a lease for the A&P location. As was apparent by his demeanor and excitement, Mr. Fareri took great joy in telling me this news; news which he knew would be devastating to me and my employees. Feeling like I just received a punch in the stomach, I walked back in my store stunned and heartsick. Not so much that CVS was coming to town, but rather that someone from our community, my community, my neighbor, could gloat at my misfortune. Where was his compassion? To add insult to injury, I recently found out that shortly after breaking the news to me, Mr. Fareri went to a local restaurant to celebrate with a bottle of champagne. Mr. Fareri, from what I am seeing, I think you popped your cork a little prematurely.

It is disturbing to know just when and how Mr. Fareri obtained this information. Information that I was told was of a confidential nature at the time. Apparently four hours before the message was thrust upon me, there was a private meeting with Supervisor Weaver, Becky Kittredge, Mike Schiliro, Adam Kaufman of the planning board, the owner of the A&P shopping

center and his lawyer. The meeting was set up by the landlord to deliver the news that they were going with CVS. It was over by 12pm. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Weaver sent emails to the two other council members who were on vacation. About one hour later, around 2pm, with no public disclosure of this information having been made, Mr. Fareri made a b-line for my store. Why was he privileged to know this information before it was made public by our Supervisor? Why did this one council member only tell him? Why not all her constituents? What is the relationship of Mr. Fareri and that councilmember?

For those of you who might be unaware, Mr. Fareri is trying to get the zoning changed in Business Park Drive in order to put a supermarket adjacent to The Gym - which he also owns. If CVS takes the place of the A&P there will be no supermarket in Armonk. Is it a coincidence that the councilwoman who leaked the information to Mr. Fareri has also been the real estate broker for the owner of the A&P shopping center? I don't think so.

By the way, I've been told that Mr. Fareri took pleasure in giving me the news about CVS because I've been outspoken at board meetings, voicing my opinion against the zone change in Business Park Drive.

This is not the proper forum or time to get into political follies. And my motives are far from political. I am motivated by a sense of doing what is right for our town. And it is our town that has to decide whether her actions were self-serving or in the best

interests of Armonk. And it is our town that should investigate, and find out if there were any ethical or legal boundaries that she has crossed. Given this, at best shameful behavior, she should consider stepping down and let this town be run with honesty and dignity once again.

In any event, I have been reading with some amusement the comments on the Internet welcoming CVS to Armonk. It is certainly the prerogative of those people to shop there. But when they leave their wallets home because they were out for a jog will CVS give them their medicine and say "Not a problem...just come back tomorrow"? I don't think so. When you bring in a prescription for a sick child or family member that just got out of the hospital will CVS get you out in 10 minutes? I don't think so.

And how many of you have seen Sam Morrell's experience trying to refill a prescription at CVS. Need I say more?

For the rest of you, my words can't express the gratitude for all the support you've shown Abe, our entire staff, and myself. I have been amazed at the number of people that have stopped by or called to see how I was after they heard the news. So many of you wrote to our council members expressing anger of what had transpired, and it is your devotion to us that is giving us the strength to fight this fight. Many of you are working tirelessly behind the scenes, giving your time at your own expense to stop CVS from coming to our town and saving our grocery store.

Tonight though isn't only about Town Center Pharmacy. It is about VIP Photo, The Right Thing, Cherry Blossom Market, among others. It is about our town; our quality of life. But you have stood up and told our board. ENOUGH PLAYING POLITICS! DO WHAT'S GOOD FOR OUR TOWN!! And you know what? I think the Board is listening. I am so very proud to be a member of this amazing community.

Lastly, I would like to thank my partner Abe, who works tirelessly to fill your prescriptions, speak to your doctors, and answer your questions besides taking care of everyday business. The reason that you have written all those letters and made all those calls expressing your support is because of him.

And just as I predicted many years ago, your loyalty is above and beyond anything I could have imagined.

Thank you all for being here tonight.