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EUGENE COOK
Councilman

February 3, 2017

Dear Editor,

On Wednesday February 1, 2017, the Suffolk County Planning Commission held their meeting to vote on the Heartland Development. If you attend this meeting I am sure that you would have been surprised and disgusted at some of events that unfolded that day.

As a resident and elected official in Suffolk County, I understand that at the last Suffolk County Planning Commission meeting that they closed the public comment portion and held the vote over till February 1st. What I don't understand is when the Chairwoman Casey called for a motion to allow eight residents to speak on public record other Commissioners tried to tie this vote to a the vote that was scheduled to be held at the end of the meeting to elect the Chairperson for 2017. I find this political behavior to be unacceptable and inappropriate for an appointed board that is to serve the residents of Suffolk County.

When these individuals sit on that dais as a Suffolk County Planning Commissioners their politics need to be left outside the door and the democratic process should take precedent; if they cannot properly serve the residents of this county than they should resign their post. Fortunately, after much debate and shaming by public officials who were able to speak cooler heads prevailed and the public was allowed to be heard.

The other disturbing point was during the review of the plan and the presentation to answer the questions by the Commissioners to the Suffolk County Planning staff one fact seem to be prevalent and that was that the Town of Islip did not provide the answers to these questions. And on more than one occasion the comments from the Commissioners was that they were not happy about this and why was the plan vague; considering that this project is a landmark proposal that would bring millions of square feet of residential, office and retail space to the area. More importantly, what I am trying to understand is how did Suffolk County Planning Commission unanimously voted Wednesday to recommend the Islip Town Board grant a zoning change that would allow for the development of this project when they appeared to not have the answers to their own questions and public opinion was not in support of the project.

This is a project that will affect all residents of Suffolk County, and more importantly affect water quality and the drawdown effect along with traffic issues. Not to mention, the Brentwood School District was not in support and they were questioning how the tax dollars were generated by this development in the application and no one seem to have the answer. These are all important issues that needed and deserved to be addressed before this project was approved, why didn't the Planning Commissioners reject the application until all answers were received not only for their own piece of mind but for the peace of mind of all Suffolk County taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Eugene Cook
Huntington Town Councilman

