

Council

Anne Gerwig, Mayor
Michael J. Napoleone, Vice Mayor
John T. McGovern, Councilman
Michael Drahos, Councilman
Tanya Siskind, Councilwoman

Manager
Paul Schofield

June 19, 2019

Re: Sharon J. Merchant and The Merchant Strategy (a division of The MS Factor)

To Whom it May Concern,

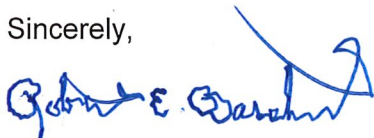
As the Planning, Zoning and Building Director for the Village of Wellington, I have had the opportunity to work with Sharon J. Merchant and her company, The Merchant Strategy, on multiple occasions. Two recent such occasions come immediately to mind.

Ms. Merchant and her team handled government/community relations regarding a controversial conversion of an old 9 hole executive golf course into Winding Trails – large lots for luxury horse barns and living quarters. She had to convince incumbent residents, Village staff and Council to accept her client's proposal. They built stakeholder and resident databases to ensure that all interested parties were kept apprised of news and events, as well as creating a project website, www.windingtrailswellington.com. Her team sent out surveys, held a project meeting, attended many late Village meetings and in many cases met residents individually to solve any lingering concerns or issues. She reached out to subject matter experts for answers and solutions for questions such as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to provide precise responses and accommodations relating to alligators; and the County Extension Agent for questions re manure smells and flies.

Ms. Merchant and her team were instrumental in helping Palm Beach Point Property Owners Association defeat a proposed landing strip for planes and small jets adjacent to their community. They organized residents, lobbied Village staff and Council, clarifying messages about lack of compatibility, spooking horses potentially causing rider accidents, air space issues such crashes and bird strikes over the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, noise and other safety concerns. Her team built a Facebook page (Preserve Wellington Equestrian Lifestyle) and built a rapport with local media and reporters.

Ms. Merchant and The Merchant Strategy are professional, well connected, informed, qualified and most importantly, know what steps to take to obtain their client's desired outcome. I particularly appreciate their open and honest approach to working with both individuals and groups. I would recommend them to anyone needing an experienced government/community relations team.

Sincerely,



Robert Basehart, AICP
Planning, Zoning and Building Director
The Village of Wellington