

RICHARD W. BREINING

August 25, 2020

Town Board
53095 Main Road
Southold, NY 11971

Re: Change of Zone Application for Fishers Island submitted by Walsh Park Benevolent Association

Dear Members of the Town Board:

It has recently come to my attention that a change of zone request is being considered for a neighboring community on Fishers Island. While I do not live in or directly adjacent to the area – our house is five minutes away - passage of this request *will* affect us because Fishers Island is such a small community - particularly the Fort Wright neighborhood which is on the more accessible, public end of the island.

For those Board Members that may be unfamiliar with Fishers Island, approximately two-thirds of the island is private; which was developed for, and is currently maintained by, the Fishers Island Development Corporation (“FIDCO”). Access to that end of the island is restricted - requiring a pass to get through the guarded gate.

I bring this to your attention to better make you aware that any open space on the smaller, west end of the island is coveted. It cannot reasonably be assumed that the addition of 6 housing units into this small neighborhood will have no effect on the neighboring homes. The intersection leading into the proposed area is already a dangerous one; the addition of perhaps 12 additional automobiles and children walking or on bicycle will only make it more so.

While I have no familiarity with housing unit density – I *am* familiar with the size of the proposed property and it seems to me that adding 6 housing units is preposterous. The area that is being considered for high-density housing cannot reasonably maintain the same “feel” that it currently enjoys. I believe it will forever change the Fort Wright neighborhood – a neighborhood whose residents take pride in how their properties appear and enjoy the comradery of their neighbors.

Moreover, it appears to me that this irreversible change is for some reason being rushed through; absent any traditional discovery and vetting process. I once served on the Vestry of our church in New Jersey, where we contemplated a major structural renovation. Our request to the local Zoning Board passed on the first attempt (virtually unheard of according to our lawyers). The reason? We had previously shared our plans with all adjacent neighbors more than two years earlier, inviting them to comment and attend our planning meetings – soliciting their opinions and comments because to a greater or lesser extent, we knew they would all be affected. I don’t believe anything similar took place with respect to this project.

Given these reasons, I would urge the Town Board to reconsider approval of the Change of Zone Application.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Breining
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