

**From:** Bambi Avery  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 19, 2018 1:34 PM

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** FW: Proposed Trinitas Development and Need for Zoning Review in the Varna Community Development Plan

**From:** Zorika Henderson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 18, 2018 11:03 AM  
**To:** Bambi Avery [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Proposed Trinitas Development and Need for Zoning Review in the Varna Community Development Plan

Dear Supervisor Leifer, Town Board Members, and Planning Board Members:

The student housing development proposed by Trinitas, which if approved would double the population of the rural hamlet overnight, is far out of scale for Varna. There would be 663 new student bedrooms and a heavy increase in traffic onto Mt. Pleasant Rd. and Rte. 366. The major influx of traffic would be overwhelming for the hamlet and make the already hazardous intersection of Mt. Pleasant, Freese Rd., and Rte. 366 even more dangerous. The proposed development is almost identical to the one by Stephen Lucente 15 years ago that was rejected because of stormwater problems and the likelihood that people's basements below the hill would be flooded, as well as the high overall negative impact from the project's size.

Stormwater catchment with the use of a retention pond, which the Trinitas developers have proposed to prevent flooded basements downhill from the development, often fails because it requires strict maintenance for effectiveness and to avoid becoming a concentrated source of pollutants:

<https://www.buildingsolutions.com/industry-insights/why-they-fail-how-to-prevent-stormwater-management-failures>, <https://www.clemson.edu/extension/water/stormwater-ponds/problem-solving/water-quality/index.html>.

Higher taxes would very likely be paid by town residents for the increased public services required by the development.

A study of taxation in Vermont towns found that "in general, the tax bills are lower in the towns in which residential property makes up the lowest percentage of the tax base. This is consistent with the findings of the Cost of Government Services studies which document that residential property has the highest ratio of cost to value; that is, residential property costs the municipality more per \$100 of taxable value than most other types of property" (<http://vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/The-Land-Use-Pr-ton-12.2002.pdf>).

In Fauquier County, Virginia, a "Cost of Community Services analysis show that residential land uses generated an estimated \$186.0 million in county revenues while consuming approximately \$217.4 million in county services in FY2014 for a gap of \$31.4 million. Commercial/industrial and

agriculture/open space generated estimated surpluses of \$27.9 million and \$5.6 million respectively, resulting in a total FY2014 budget surplus of \$2.1 million”  
(<https://ceps.coopercenter.org/content/fauquier-county-cost-community-services-study>).

Open land has positive impacts on taxes.

"Many studies have shown that residential development is not self-supporting fiscally, including the "Cost of Community Services" study produced for Skagit County [state of Washington] in 1997 by the American Farmland Trust, which noted: 'Residential development did not pay for itself, requiring \$1.25 in services for every dollar of revenue generated.' Translated into specific terms, this means that every new house that is constructed in San Juan County is being subsidized by all other property owners in the county. . . .

"Study findings indicate that farm, forest and open land had a positive fiscal impact on Skagit County in 1997. Because of its modest requirement for services, open land created a surplus of revenue for the county. For every dollar of revenue they generated, farm, forest and open land only cost 51 cents. Residential development overall did not pay for itself, requiring \$1.25 in services for every dollar of revenue generated" (<http://www.doebay.net/appeal/highertaxes.html>)

Farmland, in addition to its benefits for food production and open space, is consistently a fiscal asset to towns. "More than 130 COCS [Cost of Community Services] studies have been conducted during the past 29 years; in every study, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services" (<http://162.242.222.244/documents/Cost-of-Community-Services-Studies-American-Farmland-Truett.pdf>).

Reduced density in any proposed housing development in Varna should minimize the increase in taxes.

The town's 2005 Comprehensive Plan states that housing density in the hamlets should average 4 units per acre and offer a mix of housing options; having a large proportion of student rental housing would be inconsistent with its goals. The Plan states that development should retain the character of the hamlets and avoid radical changes. The Trinitas proposal fails those guidelines.

The principles of the original Varna Plan should be followed to retain the hamlet's community spirit and its livability.

Sincerely,  
Zorika Henderson  
(Town of Dryden)

For the web

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] >

Sent: Thursday, July 19, 2018 1:39 PM

To: Dave Sprout [REDACTED]

Subject: Hillside Acres in Varna

Hello David,

As per our conversation this morning I am writing you with two concerns that I have with the proposed development off of Mt. Pleasant Road in Varna by Trinitas Ventures.

