

To: Dryden Town Planning Board members
Dryden Town Board members and superintendent

From: Fred Conner, 710 Irish Settlement Road

Subject: 1061 Dryden Road ("Evergreen Townhouses")

Date: March 9, 2017

I have attended two public meetings at the Varna Community Center that dealt with the proposed housing development at 1061 Dryden Road. I am writing to add my voice to those of the dozens of other town residents who have requested that natural gas *not* be used as an energy-source component in this project. I won't repeat here the widely accepted and easy-to-find data and sources that prove that methane (natural gas) is a major contributor to greenhouse warming and thus climate change. Nor will I repeat the details about how energy-efficient, climate-friendly, and affordable options (e.g., heat pumps*) exist in 2017. But I will implore you – the town's Planning Board members and elected Town Board officials – to take that information seriously and to think and plan in terms of future ramifications and technology, rather than allowing the developer to saddle his tenants and the development's neighbors with outworn and unhealthful 1900s contraptions.

My second concern is with regard to traffic and automobile density. While the developer claims he will limit via lease terms each of the thirty-six units to two vehicles, he doesn't propose how he plans to enforce that rule. Nor does he specify satisfactorily how to handle overflow parking and overnight guests' vehicles. As a practical matter, since it's generally agreed that his "audience" is unlikely to be families with young children, the majority of the occupants of each of the 108 bedrooms is probably going to be a driver, and the majority of those drivers are going to own a car or truck. While there may be garage spaces for thirty-six of those vehicles (assuming tenants choose to use the space as a garage and not storage), that still leaves as many as seventy-two residents' vehicles on the roadway, plus guests' cars as well. In other words, because of the proposed dense residential development, the developer is *de facto* creating a parking scenario that will rival the largest of independent used-car-sales lots. Moreover, note that such vehicle density is an additional disincentive for parents whose children may wish to play outdoors in front of the townhouses. I believe that that unintended consequence – too many cars and trucks – is a crucial flaw in the overall development plan, and could have vital ramifications for the future character of all of Varna. It will certainly have an immediate and negative impact on the families and individuals already living within the vicinity of this proposed development.

In summary, I respectfully encourage the Planning Board and Town Board to insist that (1) the developer use electric heat pumps and community-sourced solar electricity, and (2) the density of the development be substantially reduced to minimize the negative impacts (noise, pollution, personal injury, property damage) associated with potentially one hundred or more vehicles on such a tiny lot at any given time.

* The development's add-on solar panels presented at the recent meeting in Varna are a nice PR touch, but pointless from a practical point of view. They aren't designed (sited) for efficiency and, as proposed, create inequities among townhouse dwellers regarding economic benefit. Better to invest those tens of thousands of dollars in heat pumps as a way to save *all* residents money and encourage them, the renters, to subscribe, if they so choose, to community-solar options.

- Introduction. I own the property adjacent to the proposed development site, at 1065 Dryden Road. My property will be more directly impacted by the proposal than any other nearby property, so please weigh this testimony accordingly. I want to be very clear that I am not categorically opposed to the idea of redeveloping the property 1061 Dryden Road. However, before the Planning Commission gives final approval to the proposed development, please consider the following concerns I have with it. I apologize for not participating in this process sooner, but I spent the last year in treatment and recovery from a serious illness. I am just now able to give this important issue the attention that it deserves.

- Driveway access. As currently depicted, the driveway for the proposed development will be installed directly adjacent to mine. Along with the driveway coming in from _____ [property directly across the street] _____, the result will be a congested collection of driveways in the shape of a starfish. A far better, safer, and more attractive option would be to require the applicant to utilize a shared-access approach with my own driveway. The applicant and I were in initial negotiations to transfer an easement that would allow the proposed development to use my existing access point onto Route 366, but that conversation fell apart. I remain open to this idea. Not only would it be safer to have cars entering the highway from one driveway instead of two, but it would prevent the applicant from needing to do as much excavation as would be required to develop the driveway in its currently proposed location, improving the overall aesthetics and “curb appeal” of the site.

- Vegetative screening. It’s absolutely critical that adequate vegetative screening exist to buffer the visual impacts between the adjoining properties. However, the vegetative screening that is currently depicted on map L-003 is almost entirely on my property. The map notations state: “Existing vegetative buffer to remain.”
 - o The applicant can’t make the assertion that the vegetation on its neighbor’s property is going to be retained. The applicant doesn’t control that vegetation. The applicant should be required to provide sufficient screening on its own development site. Some of the proposed housing units may need to be relocated a short distance to the west, in order to make room for adequate vegetation on the proposed development, as opposed to having the applicant take credit for vegetation that already exists on my property.

- Maintenance building. As currently depicted, the maintenance building on the northeast portion of the proposed development site is immediately adjoining the 15’ minimum sideyard setback. The only vegetative screening between the property line and the maintenance building is currently depicted on my property. Again, that is vegetation that the applicant doesn’t control. Again, it is appropriate to require vegetative screening between the development and the property line. In order to mitigate the visual impact of the maintenance building, the Planning Commission should impose a condition of approval that a vegetative buffer be developed between the maintenance building and the property line, or the maintenance building should be relocated, or both. Ideally, strictly from an aesthetic perspective, the maintenance building should not be placed in its current location, where it is the first structure encountered on the driveway, and is the most visible structure from the adjacent property.

