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IT'S TIME TO MOVE FORWARD!

Public Meeting Held to Discuss the Future of the Dover Knolls Development Four Plans and Counting; Latest Town Demands Prescription for Failure

Wingdale, NY – The Benjamin Companies held a meeting Monday night with residents of Dover to discuss the future of the Dover Knolls project. Frustrated by the slow progress in redeveloping the former Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center, the Benjamin Companies spoke directly with residents seeking feedback and input.

“The community needs and deserves this project to move forward,” said Alvin Benjamin. “It has been three and a half years since this process began and no real progress has been made. We have done everything to comply with the requests of the Dover Town Board and are very frustrated at this point.”

Since beginning discussions in 2003, the Benjamin Companies have made every effort to accommodate the wishes of the Town Board, spending to date over \$16 million in planning and development for the site. From incorporating requests from the Town prohibiting development on extensive areas of the site, submitting a plan that calls for less development than allowed by the Town’s zoning code, to hiring a nationally recognized “new urbanism” planning and an international economic and marketing firm to work with the Town to design a viable traditional neighborhood alternative plan for the site. In addition, the Benjamin Companies have paid the Town alone approximately \$300,000 just to fund the Town-hired consultants for the project.

The Benjamin Companies were just about to commence the preparation of the long awaited and extensive Draft Environmental Impact Statement when the Town rejected in an eight-page letter the alternative traditional neighborhood plan, the parties had supposedly been working together on the past five months.



“We were shocked when we received the Town’s latest letter, “ explained Alvin Benjamin. We had been working closely and meeting with the Town and the Town’s consultants for the past five months, and believed that we had finally agreed upon a conceptual development plan, only to receive a comment letter from the Town a few days later essentially rejecting the plan before we even commenced studying the plan under the environmental review process,” said Benjamin.”

In rejecting this plan, the Town instead demanded that the Benjamin Companies prepare a so-called alternative plan consistent with the SEQRA Scope. “We absolutely agreed at several of our meetings with the Town to prepare such a plan; provided, it was everyone’s understanding that the jointly prepared alternative was a better plan from both a new urbanism and feasibility analysis, and that the DEIS would bear this out.” explained Michael Zarin, counsel for the developer.

“At this juncture, public input and support will be vital in finding a resolution,” Alvin Benjamin added. “We have done everything within our power to meet the demands put on us by the Town Board. Before we can proceed and spend additional millions of dollars more in planning and development for this project, we have come to the conclusion that we need a written commitment from the Town agreeing on a viable and mutually agreed upon concept development plan, as well as specific timetables to complete the review process.”

“The only way to complete this very difficult project is going to be as a true public-private partnership,” concluded Benjamin. “Without the public’s support; we are not sure where to go from here.”

The Benjamin Companies, headquartered in Garden City, New York, is a nationally acclaimed real estate development and management company. With a reputation for innovative residential and commercial developments, the Benjamin Companies are guided by a commitment to community and building in harmony with the environment. It is important to note that The Benjamin Companies have already successfully redeveloped two very similar former psychiatric facilities. The hallmark of the Benjamin Companies projects has always been attention to detail, a commitment to quality and sustaining the American dream.

For more information on the Dover Knolls project please log on to www.KnollsofDover.com or call (845) 832-3200.