

A Call to Action for Housing Advocacy in the Town of Huntington!

Background:

Long Island, particularly the Town of Huntington, is experiencing a critical housing development crisis. This crisis is characterized by a pronounced shortage of attainable housing for many individuals who grew up, work, or wish to reside in Huntington. This scarcity detrimentally affects various community aspects, including employment, public health, safety, and the retention of young professionals essential for the town's growth and innovation.

The lack of attainable housing options is recognized as a major economic and social issue, impairing regional progress, family well-being, and the area's allure for investments. Addressing the housing crisis in Huntington necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the expansion of affordable housing, combating discriminatory lending practices, and nurturing innovative solutions tailored to the unique needs of the Huntington community. Commitment to these strategies is vital for fostering a more accessible, inclusive, and prosperous Huntington.

WHAT:

The Huntington Town Board has scheduled a series of public hearings, the first of which will take place on April 30, 2024 at West Hollow Middle School, 250 Old East Neck Road, Melville, New York, at 7:00 PM, to consider the creation of the Melville Town Center Overlay District (MTCOD) and an amendment to the I-1 Light Industry District Zone (I-1), in specifically limited areas of Melville, to allow housing as a conditionally-permitted use in an area of Huntington that is dedicated to commercial and industrial uses.

- The geographic area is narrowly limited to that area bounded on the north by the Long Island Expressway, properties east of Walt Whitman Road, west of Pinelawn Road and north of Ruland Rd.
- In this area, residential uses would be permitted by way of a special use permit to be issued by the Town Board, upon application, after a hearing and subject to strict criteria.
- The proposed legislation limits the total number of apartments in this area to 3000.
- The proposed legislation would pause the acceptance of new applications after the submission of the first applications totaling 400 residential units.
- The underlying zoning classification will remain intact, and the introduction of residential units is in addition to other uses permitted, such as office and other commercial uses.
- The MTCOD envisions a walkable Main Street area which would exist in harmony with the broader proposed amendments to the I-1 zone, in the limited area defined above.

WHY:

By any metric, Long Island in general and the Town of Huntington in particular is in a housing crisis.

- There are not sufficient housing options for young people starting out, older people scaling down or those simply wanting an alternative housing choice.

- Young people are leaving the area in droves, and most cite as a primary reason for their departure the high cost of living and the lack of housing.
- Employers are having a difficult time recruiting and retaining talented employees, citing as a primary reason, the high cost of living and the lack of housing.

The initiatives being proffered by the Huntington Town Board would introduce a housing component in Melville to help meet a housing need in Huntington.

CALL TO ACTION:

Sponsors of this legislation (Ed Smyth, Sal Ferro and Dave Bennardo) need stakeholders, employers and concerned citizens to attend ALL Town Board meetings and speak in favor of this initiative. This is a well thought through, carefully balanced initiative that will help Huntington move forward.

Please attend:

- **Tuesday, April 30, 2024, Town Board meeting, West Hollow Middle School, 250 Old East Neck Rd., Melville, at 7:00 PM.**
- **Tuesday, May 7, 2024, Town Board meeting, Huntington Town Hall at 2:00 PM**
- **Tuesday, June 11, 2024, Town Board meeting, Huntington Town Hall, at 7:00 PM**

FACTS:

There is a concentrated misinformation campaign underfoot, designed to intimidate the Town Board members and provide scare tactics to the community. Several reports in local papers provide false, misleading and irresponsible information.

Truth

- The total number of units to be achieved is capped at 3000.
- There will be a pause on the acceptance of new applications, after the first 400 come in, so that the Town Board can gauge impact.
- The Town Board is in the process of, and will be conducting a comprehensive environmental review, before it enacts any code changes.
- The public hearings are integral to the environmental review process, so that the Town Board can hear, weigh and address public comments and sentiment.
- Any residential component in a building existing or be constructed would be an option and not a mandate.

- The Town Board will have review jurisdiction, in accordance with strict design criteria, so that any mixed-use building will be in harmony with existing commercial and office uses.
- Each independent application will be subject to its own environmental review.
- Contemplated uses in the underlying zoning district are still permitted.
- The MTCOD will create a walkable town center in a very small and strictly defined area.
- The MTCOD offers a careful balance of residences in relation to offices and/or retail, with an emphasis upon open space, outdoor areas and a walkable community.
- Board members have conducted not less than three (3) public community meetings, and have held upwards of 20 meetings with the civic associations, before these public hearings were scheduled.

