

## OTHER VIEWS

# Let me entertain you ... but somewhere else

**I**N AMSTERDAM, it's called a red light district. In other cities, combat zones. Adult entertainment zones are designed to keep all the adult entertainment in one place – away from everyone else.

The borough of East Rutherford is exploring creating such a zone. It hopes by creating a specific district for triple-X businesses it can prevent them from opening near family-themed businesses, schools and residential neighborhoods.

There has been some criticism of the plan, much to the surprise of borough officials. Critics question whether such zoning regulations hold up in court. First amendment rights get in the way of urban planners. You and I may object to an adult book store, but our Constitution protects the rights of smut dealers to sell smut.

In Bloomingdale, borough officials have just approved an ordinance that will restrict where adult businesses can operate. The ordinance comes too late to stop the aptly named Dollar a

Day Video store from operating at its current location, outside the zone. The store's owner told The Record, "[I'm] just trying to make a buck like everybody else." Given his store's name, there at least is truth in advertising.

As easy as it is to joke about adult entertainment businesses' names, such businesses are no laughing matter. The City of Passaic is stuck with a pornography movie theater, the Montauk. The city clamped down on code violations and the Montauk went from gay porn to straight porn (because the sexual orientation of a porn theater is a matter of choice), but it won't go away. Rumors of the Montauk's imminent demise due to eminent domain are just that – rumors.

East Rutherford may not be able to contain adult entertainment in one area, but it is a well-intentioned effort. The problem with combat zones is they can attract all the wrong elements into one small place. Tourists may swarm to Amsterdam's red light district, but who would want to work or

live there, aside from the entrepreneurs of sex?

Generally adult businesses set up shop in industrial areas, far from the well-traveled roadways of main streets. One would think that if even the puppet musical "Avenue Q" has determined that the Internet is for porn, that there is little market for adult video stores. People looking for some bada bing can find it via broadband. But perhaps human contact is still part of the allure of adult video and bookstores.

East Rutherford officials also have to jump through more legal hoops than other municipalities. Part of its triple-X district falls under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. Given the push for luxury suites and amenities at the sports facilities in the Meadowlands, there might be interest in a Bada Bing Bling Club.

A more effective way of keeping adult entertainment out of communities is to pressure landlords not to rent to those kinds of businesses. Aggressive merchant organizations have a better shot of convincing fellow landlords that adult entertainment

cheapens neighborhoods and reduces real estate values. Of course if the landlord lives in another state – the case of the Montauk in Passaic – there is little hope of awakening hometown pride.

East Rutherford officials are engaging in a process that probably will not achieve the desired results. If an adult business wants to open up outside of the zone, court precedents have favored the adult business, not the municipality.

Ultimately it was big development money that pushed the peep shows off 42nd Street in Manhattan. A better financial deal will dissuade any landlord from renting to an adult business. Rather than ghettoizing adult businesses, officials in Bergen and Passaic counties should band together and create one attractive adult entertainment area – a theme park for the morally wayward on an appropriate parcel of contaminated land.

EnCap may tumble like a house of cards. Dare I suggest its successor?

Long live EnCup.

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### How are we to contain adult-entertainment venues?