



SustainableEHC
500 London Avenue
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215

www.sustainableehc.org

Dec. 1, 2021

Mayor Lisa Jiampetti and Egg Harbor City Council
500 London Ave.
Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215

Dear City Council Members:

SustainableEHC, the city's green team, recently discussed the city's plans to deem the 400-acre City Lake Park an area in need of redevelopment. The green team members present during our Nov. 23, 2021, [Zoom meeting](#) agreed to allow Chairwoman Nanette LoBiondo Galloway to send this letter outlining the green team's position on the proposed redevelopment plan that would allow the city to remove a long-standing deed restriction designating the land be used as a park and allow Tackle Direct to build a 70,000-square-foot office, retail and warehouse facility and man-made lake on 48 acres just south of the existing lake and campground access road.

The majority of those present agreed Tackle Direct would be a welcome addition to the city's business community, but that the project should be located outside of the 400-acre park's boundaries. Members believe there are other areas in Egg Harbor City that need to be redeveloped in accordance with New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, such as the Tower site, old city landfill, and the Acme, Better Built Door and marine building sites along the White Horse Pike.

One of our members who is affiliated with Cedar Creek High School indicated that Tackle Direct would be a good corporate citizen because it is highly regarded in the fishing industry and is a potential statewide sponsor of the Hooked On Fishing Not On Drugs recreational substance abuse education program.

While one of our members agreed that it would be difficult for Tackle Direct to obtain a large enough parcel in a rural setting elsewhere in the city for the company to achieve its goal of providing a recreational fishing outlet for outdoor enthusiasts, the majority of our members feel City Lake Park should be preserved as recreation and open space for future generations as it has been since it was deeded to the city in 1872.

City engineer Ryan McGowan attended the meeting and provided pertinent information about the proposed project, so our members were informed about the potential pitfalls at other sites and the idea behind Tackle Direct's concept plan before they voiced their opposition to the potential loss of open space and recreation.

Mr. McGowan also said Mr. Gill of Tackle Direct selected Egg Harbor City Lake Park as the place to consolidate his business operations partly because of its remote location but also because the city has been deemed an Opportunity Zone, which offers developers additional tax incentives beyond what the city could offer in a PILOT or tax abatement program. Building in Egg Harbor City would eliminate the need for a developer to pay capital gains tax for 10 years. The U.S. government is five years into the 10-year program initiated by the Trump administration. It is unknown if the Biden or a future administration will extend the program beyond its original timeframe.

Some of the comments made by our members include:

- "There are other places in town that would be appropriate without destroying our Pinelands."
- "Redevelopment of the White Horse Pike would help the city look better."
- "I don't think tearing up land that should be preserved is a good idea."
- "I would prefer another area if we could do that, but if we can't, it doesn't sound like a terrible thing."
- "We have only had positive experiences working with Tackle Direct."
- "I would love to have Tackle Direct here, just not inside that diamond."
- "I don't think we should give away any of our parks."
- "With the new bike path that's coming, more children will be able to get to the lake safely."

So, in general, our group indicated it is "all for progress, just not there."

Sincerely,

Nanette LoBiondo Galloway
Chairwoman
SustainableEHC