False:

- 40,000 new apartments are being built.
- 100,000 new residents will move in.
- The MTCOD would be the largest housing development ever experienced in the history of Long Island.
- The town board is failing to perform an environmental review.
- The town board is acting in secret - Board members have conducted not less than three (3) public community meetings and have held upwards of 20 meetings with the civic associations, before these public hearings were scheduled.

These reports are outrageous, not based upon reality, and bear no relationship to generally accepted and legislatively defined design criteria. These reports are designed to besmirch the character and intentions of the Town Board members who are working hard to meet the housing needs of the residents.

Articles:

Town revives plan to rezone LI's corporate center for live/work redevelopment:

<https://libn.com/2023/02/02/town-revives-plan-to-rezone-lis-corporate-center-for-live-work-redevelopment/>

Claim that town 'could' build 40,000 apartments isn't in town plans:

<https://huntingtonnow.com/claim-that-town-could-build-40000-apartments-isnt-in-town-plans/>

Town of Huntington seeks input on future redevelopment in the Melville Employment Center:

<https://www.lilanduseandzoning.com/2023/02/09/town-of-huntington-seeks-input-on-future-redevelopment-in-the-melville-employment-center/>

Long Island Town of Huntington says no to more apartments:

<https://nysfocus.com/2023/07/27/huntington-long-island-housing-new-york>

Board Oks Melville hearings, but Lupinacci splits in opposition:

<https://huntingtonnow.com/board-oks-melville-hearings-but-lupinacci-splits-in-opposition/>

Long Island, we need to talk (about housing):

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/24/opinion/long-island-housing.html>

Nassau, Suffolk rank near bottom in housing growth among large counties:

<https://www.newsday.com/business/long-island-housing-growth-development-qz3r69p7>

Town advancing Melville rezoning for live/work redevelopment:

<https://libn.com/2024/04/11/town-advancing-melville-rezoning-for-live-work-redevelopment/>

Town adds housing cap to proposed downtown Melville project:

<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/towns/melville-walkable-downtown-dnow8bzo>

Pennetta: Bringing a 1970s business park toward a sustainable future:

<https://libn.com/2024/04/11/pennetta-bringing-a-1970s-business-park-toward-a-sustainable-future/>

Opposition Articles:

Letter: Melville overlay district plan is ill-conceived:

<https://huntingtonnow.com/letter-melville-overlay-district-plan-is-ill-conceived/>

Huntington zone change could add 40,000 apartments in Melville:

<https://www.theleaderonline.com/single-post/huntington-zone-change-could-add-40-000-apartments-in-melville#:~:text=The%20Huntington%20Town%20Board%20has,Melville%20now%20has%2019%2C000%20residents.>

Huntington's rotten Melville rezone:

<https://www.theleaderonline.com/single-post/huntington-s-rotten-melville-re-zone>

Councilwoman Brooke Lupinacci's comments opposing the Melville urban rezone at the March 27th emergency Huntington town board meeting:

<https://www.theleaderonline.com/single-post/councilwoman-brooke-lupinacci-s-comments-opposing-the-melville-urban-re-zone-at-the-march-27th-emerg>

Relevant Studies:

2016 Melville Employment Center Plan by the Town of Huntington:

<https://www.lilanduseandzoning.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/128/2023/02/Melville-Employment-Center-Plan.pdf>

Stony Brook Business College Real Estate Institute: Impact of Market Rate Apartments on School District Enrollment:

https://www.reisb.org/_files/ugd/28540a_0a0f09a5f24442dab071db44b698c04d.pdf

Regional Planning Association's Housing Data:

<https://rpa.org/work/reports/long-island-housing-data-profiles>



The Fourth Regional Plan: Long Island Route 110:
<http://fourthplan.org/places/long-island/rte-110>

Links to Legislation:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:a961b4cc-bf95-4c9b-94aa-97b7dcde12b7>

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:052b49a8-30f1-4112-ac3b-00c0ab7e36cb>