



Clarification of Board's Position on AvalonBay

I write to set the record straight regarding AvalonBay's most recent proposal and the Huntington Board of Education's (BOE) position regarding it.

With the first proposal, the Board was approached by AvalonBay 18 months prior to the Town Board voting to take any action. AvalonBay expressed an interest in working with the district to help mitigate any adverse impact of their development. The Board ended up voting unanimously to oppose the town's Transit Oriented District Zone, because we felt it singled out Huntington Station for increased housing density and left open the opportunity for additional high density developments in the future.

Regarding the latest AvalonBay proposal, Councilman Mark Cuthbertson says we have "negotiated in bad faith." To those ends, there have been no negotiations between AvalonBay or Town Hall and the BOE. His statement that we have been given "reams of information" is untrue. We have not been contacted by either AvalonBay or Town Hall regarding the latest proposal. The only contact we have had was initiated by me, when I contacted the Tax Assessor and Planning Department trying to determine what the actual tax receipts from the proposed development would be. I was informed that the town had not done any work in determining what it would assess AvalonBay, and in a subsequent conversation with the Planning Department, was informed that they would use the proposed tax receipt numbers put forth by AvalonBay in their Draft Environmental Impact Study, not a number generated by the Tax Assessors office.

This lack of financial diligence by Town Hall, coupled with a skepticism towards the predicted number of children added to the school district led to the Board voting unanimously in favor of a position of non-support, pending future discussions with AvalonBay and Town Hall. Our Board has worked hard to keep from increasing the already high tax burden that our district residents carry. Supporting a proposed development without guarantees that it won't adversely affect our district economically would be irresponsible of the Board.

Bill Dwyer

President, Huntington Board of Education

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