Number one being the storm water run off. One of the drainage areas from that property runs down through our community and the capacity of the existing drainage ditches will not be able to handle an additional run off. Secondly, currently the traffic on State Rt. 366 makes it difficult at certain times of the day to pull out of Graduate Drive and Carls Way. Adding a large number of vehicles to an already extremely busy highway will only make it more difficult and dangerous for our residents to enter Rt. 366. As I understand it, the DOT is currently looking at this issue.

Thank you for your time on the phone this morning and feel free to contact me with any questions you or any other Dryden Town officials may have.

Sincerely,

Chip

James W. Ray Jr.  
President

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Jim Ray Homes Inc  
9 Newfield Depot Rd  
Newfield NY 14867

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: Trinitas

Fellow Planning Board Members,

This morning, I emailed these comments to the Town Board and to other interested parties in anticipation of tomorrow's Town Board meeting. I am passing them on because they capture my thinking as of now regarding Trinitas. I look forward to our discussion a week from Thursday. (I have edited this version primarily to correct typo's in what I emailed the Town Board this morning.)

Dear Town Board Members,

I offer these comments regarding your review of the Trinitas proposal:

Based on what I have seen and heard on the public record regarding the Trinitas proposal, I believe the following issues should be raised and studied using a Full Environmental Impact Statement.

- First, requiring an Environmental Impact Statement will give both the Town and the public the chance to study key environmental

issues in detail and to work together to decide where alternatives and mitigation measures will improve the proposal for the benefit of the Town and the wider community.

- Impact on Land: The land to be developed is steeply sloped, wooded, and has ponds on it. So the grading, filling, excavating, and run-off all could have a significant negative environmental impacts; therefore, the Town needs to do an EIS to learn what alternatives or mitigation measures need to be taken.
- Impact on Transportation: The developer will

be

packing 100's of students most of whom will have cars next to a very dangerous, un-regulated intersection at 366 and Freese/Mt. Pleasant. The exits and entrances are into a busy road (366) where sight lines are poor and speeding is common or onto a narrow, hilly country road with poor sight lines where down hill speeding is common (Mt. Pleasant). Mt. Pleasant traffic from Trinitas continuing across to Freese Road will jam up at

the

unregulated intersection and again at the one-lane bridge on Freese. All these conditions demand close study through an EIS so the Town can decide what alternatives and mitigation measures Trinitas will have to undertake.

- Impact on Energy: The source of energy has not been specified. Regardless of whether it is gas or electricity from the grid, adding the demand for multiple units and 100's of students requires more energy production and creates more pollution. For our community's sake, the amount of energy to be used and the emissions to be generated must be specified and quantified. After that alternatives and mitigation measures need to be identified,

costed out, shared with the community, and the Town must decide what alternatives and mitigations will be required.

This kind of study was required by the Town of Ithaca in the case of Cornell's Maplewood graduate student housing--a smaller

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project than Trinitas, and it should be done here. To reduce the demand for energy and reduce emissions, alternatives that should be considered include heat pumps and generating or connecting with renewable sources of energy. Mitigation measures which should be considered include down-sizing the project, building to high efficiency standards (Passive House or Net Zero or earning all 17 LEED energy points), air-source water heaters, Energy Star appliances, and many others which can be identified--see the next paragraph.

The DEC's Guide for Assessing Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in an Environmental Impact Statement

- should be required by the Town in its EIS for the specification and quantification of energy and emissions. The Guide also provides a list of alternatives and mitigation's measures which can be taken to reduce energy demand and emissions. In addition the Town and City of Ithaca's Green Building Policy Report is an excellent, locally-developed source for cost effective alternatives and mitigation measures. Both can and should be required to be used by the Town.

• Consistency with Community Plans: ANY use of natural gas is NOT consistent with the County's energy and emission goals and the Town's Climate Smart Pledge. In addition, there are many questions to be investigated including exploring alternatives and mitigation measures regarding potential inconsistencies between the Trinitas proposal, the Varna Plan, and the Town's Comprehensive Plan .

*\*\*Since I emailed this Wednesday morning, I was corrected. Trinitas is roughly 3/4 the number of beds that Maplewood is. So, Trinitas is smaller but roughly comparable in terms of likely energy consumption and the creation of GHG emissions.*

--  
Joe Wilson

