

Village of Woodsburgh



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LEE A. ISRAEL, MAYOR

June 29, 2017

Dear Resident:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank the entire community for your continued support. The turnout on Election Day was impressive and the results clearly demonstrated the community's overwhelming support for our actions in representing your interests. We sincerely appreciate the trust and faith that you have put in us and be assured that we do not take our responsibilities lightly.

During the campaign there was certain information disseminated in the community about the Woodmere Club and its potential development that I feel compelled to address. I particularly want to clear up any misconceptions so that we can all have a better understanding of the issues as we move forward.

1. *Why hasn't the Board spoken publicly about the potential development of the Club property?* The Board of Trustees serves as the Planning Board for the Village. Because the Planning Board is responsible for approving or denying any application relating to subdivision of property that may come before it in the future, our counsel has advised us that the board is restrained from making public statements that demonstrates a "pre-determination" of an application before it is made. Simply put, we cannot legally issue an opinion regarding a future determination by the Board for something that *has not yet* happened. Doing so could create significant risk of any future decision rendered by this Board being overturned and would cause the Village to incur unnecessary legal fees.

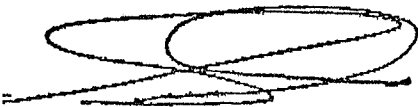
However, I do want to point out for the record that the Board will do whatever we can to ensure that the beauty and charm of the Village is maintained. In fact, within the last year or so, the Board received two separate requests for residential development on the Woodmere Club property and turned each away. Those actions by the Board were appropriate as formal requests had been provided and in each instance the Board determined that it would not be in the best interest of the Village to move forward with such requests.

2. *Could something have been done to stop the sale of the Woodmere Club?* The Woodmere Club is private property and the Village does not have standing or the right to control its sale or transfer of ownership. We do however have authority over zoning, use and subdivision, which will be addressed if and when an application is submitted. At this time, no such application has been submitted and the Woodmere Club has advised that it intends to maintain its present form as a private club for the next 4-5 years. Any future application/s will be fully disclosed with adequate notification to the community so that a full and comprehensive *public hearing* can be held. As you can appreciate, any application will be subject to significant analysis, which will include, but is not limited to its impact on the surrounding infrastructure, traffic and environment. These issues will be addressed not only by the Village of Woodsburgh but by adjoining villages, the Town of Hempstead and Nassau County.

3. *Why didn't the Village consider purchasing the Club?* We have heard from members of the Community that some individuals have suggested that the Village could have purchased the club and maintained it as a town golf course. Such a purchase while not only fiscally irresponsible is not even remotely feasible. The potential cost of such a proposal would have put a prohibitive financial burden on Woodsburgh residents and the Village could not have bought the club or joined with neighboring Villages or the Town of Hempstead or Nassau County to purchase this property. Additionally, even if it were fiscally feasible, we could not compel the Woodmere Club to accept our offer, especially given the length of time any such transaction would take considering the Club's financial condition. The idea for the Town of Hempstead to purchase the Woodmere Club was raised with them and discussed and the Town of Hempstead declined. Moreover, there is absolutely no interest from any of the neighboring villages to subsidize a golf course in a market where golf demand has significantly declined not only in our county but across the country.
4. *Does being a Woodmere Club member impact Board decisions?* Some Board members including myself are members of the Woodmere Club. It is just one of the many community organizations that we are involved with and which we do on our own time. As a member of the Woodmere Club for many years prior to my involvement in local government, I have watched the unfortunate decline in membership which put pressure on the Club's financial condition. This is a reality for many golf clubs in the United States. At no time during my position as Mayor was I involved in the governance of the club or privy to any decision related to its sale, nor have I, nor my fellow Board members, who may also be Woodmere Club members, ever benefited in any way from the sale of the Woodmere Club; nor have any of us made any loans or received any equity distribution or financial gain from the sale of the Woodmere Club. Unfortunately these, as well as other spurious and false allegations have been spread during the campaign. This is where we each have our homes and our responsibility and allegiance, first and foremost, is to the Village of Woodsburgh and to maintaining its charm and quality.
5. *What is the Board doing to ensure that the Village is not negatively impacted by the sale of the Woodmere Club?* We as a Board have been proactively taking steps in anticipation of the potential sale of the Woodmere Club. We have retained highly qualified legal counsel and are doing whatever we can to ensure that any zoning of the property is favorable to the Village as well as submitted a formal letter to the Town of Hempstead in support of the current moratorium prohibiting the issuance of any development approvals for residential development on privately owned golf courses. We are also in the process of creating a "special committee" whose sole mandate will be to monitor the situation as it unfolds; to brainstorm and to address and advise the Board. We hope to draw from the qualified knowledge base and talent that we have within our own residential community for this committee. We encourage all of you to be part of the solution, but we must do this in a unified and controlled manner, led by the Board whom you have elected.

We are very sensitive to the concerns of all members of our community, regarding potential overdevelopment as we too are all residents of the Village and share those concerns. We will continue to work very hard to maintain the charm and character of our community, however, to do so we need your help and cooperation. Simply creating panic and fear is unproductive and detrimental to our Village, which has always prided itself on its cohesiveness and the respect we all have for our fellow neighbors. The fabric of our community has been impacted during this campaign but such damage is not irreparable. Now is the time for all of us to work together toward a better Woodsburgh currently and in the years to come.

Very truly yours and on behalf of the Board of Trustees,



Lee A. Israel
Mayor