



Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

County Planning Board

February 10, 2014

Jill Simon Shapiro, Town Clerk
Town of New Castle
200 South Greeley Avenue
Chappaqua, NY 10514-3399

Subject: Referral File No. NWC 14-002 – The Spa at New Castle; Draft Scoping Document

Dear Ms. Shapiro:

The Westchester County Planning Board has received a draft scoping document for the preparation of an environmental impact statement, pursuant to the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), for the above referenced proposal. The proposal involves a petition to amend the Town Zoning Ordinance to create a new floating district to permit a “Resort Lifestyle Complex” to include a hotel with 34 suites and 50 condominium units along with spa amenities including an indoor/outdoor pool, spa, 4,500 square foot restaurant, gym and other recreational amenities and public spaces. The applicant is also petitioning to map this new floating district to a 96-acre property located at 773 Armonk Road, commonly known as the “Legionaries” property.

We have reviewed the draft scoping document under the provisions of Section 239 L, M and N of the General Municipal Law and Section 277.61 of the County Administrative Code and we offer the following comments:

1. Affordable affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH). *Section A. Land Use and Zoning* contains a section that would “describe relationship and applicability of the affordable affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) provisions.” It is our understanding that the Town has adopted zoning regulations that are generally consistent with “Model Zoning Ordinance Provisions for Affordable Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Units” as included in the *Westchester County Fair and Affordable Housing Implementation Plan* (dated August 9, 2010). These regulations would require the provision of at least five affordable AFFH units in a development site of 50 condominium units (10%). The scope should specify that the draft EIS shall discuss how this requirement will be accommodated into the development.

2. Transit access to site. The draft scoping document briefly notes that public transportation will be discussed in the EIS with respect to: 1) identifying the availability for public transportation services in the vicinity of the site; 2) discussion and evaluation of potential impacts on public transportation and; 3) discussion of measures designed to facilitate and encourage use of public transportation services.

This proposal to rezone a large former religious property to a new floating zone for a “Resort Lifestyle Complex” appears to be a part of a trend in Westchester County whereby large, usually single-tenant properties are being repurposed for entirely new uses. The Chappaqua Crossing proposal is another example. Such developments have the potential to change commute patterns in areas not currently served by bus or rail transit. This may be significant as some of the new land uses, presumably including a resort complex, require an employment force that in this region typically utilizes transit for work travel.

We recommend that the scope be expanded to require more detailed discussion of the anticipated work force and commutation including: the size of the proposed workforce on the site, work hours and expected means of travel. The scope should also require a discussion of whether it is feasible for the site operator to establish an employee bus shuttle that could connect to the nearest Metro-North station and/or to downtown Armonk where connections can be made to the Bee-Line Route 12 bus. This bus travels between Armonk and White Plains and makes timed transfers with Metro-North trains.

3. **Recycling.** *Section H. Utilities* contains a reference to recycling, namely to “discuss and evaluate recycling, if applicable.” We recommend that the scope be revised to require a comprehensive discussion on recycling and how the proposed development will comply with the County recycling program which has been expanded to include plastics numbered 1 through 7.

We also suggest that scope require a discussion of the feasibility to add food composting facilities to process food waste from the proposed on-site restaurant. Food composting would be a sensible way to both reduce the amount of waste that must be processed in the waste stream, while providing a resource for landscaping and plantings on the site.

4. **Stormwater management.** We recommend that *Section F. Stormwater Management* be expanded to include a discussion of the potential for pervious walkways, drives or parking areas and the potential to incorporate other techniques such as rain gardens and green roofing that would seek to treat and retain as much stormwater on-site as possible.

5. **Green building technology.** We suggest that the scope be expanded to include a discussion of green building technology that will be, or could be, incorporated into the proposed development.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Respectfully,
WESTCHESTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

By: 
Edward Buroughs, AICP
Commissioner

EEB/LH

cc: Naomi Klein, Director of Planning, County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Michael Swee, Associate Transportation Planner, County Department of Public Works and Transportation