

Manalapan Strong Press Release

CITIZENS JOIN TOGETHER IN LAUNCHING A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE OTHERS ON MANALAPAN CROSSING

Manalapan Crossing Will Forever Destroy the Rural Character of Southern Manalapan

October 26, 2014 (Manalapan, NJ) – Manalapan citizens have joined together to establish “**Manalapan Strong**,” a citizens advocacy group whose first project is educating Manalapan residents concerning the proposed Manalapan Crossing project and stopping an Ordinance that among other components allows apartment buildings in the Township. This Citizens group represents a wide spectrum of interests and backgrounds and includes Republicans, Democrats, and Independents working together for the good of the township of Manalapan and its 38,000 plus residents. The group has already launched its website www.PreserveManalapan.com. More than 600 individuals have joined its Facebook page in just three days, supporting this important mission.

The proposed development will authorize four story buildings with up to 720 apartments, a public entertainment center, and up to 500,000 square feet for commercial use, and black-paved commuter parking lots at the old Probasco Farm on Route 33 and Millhurst Road. While the Republican members of the governing body have portrayed this development as a means of bringing in tax revenues, many contend that those revenues will be offset by new, additional municipal services costs relating to education/schools, fire protection, police and public safety, garbage collection, etc. More than 120 acres of open green space will be lost forever and traffic congestion on Millhurst Road will only get worse notwithstanding the fact that Manalapan officials proclaim that the developer will be making road enhancements to alleviate traffic.

The citizens advocacy group notes that three former Mayors of Manalapan (*Mayors Jim Gray, Michele Roth, and George Spodak*) have testified at prior Manalapan Township Governing meetings that they are opposed to this proposed development project, urging the township governing board to reconsider the size and scope of this project and ascertaining that these actions will not solve the property tax problem in our town, destroying its character and attraction for residents and incoming families who may have considered to locate here.

The group held its first meeting and will be meeting again within the next few days, but, its members have already begun launching a full scale strategy to oppose the intense proposed development of Manalapan Crossing. Some of its members are citizens who have been vocal about the proposed project at public hearings and Manalapan Township Committee public meetings. Subcommittees are hard at work implementing the group’s strategic plan and mission.

The group issued the following statement:

“We intend to do everything we can to muster the necessary opposition to halt and/or dramatically scale down this proposed development and ensure that our elected Manalapan officials follow the will of the people, not the desires of developers. When it comes to maintaining the rural character of the southern part of Manalapan, ensuring green space, and a rational and balanced approach to development proposals, we will engage and strongly provide feedback and input so that our fellow citizens are not messaged by the fallacious arguments of the political party establishment and developers they seem beholden to. Furthermore, the proposed Ordinance and project are not in accordance with the Manalapan Master Plan.”

Manalapan Strong’s mission is to:

- Make sure the Manalapan Master Plan is followed;
- Provide important facts and information to fellow residents of Manalapan concerning the proposed development of Manalapan Crossing;
- Educate and advocate in opposition to this development project;
- Create a grassroots campaign aimed at showing citizens how they may assist so that the people's voice will be heard and acted upon by our local elected officials;
- Ensure that any proposed development is rational, promotes green space, and promotes a good quality of life with full transparency concerning the effects on school population, traffic, taxes, and municipal services expenditures;
- Preserve the beautiful, rural character of southern Manalapan, the gateway to Manalapan Township;
- Share key findings from "cost of community services" studies performed nationally which document that residential development as well as commercial business activity actually drives up taxes in towns in addition to lowering the value of property adjacent or nearby to such overdevelopment.

The newly formed group also provided an additional statement:

“Our government is supposed to be ‘a government for and by the people.’” Elected officials are supposed to listen to and follow the sentiments of the people. In Manalapan, at the October 14th town hall meeting, governing body members Jack McNaboe, Mary Ann Musich, Jordan Maskowitz and Susan Cohen voted ‘yes’ to introduce an Ordinance giving the green light for development at Manalapan Crossing. The only dissenting vote was from Ryan Green, whom they primaried in the last GOP June primary election to run their preferred candidate Mrs. Ginsberg. They voted “yes” for the introduction of the ordinance after two hours or more of testimony from a packed room of Manalapan residents who went on record as opposing this project in its current form. Only one resident was in favor. Their rush to introducing an ordinance that evening is evidence that they do not follow the people’s will nor are they attempting to downscale this mammoth monstrosity development. Their indifference to the voting public on this issue catalyzed the formation of this committee of citizens. We intend to muster our

resources and leverage relevant strategies to publicize the facts about this matter. The ordinance is being considered on November 10th. We want to avoid a legal battle, but, if the Ordinance is not taken off the calendar we are ready for the Court battle.” The committee also noted that the Planning Board - which met on October 22 - did not allow the general public to testify, raise questions, or provide thoughts on the ordinance during the meeting’s public portion.”

The group will provide regular briefings for members of the press as it progresses on all policy fronts and its grassroots campaign. Several projects are being launched as of the issuance of this press advisory.

www.PreserveManalapan.com