



Chappaqua Central School District

Victoria Tipp, President
Board of Education

October 15, 2020

Dear Town of New Castle Supervisor Pool and Members of the Town Board,

The Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education trustees, as fiduciaries of the School District, and as representatives of its constituent taxpayers, hereby request the opportunity to comment on the Form Based Code (FBC), particularly the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) sent to the Superintendent of Schools on September 29, 2020. We request that the Town Board delay its public engagement and decision-making process in order to provide adequate and reasonable time for the Chappaqua Board of Education and Administration to obtain and present an accurate analysis of school enrollment and other impacts of the FBC on the School District.

The impact of the FBC on the School District is one of the most important factors to be considered by the DGEIS for the following reasons:

1. Most residents move to the Town because of our School District;
2. The large majority of Town Board constituents are residents of the School District and both boards have a fiduciary duty to represent their interests;
3. School District taxes account for over 70% of local property taxes;
4. The proposed residential units sold as condominiums would be taxed at a lower commercial (condominium) rate, and rental units would be included in a building's commercial tax rate. Therefore, increased enrollment costs would be borne by current residents of single-family homes taxed at a higher fee-simple rate;
5. Increases in school enrollment will be determined by the density of build-outs which the FBC leaves to the sole discretion of developers, without any recourse to current checks and balances provided to the public by advisory boards and the Town Board itself, as long as developers are in compliance with the maximum density allowed by the FBC;
6. Enrollment increases resulting from density of build-outs would impact School District expenses and operations in relation to staffing, salaries, employee pension and health benefits, transportation and bus routes, special education services (including potential private placements), facilities and school infrastructure, number of class sections, number of electives at Horace Greeley High School, and ratio of counselors and psychologists to students, among many other factors; and
7. The information regarding new student enrollment projections and anticipated costs provided in the DGEIS is wholly inadequate, due to its reliance on Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research residential demographic multipliers, a source which is 10 years old and not specific to New Castle or Westchester County.

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For these reasons, among others, appropriate input with accurate information on the impact of the FBC to the School District is a necessary and crucial part of the analysis. At this time, we cannot be assured that the information provided to the Town Board by the DGEIS is fair, accurate and reliable with respect to the School District.

We ask that the New Castle Town Board work in cooperation with the Chappaqua Board of Education and Administration to address our concerns, by delaying the public engagement and decision-making process regarding the FBC. This would allow the School District to expeditiously commission a study by an appropriate consultant in order to provide the necessary, accurate and relevant information that will serve the Town and community in understanding the effects of the proposed FBC on our School District, our school community and our taxpayers.

Sincerely,

The Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education

Victoria Bayard Tipp, President

Holly McCall, Vice President

Hilary Grasso, Member

Warren Messner, Member

Jane Kimmel Shepardson, Member

