

So many questions have been raised concerning the proposed Super Wal-Mart in Brooklyn. How much tax revenue would the town of Brooklyn actually receive? Could that revenue balance the loss of revenue from the local businesses, owned by our friends and neighbors, which would undoubtedly fail after Wal-Mart's arrival? Would a big-box store increase crime in our town? What would its impact be on the nearby wetlands? How would it affect traffic on Route 6? Is the town of Brooklyn extending a tax break to Wal-Mart as incentive and, if so, does Wal-Mart (the largest company in the world) really need a tax break? With eight Wal-Marts already within 25 miles of Brooklyn, why do we need another?

These are just some of the questions being asked by residents of our town, and I will add a few more. Is money our only measure of what is valuable? Might there be other things at stake here that can't be measured by money? How do we measure the quiet charm and beauty of Brooklyn and are we prepared to permanently give them up for financial gain?

In my work I have occasion to talk with many people from other parts of the country who feel as though they've discovered a jewel here in Brooklyn. Even people from different parts of our own state are charmed by our town when they first visit. They recognize that we have something here which is becoming downright rare – a lovely, small town relatively free from the sprawl which is so common elsewhere. We should take enormous pride in that and be very cautious about trading it away to a huge corporation which looks at our town in terms of its own numbers and nothing more. The corporate executives of Wal-Mart have no history here; they don't live here and they don't vote here.

I urge the people of Brooklyn to ask questions and get answers. I urge the selectmen in Brooklyn to listen to all sides and be good stewards of what we cherish here. Once the quiet charm of our beautiful Brooklyn is gone, no amount of money can buy it back.

Susan Lamb
Brooklyn