

Stop Island Hills Development Plan

Ron Meyer , Commissioner
Islip Town Hall
655 Main Street
Islip, New York 11751

November 9, 2017

Dear Mr. Meyer:

I am a resident of the Town of Islip, and I am aware that Rechler Equity Partners submitted an application for a change in zoning for the Island Hills Golf Course on March 8, 2017. I ask you OPPOSE this application.

The area in question is an established residential area with one to two story single-family homes. Approval for a change in zoning should NOT be given for several reasons:

- The addition of 27 two, three, and four story buildings consisting of 1,365 rental apartments is not consistent with the residential zoning of the existing neighborhood.
- Rechler Equity Partners purchased the property knowing that it is zoned AAA residential. Maintaining the existing zoning will allow the developer to build many single-family homes
- The Islip Town Planning Board, in the 2009 Sunrise Highway Corridor Study produced by the Suffolk County Department of Planning, stated the following in reference to the Island Hills property:
 - P.77 “Recommendation: Retain existing Residence AAA zoning. Consideration should also be given to the designation of a recreational zoning district in order to protect this valuable recreational use and preserve this existing oasis of open space.”
 - “Retain golf course or if an application is received, allow as-of-right development or similar FARS and density and require cluster subdivision which preserves golf course or any other open space on site. TDRs should be considered if on-site yield is incompatible with golf course. Actual yield would be about 107 units if developed under the existing Residence AAA District.”
- According to the Cornell Real Estate Review, Volume 8, Article 13:
 - “A variety of studies...note that permanently preserving open space is more beneficial to neighboring land than not preserving open space.”
- Rechler maintains that our home properties will not decrease. Several studies refute this.
 - According to a study published by Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies, this is true in urban areas and in “neighborhoods of predominantly low- and moderate income working households.” Clearly, Sayville does not fit this description. The same paper also cited studies that “find examples where single-family houses located near apartments either experienced lower prices or lower appreciation rates than houses located further away.” This would apply to the houses surrounding the golf course property.
 - In an article entitled “The Neighborhood Features that Drag Down your Home Values,” the American Community Survey reports that “...Zip codes with an above-average concentration of renters have lower property values with the county they are located in –

by 14%.” The proposal of 1,371 apartments, more than the amount of apartments that already exist in Sayville and Bohemia combined, would therefore negatively affect our property values.

- Rechler maintains that the increase in traffic would occur only on the weekends. Research does not support this.
 - While the Institute of Transportation Engineers states that single-family homes generate the most traffic, this is because “...they were generally located farther away from shopping centers, employment areas and other trip attractors.” As the proposed development is located in the same area as single-family homes, considerable traffic will result.
 - According to a report by the Suffolk County Government, “Most Suffolk County residents work within the County’s boundaries. As of the 2000 Census, the most recent data available, 73% of Suffolk County residents who work, work within Suffolk County.” Only 13% work off Long Island. The majority of the Greybarn residents, then, will be driving to work.
- According to the Consensus for Affordable Housing on Long Island, “Long Island is renowned for its single family homes, and we don’t want to lose that recognition.” The article also states that multi-family housing developments should be built “around train stations” so that the residents “will have direct access – through the LIRR and the rest of the MTA system – to the entire Greater New York City region.”
 - The proposed Greybarn development is two miles from the Sayville Train Station and over four miles from the Ronkonkoma Train Station.
 - A TOD development is planned for Ronkonkoma. It only makes sense that commuters would prefer to live close to the station rather than in Sayville.
- Another concern is the impact on the Connetquot School District.
 - According to the study published by Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies, 100 apartment units average 31 children. Therefore, the proposed development could add approximately 400 students to the district.
 - Rechler claims on their web site, “Apartments actually pay more in taxes and have fewer school children on average than single-family house. In other words, it is more accurate to say that apartment residents are subsidizing the public education of the children of homeowners than the reverse.” The exemption from property taxes that commercial properties often receive refutes this claim. According to the Town of Islip policy, “Generally the amount of the exemption is 50% of the increase in assessed value...the exemption amount then decreases by 5%in each of the next nine years.” Thus, the Connetquot community will have to absorb the burden of increased enrollment.

As you can see, the proposed zoning change will negatively affect the atmosphere and integrity of Sayville. The residents have a vested interest in our community; Rechler does not. Please consider the impact on traffic, the school district, and our quality of life when evaluating whether or not to retain the present AAA zoning. Your constituents are depending on you to make the right decision to preserve our green space, our history, and our way of life that we feel embraces the culture of suburban living.

Respectfully,

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____