

Manalapan Proposed Development Ordinance at Millhurst & Route 33 Too Intense Says Manalapan Strong Members

An Independent Traffic Study Should be Completed Prior to Any Ordinance Being Introduced

(*Manalapan, NJ – February 22, 2017*) - At the February 22, 2017 Manalapan Township Committee meeting, citizens attended to learn more and provide comments concerning the proposed ordinance to allow up to 350 housing units and a minimum tract of 20 acres for commercial use.

Manalapan Strong members highlighted several themes, asking the Township Committee to table the ordinance until an independent transportation/traffic impact study can be provided and that a costs-benefits analysis in terms of how it affects Manalapan's taxpayers should be prepared. Also, the proposed development was labeled as "too intense" despite some minor improvement over components of the Manalapan Crossing ordinance in 2015, which was opposed by a large number of residents and inevitably held by the governing body. As indicated at the meeting, the development will substantially impact on students' transportation to schools, causing delays and further traffic. And, this proposed ordinance is tantamount to "spot zoning."

A *Manalapan Strong* statement reads:

"While this proposal contains minor enhancements to the 2015 development 'Manalapan Crossing' proposal inasmuch as it no longer has 599 multi-dwelling rental units, it is still too intense in its development plans for this community. We do not want to repeat the mistakes of overdevelopment in the northern part of Manalapan in the southern part. While the Township Committee has re-packaged the type of units by allowing up to 280 market-rate adult community units, and up to an additional 70 multi-dwelling units considered affordable special housing, the fact is the ordinance has substantially the same permitted uses as the 2015 ordinance that are very intense for the southern part of Manalapan. Those uses include hotels with a minimum of 100 guest rooms, supermarkets, restaurants, medical research facilities and other medical professional practices, municipal facilities including a Library, post office, gas stations, pharmacies with drive-through, funeral home, day care for children and adults, etc. Commuter parking and amphitheater components were lifted."

"Why the rush? An overlay once made is forever. All the overlay does is allow the property owner to make millions of dollars and the Town gets more overdeveloped, more traffic, more infrastructure costs, and headaches. The taxpayers lose under such intense development."

"The elected governing body should be protecting the interests of residents in this area, not fast-tracking this ordinance for a developer's convenience. The quality of life in the area, impact on the environment, and traffic increase should clearly be considered in the scope and nature of any plan. Certainly, preservation of land should also be an important, key consideration. Real estate experts and various studies show that this

kind of development does not necessarily reap economic benefits for the taxpayers and that the developed residences do not necessarily subsidize the costs of municipal services, just like increased business properties do not create the level of tax rates and revenues some elected officials generally project. Certainly, property values of homes in the surrounding area would be affected negatively by the intensity of development. Even with any enhancements to Millhurst Road and Route 33 subsidized by a developer, expansion of roads into several lanes will only attract more traffic flow and congestion. It can contribute to more problems."

The statement further encouraged residents of Southern Manalapan "to attend and participate at the March 8th hearing." Despite the valid points raised by citizens at this township committee meeting of February 22 and the request to table the ordinance's introduction, the Committee voted to introduce the measure.

Manalapan Strong believes that prior to the ordinance introduction, ample analysis, studies, and consideration of points made by residents should have been used to better modify the provisions of such a proposed ordinance. The Manalapan Strong statement further stipulates that, "The Township Committee should have heeded the lessons learned from the 2015 'Manalapan Crossing' situation. This is an election year and we will hold our elected officials accountable."