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## Foundry Road Development

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[REDACTED]  
To: "Peter G. Barber" <barberp@togny.org>, Christine Napierski <napierskic@togny.org>, Jake Crawford <crawfordj@togny.org>, Amanda Beedle <beedlea@togny.org>, santosg@togny.org

I feel compelled to raise some issues with the Town Board as you make your decision regarding size and density of this project.

First, I found Ms. Bohl's letter in last weeks paper appalling on many fronts, but mostly that she felt she could threaten you, as the Town Board to cave to her wants otherwise she will abandon the project. How stupid does she think this town or you as the Board are? How insulting. I did respond to her letter in another letter to the paper, which I will attach to this email so you are aware of what I said.

This project size does not fit in any way in this part of town. There are no other 3-4 story buildings anywhere near this site. The design is not in keeping with character of the neighborhood, especially with the historic buildings across the street. I will bullet the list of issues that I see that need to be addressed and am hopeful that you as the Town Board will understand what I am saying. I also have to say that I was quite upset with Mr. Kovalchik's report to you, supporting the project as requested by Ms. Bohl and Mr. Hershberg. After reading this, it would appear that he did not hear what the Planning Board had to say or recommend. I don't believe his role as a Town Planner should be to fully support only one side of the equation, which is what he did in this case. In the past, he has shown that he can present a project with both the pros and cons and has done so very professionally. I don't see that in this case and in fact, I think this hampers your ability to fully look at this project without seeing any of the cons of the project.

- The Census Bureau does a good job of giving information that is helpful in looking at towns and presenting information that is helpful on many fronts. One of these areas is the income for a town. Mr. Kovalchik quotes the census as stating that the median income for Guilderland is approximately \$ 102,000. Let's look at what that really means in day to day life of folks who live here. The median income level is different from the per capita income, and we believe that this more closely represents the actual income levels for residents in our town. The per capita income level is \$55,578. The per capita income level appears to be more realistic as it would encompass Single head of households as well as singles who have roommates etc. What this shows is that you need the two incomes in order to live in Guilderland. Using a median income inflates the

income levels for the town. There is a lot of information regarding income levels that is provided by the Census Bureau as well as other sites that look at the same things. They are all within the same ballpark in terms of median vs. per capita.

- Apartment rentals as identified in this project do not include utilities. The rents that are proposed are not in line with the rest of the rentals in the area other than Hamilton Parc and the Apex, which are high end apartments. If we look at the occupancy rate in both of these complexes, I think you will find that they are nowhere near filled to capacity. In fact, Hamilton Parc went before the ZBA to request that they be allowed to start on Phase 2 of the complex and were told no.... They failed to meet the occupancy rate that was outlined in the agreement. To date, there are very few apartments rented. The average rental in Guilderland is as follows:

- One bedroom - \$1434/month

Two bedroom - \$1681/month

Three bedroom - \$2008/month

- The average amount a renter pays for utilities and amenities is approximately \$100.00 - \$200.00 per month per apartment in the Capital Region.
- These apartments with the AMI ranging from 60% to 120% are still not in line with what rents are in our town. With the 60% AMI rent would be \$1529, which is still above the average rent in town.
- We need affordable housing! This is not affordable, and the caveat that unless this group gets help from the IDA, they are not going to entertain workforce housing. The largest population growth in this town is that of seniors. There is not much available to them in terms of rentals. There is not enough available for them to transition into either a smaller home, townhome or apartment that is comparable to the homes they live in now. This needs to be addressed. We have a designation as a Pro-housing town.... Let's do something! Perhaps with all of the time that Mr. Kovalchik spends with developers helping to get their projects through, he could be spending more time on looking for ways to increase affordable housing incentives.
- Mr. Kovalchik quotes several sections of the Neighborhoods and Housing section of the **PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**. Let's be clear... you as the Town Board have not yet weighed in on the plan and just because it is in the draft, does not mean that it is in place. In fact, a very important section of the plan, **TOWN CHARACTER**, which was addressed by the subcommittee was taken out

completely, we assume, by Mr. Kovalchik. Ms. Hakes stated that it was mentioned throughout the plan, but no one who has looked at can find any reference to it. This particular area is known as the Guilderland Hamlet. It is a section of town that is important, and should be maintained as it is an expression of what we, as the committee envisioned as Town Character. The fact that it was taken out, appears to give license to not adhering to this type of development that we as the committee envisioned. This particular area should not be redeveloped as proposed as it is totally out of character with the rest of the buildings in that area. The Albany County Planning Board approved the rezone to a PUD solely for ease of building. Their comment was that it would make sense for all of the parcels to be zoned the same so that there was not a continual going back to the town for variances because of the different zoning. That makes sense, and was the right decision. That being said, just because it is a PUD does not mean that building upwards over 2 1/2 stories should be approved. We have a zoning code, and although PUD's have no limits, there should be limits. No other building in this area would be this size. This would be ostentatious in comparison and totally out of touch and character. There are other options for PUD's and they should be explored.

