

Dear Mr. Meyers:

As an Islip Town resident, I have significant concerns regarding the zoning change proposed by Rechler Equity Partners/R Squared Development, LLC (Rechler) for the Island Hills Country Club. Approval of a proposal of this magnitude will have adverse effects on emergency services, law enforcement, schools, traffic, utilities, the environment, and the overall quality of life in the surrounding towns in addition to placing a financial burden on taxpayers.

The proposed plan of 27 buildings ranging in height from two to four stories includes 1,365 apartments which more than double the 1,260 established apartments already in Sayville and Bohemia complexes, most of which continue to advertise availability. These additional apartments will add approximately 3,400 people to our community, a 1% increase in the overall population of Islip Town and a staggering 20% increase in Sayville's population.

Our volunteer-based emergency services already experience high call volumes and the increase in population caused by this proposal will significantly impact response time and will require additional training and more volunteers. Members of both the Sayville Fire Department and the Community Ambulance Company have expressed their opposition to this change in zoning. Even if Rechler were to purchase a new fire engine and/or ambulance for the community in an attempt to sway public opinion, it will do little to offset the greater risk to our community caused by the increased call volume and inadequate staffing.

The Suffolk County Police Department's 5th Precinct will also be adversely effected by an increase in the number of calls, traffic incidents and, quite likely, crime rate. As the proposed plan does not provide for adequate on-site parking, a significant number of cars will have to park outside of the complex on neighboring streets and in front of residents' homes, further burdening community surveillance. Given the current \$89m county budget deficit, it stands to reason that the cost of any additional police personnel to support an increase in the number of residents planned for this project will fall on the community through increased property taxes.

The Connetquot School District will also feel the impact if this proposal were to be approved. The influx of students will put a strain on current staffing levels and quite likely will adversely affect the quality of education and well being of the students. Any changes needed to support this influx in students will be expensive and will once again require an increase in school taxes to support an already burdened school budget.

A complex of this size will have an unprecedented impact on our utility services and waterworks system. It is estimated that tenants alone will use 111,690,000 gallons of water annually. Add to this the volume required for the maintenance of the buildings and grounds and not only will it put a strain on this already limited resource and available water pressure for surrounding communities and fire safety, but Suffolk County Water Authority will certainly be impacted and may be forced to raise rates for all customers.

PSEGLI and National Grid will also be burdened by the proposed zoning change. They will likely have to reconfigure their systems, add new lines, transformers, etc., the cost of which will be passed on to all customers.

The Sayville Post Office is currently well run and efficient as it is staffed for the currently size of our community. The additional workload of sorting and delivery caused by a complex of this size will be an enormous burden and will likely result in a lower quality of service for existing residents as with a \$5 billion budget deficit, the USPS is unlikely to add to staff.

Although the Islip WRAP program helps to reduce the impact on our landfills, this proposed complex would add an estimated 652,800 lbs. of trash every year and will add significantly to the pollution to our area.

Further, impact to our environment, and likely residents' health, would be far reaching. As a golf course, the land has been laden with dangerous chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Once airborne, these pathogens have been known to cause various types of illness and cancers. Additionally, run off into Green's Creek during and after construction will significantly impact the health of not only the Creek but also the Great South Bay and the Sandplain Gerardia, which is a federally endangered plant. Based on a study on Green's Creek undertaken by the Town of Islip, the composition of the soil, the slope of the land and the proximity to the water table warrant *"acquisition of sensitive parcels whose development would negatively impact the waterbodies"*. In addition to the Green's Creek study, the 2009 Sunrise Highway Corridor Study specifically mentions the Island Hills Country Club and made the recommendation to *"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."*

Sadly the time for the Town of Islip or Suffolk County to have attempted to purchase this historically significant, highly praised A. W. Tillinghast designed golf course in support of the recommendations from these taxpayer-funded studies has likely passed. But to even consider this proposal is in direct conflict with the recommendations of the experts conducting these studies.

Not only will the completed complex have an adverse impact on the community overall, the 8 to 10 year estimate for construction will put undue strain on our community with lower real estate prices and increased air, water, noise and light pollution. The results of a recent survey of over 2,000 area residents show overwhelming opposition to this proposal.

While Rechler has enlisted the services of Patchogue Mayor Pontieri to promote the success of the changes to Patchogue's downtown, an area vastly different from the Island Hills Golf Course, and Anne Marie Jones to communicate with area residents, it is apparent that Rechler has no stake in this community and little concern for its residents.

This proposal is not smart growth and provides no benefit to the community. The only beneficiary of this proposed change in zone will be the Rechler companies and their profits. The community will pay not only the price of overcrowding, a decline in services, increased resource consumption and pollution but will bear the financial burden as well since Town Comptroller Ludwig has stated that the current budget is *"status quo and unfortunately won't provide the ability to grow and do new services that we would love to do"*.

I am asking that you carefully consider all aspects of this proposed change in zoning before making your recommendation to the Town Board. Thank you for your time and consideration of this information.

Sincerely,

cc Planning Board Members: K. Brown, G. Bruno, B. Ferruggiari, E. Friedland, T. Mattimore, M. Moriarty, A. Musumeci

References

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