

Good evening. My name is Dr. Andrea Grant and I live on Meadow Road. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

I first moved to Scarsdale in 1972. I grew up here, attended school here, and was raised on the values of this community. Indeed, Scarsdale is so much a part of who I am that I, like many of my peers, chose to return here to raise my own children--so that they could be afforded the same formative community experience that I was fortunate enough to have--and I moved back here so that the values that I had always believed were held in esteem by this community are values with which my children could grow up. As I did.

To that end, I feel strongly compelled to address the Board this evening regarding the sale of 2 Morris Lane to Monte Nido.

Let me start by saying that I have a doctorate in Child and Adolescent Psychology from NYU and I currently work at the Global Mental Health Program at Columbia University, where I have a specialty in Mental Health Policy and Advocacy. Quite coincidentally, I also very recently co-authored a chapter in the Wiley Handbook of Eating Disorders—one of the most widely respected on the topic. I mention this so that you will understand that I am intimately familiar with the Padavan Law, and other policies and laws that dictate Mental Health treatment in this state, and with the etiology, course and treatment of Eating Disorders, as well.

My clinical background then, saved me some time over the last week while I read not only the letters, petitions, and statements by community members, Board members, attorneys and other interested parties, but also the reams of easily attainable research and information regarding all of the points made by those in opposition to the Monte Nido residence—from traffic concerns (which, for the record, our own Village Planner had previously stated were not actually of concern), to undue stress on emergency and ambulance services (which, as we know from Monte Nido's director, they've used only twice in the last 18 years), to concerns over the devaluation of property located proximally to the residence, which no one mentioned in bold letters but must be as important here as it is in every other community where group residences for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled are situated (and which, as Michael Dear, Otto Wahl and other experts have established are, thankfully, completely unfounded)

Please understand that I did not comb through all of the above because I thought that I could influence the Board's decision, as that ship has obviously sailed, and is now a moot point. Nor did I delve into the issues presented by the community because of their impact on the invocation of the Padavan Law—there is no impact on the Padavan Law from the issues enumerated by the community.

I combed through all of the letters and petitions, and documents, statements, and research because I imagined, naively as it turns out, that somewhere in there I would find a factually-based, valid reason for the outcry over this residence and for

the Board's absolutely inexplicable decision to oppose it. I thought surely my neighbors who oppose this facility and the Board members who are supporting their petition must have also pored through the easily available data and found *something* grounded in actual truth or theory by which they could justify their position.

But I was wrong.

And in the total absence of any actual, factual, easily obtainable evidence that the establishment of this residence will cause traffic congestion, or place undue stress on our emergency services, or impact our personal safety in any way, or pose a threat to our property values, the only reason left, that I can possibly postulate for the continued opposition to this residence is prejudice--and the unjust exclusion of people whom we perceive as different merely because this difference causes us some psychological discomfort.

And that's why I'm here tonight. Because given that what has transpired in our community over the past couple of months with regard to the sale of 2 Morris Lane to Monte Nido and, in particular, the Board's decision two weeks ago to formally object to that sale, has been so jarring and in such stark contrast to the values of inclusion and tolerance and kindness that I hold dear, that I teach my children on a daily basis, and that I learned growing up in *this* community I couldn't just remain silent and disinterested. And now it is I who conclude my comments with a 'heavy heart.'