- In Mr. Kovalchik's letter to the Supervisor, he quotes extensively the Comprehensive Plan update, but he leaves out 2 very important sections.... Sections D-2 and D-3.
- Section D-2 addresses promoting sustainable green building practices to advance energy efficiency, water conservation and use of building materials which reduce environmental impacts. There is nothing at all noted in any of the plans or narratives about these issues being addressed. If you are going to quote and promote this plan, let's include all of the areas that are important, and this one is. The same can be said for Section for D-3 which addresses maximizing town investments in public water and sewer, transportation, pedestrian connections, infrastructure etc. You can read this in the plan and it would take up too much space here to address fully. I would like to point out that none of these things in D-2 and D-3 are addressed in the plans for this project. There is no investment in what we as a town are looking for in our residential development and that is inherently clear with what has been presented. The issue with water and sewer is paramount. If you recall, in 2018 in the presentation by Mr. Kovalchik, he identified the greatest issue that we will face as a town is water. We are facing that now. With the addition of all of the building that has occurred, especially the larger complexes, water usage will go up drastically. We currently pay over \$2 million a year to outside water sources. The average water usage Mr. Hershberg quotes is 50 gallons per day per person. That is on the low end, and it is actually closer to 80 gallons a day per person. Multiply that by 365 days and that is just over +29,000 gallons of water per person per year. Can we afford that? Can our sewers handle all of that waste? We have over 200 apartments going in at the Apex, we have close to

200 apartments at Hamilton Park and now this one requesting 260 apartments.

Do the math! That is a lot of water and a lot of waste! Can our infrastructure handle all of this? I hear rumors that we don't have a sustainable water source... we buy water from Watervliet and the City of Albany.... We use water from Rotterdam on an emergency basis. How long can we sustain this? Is there enough water for all of us? It is a concern that many folks have with all of the development.

- The traffic is horrible in this particular area and has been for years. The traffic light does not always help as people run it routinely either heading east or west on Western Avenue. Some of the issue raised by the folks on Foundry Road have been addressed... DOT did cut branches so that the traffic light is clearly visible from all sides. They also dimmed the light slightly at the Fire House as folks were seeing that light as green and then running the red light at Foundry and Willow.

I can tell you that any sympathy that anyone may have had for Ms. Bohl has evaporated by her attitude with this project and that of Mr. Hershberg. Both of them seem to be intent on getting what they want and if they do not get it, they are saying they will walk away. As much as this has been an eyesore, and may continue to be, I would be embarrassed as a resident of this town if you were to approve what they are requesting. As you may be aware, our town has the nickname of 'Builderland' because no matter what project gets proposed, it gets built. Developers come here because all we do is help them build without listening to the public and what they want to see where they live. There are many options for this property, and many feel that more high end apartments with the dangling carrot of Workforce Housing for 10% or 26 apartments is not going to meet the need for those who would not be able to afford the rent with the subsidy.

I urge you to look closely this, and weigh the impact of what will happen in this neighborhood. The addition of 260 apartments with just as many plus more cars going in and out everyday will cause congestion that we have not yet seen. Think about this congestion when the fire whistle goes off and it is rush hour with 4 -6 lanes filled with cars.... How do you get around that? I think a realistic view of this project is needed and adding more high end apartments is not filling the need we have. We already have substantial vacancies in various apartments in town. You can see signs out, ads in rental magazines etc. Very few are filled to capacity and they are offering incentives to rent with them. To put another high end apartment complex in across from a Fire House that will have fire whistles going off at what ever time, will certainly have folks thinking twice about spending \$2000 a month to live there. This should be redeveloped, absolutely.... I question whether the residential needs of our town are being met by this project and the answer is a resounding no.

Please stand firm and do not be coerced by the possibility of workforce housing. I find the quid pro quo disgusting.

Thanks for your time.

Robyn Gray