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## Atkinson woman says sign jeopardizes community center

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ATKINSON - It's just a sign.

But resident Leigh Komornick said she fears the sign for Adam Pappalardo's commercial building on Route 121 could put the Atkinson Community Center in jeopardy.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment gave Pappalardo a variance on Oct. 10 to erect a sign on town land for his Main Street business. His old sign was taken down by the state Department of Transportation when the bridge was reconstructed. The state now owns the property where the old sign sat, so it can't be put back there.

Pappalardo previously agreed to let the town pave an exit from the community center parking lot to his right of way, so selectmen Chairman Jack Sapia said it was only fair that as "good neighbors" the town returned the favor and let the sign be placed on town land as part of a compromise.

But Komornick said the sign compromises the deed restrictions under which the town acquired the five acres of conservation land from the state Forest Society in the early 1980s. When the town bought the land at a bargain price, one of the specific conservation restrictions was that the land could not promote commercial use.

Komornick of Robie Lane received copies of two letters - dated Jan. 23 and Sept. 28 - from the Forest Society to the town of Atkinson in her capacity as Plaistow planning coordinator because Pappalardo's building sits in Plaistow. But his right of way and sign have always been in Atkinson.

She said she doesn't understand how the selectmen went against these "well-written, concise letter(s)," she said.

"The Forest Society's conservation restrictions prohibit a commercial sign from being placed on the Town land," the most recent letter reads. "Therefore, the Town of Atkinson does not have the right to grant such permission for a commercial sign on this land."

Since it's actually a commercial zone, Pappalardo allowed the community center driveway and agreed to also put up a "Welcome to Atkinson" sign. Sapia said the town did the right thing.

"The sign is on the edge of the property, in the commercial zone, with the road and parking lot behind it," he said. "It's not out where the deer and animals are."

All three selectmen went to the ZBA meeting Oct. 10 as the property owners. Sapia said he gave the Forest Society representative his contact information at that time and has not heard from her, so he said he thinks they will let the sign stand.

Komornick said she doesn't know where she is going to go from here.

Pappalardo could not be reached for comment.