- Water service. The maps currently show a 1” water service line serving the proposed development that originates from the 6” pressure main near the hydrant. See, *e.g.*, the

Boundary and Topography map in the applicant's submittals from _____. The proposed route of the water service crosses my driveway. The applicant would need a utility easement to place its water line in this location, which he currently doesn't have. Rather than running the water line across my driveway, the Planning Commission should require that the water line be kept inside the public right-of-way in Route 336, until it is able to enter directly into the development site, rather than cutting any corners across the neighbor's property. A water line failure in the location that is currently depicted would be catastrophic for my driveway and my tenant's access to my property.

- Shared sewer line. The proposed development would tie into an existing sanitary sewer pipe that runs along the property line between my property and the development site. I paid for the construction of the sewer line (including the portion of it that currently crosses the southern portion of the proposed development site) to serve the apartment building that I built on my property in the early 80's. At extra cost to myself, the sewer line was built with extra capacity, beyond what was strictly needed to serve my own development. If there currently is capacity in the line to accommodate the 36 units now being proposed, I have no problem with the applicant using that facility. However, I do believe that the applicant should be required to contribute its share of the cost of developing this capital improvement. Without such contribution, the applicant would be piggy-backing for free on facilities that I originally paid for. In addition, the applicant's proposal to serve 36 dwelling units with this sewer line depletes the capacity, limiting the potential for future redevelopment on my own property. It would be a shame if I paid for this oversized sewer line and ended up giving all of the extra capacity away before my own property benefited from it.

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From: Carol Whitlow <whitlowcarol@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:22 AM
To: Ray Burger; Bambi Avery
Subject: # of 1061 units times 4

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Town Boards,
The Varna meeting was a productive one in terms of discussion of our goals and the developer's understanding of what we want and need. Buzz Lavine, Liori Snyder, Judy Pierpont and others all spoke eloquently. The environmental impact of building, in 2017, fossil-fuel dependent housing, is immoral.

Bill Reed wrote an informative letter, which was read aloud at the meeting, about the intersection of his property and 1061. What he said is also true of my property. I have a 50-year old cedar edge that is dead for the bottom 8 feet or so. The developer continually "claims credit for" my landscaping which he has no control over. He has not approached me to discuss my hedge and so I object to his bringing me in without my knowledge and giving the impression my hedge is his to use to answer your questions.

I find the "fence" the developer is now planning to be out of character with the rural residential property I bought over a decade ago. You can look at the industrial white plastic fence on the Potters development at Forest Home and 366 to see how inappropriate that is.

The developer continues to claim, after several revisions, that a steep slope bordered by heavily travelled, low visibility Route 366 and two driveways for over 100 cars, is a "Picnic Area." I still invite you to visit the property and bring your grandchildren to picnic there. Please consider that if a child is killed there the town could be found negligent. Or, even if a dog runs from there onto 366 it is bound to cause an accident.

I was likewise horrified when Kimberly Michaels suggested that children could play in the woods surrounding the development. The woods slope steeply to a dangerous ravine on

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the south
and to Route 366 (heavily traveled, low visibility) on the north. Either Ms. Michaels is not familiar with the topography of the property or she is not aware of safety concerns for young children.

Which takes us to the PUD designation. There are no amenities offered to residents. The sole object of the plan is to crowd as many rentable units as possible on the only flat area on the property. There is no plan for, nor space for a garden area, play area (swings, sliding board), exercise room, community meeting room or other PUD considerations. Again, the sole interest seems to be getting PUD designation to override density concerns.

There is insufficient parking for 36-3 bedroom units. Count the cars at Bill Reed's 4-unit townhouse on the north border. Then multiply the parking he offers (and he offers a basketball area) by 9. (36=4X9, that is the # of 1061 units is 9 times the # Bill Reed has, thus you need 9 times the parking space.)

The curb cut is a major concern. 1061 only has a completely vertical cut onto Route 366. How will you have 2 lanes, entering and exiting? Again, a liability lawsuit-wise for a likely accident area. I urge you to take your cars there to model the impending disaster.

Traffic onto Route 366 is a major concern, the study last year confirmed that there was not sufficient visual distance looking from the driveway up Route 366, east. They made a mistake in their conclusion. Wouldn't you hate for a clerical error to have such disastrous ramifications?

As to my quality of life, looking at a wall-fence from my living room window, listening to 36 air-conditioners on summer evenings, looking at and hearing a maintenance shed in front of my living room windows, the character of my home and property is completely violated.

You must also consider that this will pave the way for development of adjacent properties, also pouring traffic onto Route 366.

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There simply is not the correct configuration of usable land and safe traffic for this development plan at this location.

If you look at Observatory Circle, off Mt. Pleasant just adjacent to 1061 on the south, you will see family-friendly homes build with sufficient density, adequate parking, and safe traffic flow onto the main road. The developer made money, the town increased their tax base, and no one got hurt. The next neighbor uphill cannot even see the development because there is a swath of trees between their home and the Circle. The Circle offers a pleasant and safe place for all neighbors to walk, kids to learn to ride bikes, etc. This is an interesting comparison.