

Town Clerk (Town of Neversink)

From: Chris Mathews <supervisor@townofneversink.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 1:15 PM
To: Keith Zanetti; Nicole Gorr; Scott Grey; Ric Coombe; Lisa
Subject: Fwd: Keriland proposal-Watson objection
Attachments: Keriland Watson comments.docx; Untitled attachment 00025.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: larry watson <lwatson2112@gmail.com>
Date: June 7, 2022 at 3:46:54 PM EDT
To: "Mark McCarthy (Town of Neversink Supervisor)" <supervisor@townofneversink.org>
Subject: Keriland proposal-Watson objection

Attached are my current comments about the Keriland proposal. I also left a hard copy with the clerk. I've spoken with others on Blue Hill Rd. and they oppose this for the same reasons I listed. I'd like to sit down with you and get a better understanding of zoning law changes being requested and how the process will progress with the town.
Larry Watson
7987922

June 7, 2022

Chris Mathews
Neversink Town Supervisor,

I participated in the Keriland presentation on April 27. I am compelled to express my opposition to this development.

I moved to the Town of Neversink in 1988 when I took a position as Plant Manager of the West Delaware Hydroelectric Plant. I was encouraged to reside in the area and found a home on Bungalow Brook Rd. in Claryville. A spur road that had 2 other full time residents and 3 summer homes. It was a peaceful setting and I thought I would reside there for many years. As the years went the families of the summer homes grew and the street started to change. They understandably treated the area as a summer camp since they were at the family retreat. That meant outdoor parties late into the night on weekdays, intoxication resulting in a car in the ditch in front of our home, and various other incidents that decreased our quality of life. The tipping point was the relentless assault of lawn mowers. Every day was like living next to an airport. There was no escaping the drone so we decided to leave.

Being an avid runner and biker I took advantage of the roads and trails in the area so we tried to stay in the area. My wife, a lifelong resident of the Town of Neversink, and I started searching for something with significantly more privacy. A place where nobody would bother us and we would bother no one.

We looked unsuccessfully for years before I change our approach. We looked for areas that met our criteria and I sent property owners an offer letter. Blue Hill Rd. was our first choice. Offer after offer was rejected until the last response. That is how we came to acquire 40 acres on Blue Hill Rd.

You have to be a certain mindset to appreciate this area. For the past 150yrs+ it appears the entire road has averaged 8 +/- homes at any given time. Every property owner has worked to preserve the nature of the area by not subdividing. Shoenberg placed ~800 acres into conservation and Henry King has been trying to put his ~350 acres into the same. 4 of the homes are well over 100yrs old. 2 of them depend on deeded rights to springs located on Keriland property. Keriland's 50yrs+ ownership had contributed in no small part to the area and how those that chose to locate in adjacent properties viewed the area. Their proposal is a dramatic gentrification that will fundamentally change the area.

Traditionally, hunting camps have located in remote parts of the town. The Covered Bridge Camp is practically across the street from the proposed development while we are adjacent to it. All day shooting is not out of the norm. I've tried to limit my shooting to periods when nobody is around but that would be impossible going forward. Sound travels and echoes off the ridge amplifying its effect up and down the road. In the winter I can hear the Town plow truck as far away as Hunter Rd. Do you really think these new owners will envision this as part of their utopia?

The Keriland presentation mentioned how good they felt when on the property without stating the obvious that it is entirely due to the lack of development. An elitist insular project will destroy the feel of the land. Noise pollution will dominate the area. It is not uncommon to find people driving down the center of the road and cutting any of the many blind turns on Blue Hill Rd. and Hunter Rd.. This will eventually result in traffic accidents. The limited deer population will suffer from this traffic.

I can't envision the farm proposal as at least 75% of the acreage is slope greater than 8%. Above 2000ft we have a growing season of at best 100 days. Add to that the marginal topsoil. The previous owner, George Ratner only had success growing cauliflower.

As for the "Adventure Center"...WTF?

The offer to open the trails to the public is an empty benefit. For close to 20 yrs I made hundreds of mountain bike rides and trail runs in the Willowmac Forest and around Denman Mtn. Aside from snowmobilers, in all those years I only came across others on one occasion. I don't doubt a few locals will check out the trails initially but that interest will wane. What will happen is an influx of people from more populated areas, including those already transiting to Frost Valley, will make their way here and we will have a situation like the the Blue Hole fiasco. In actuality this is just a form of advertising for Keriland. Sooner or later they will shut down access to better cater to their cliental.

All too often developers are let loose to transform an area as they see fit to the detriment of current property holders. The town has traditionally been a haven for blue collar workers and those with modest (by Keriland standards) summer homes. The proposal turns an area with the lowest housing density into one with the highest. If the proposal is financially successful you can expect phase 2, 3, etc until Blue Hill Rd. & Hunter Rd. are saturated.

Frankly, what is the point of a Master Plan if a developer can throw down a commercial project in a rural conservation zoned area.

Public knowledge of the proposal seems mostly limited. Either no knowledge of it or something about a resort. Likely the largest project since the DEP built the water system, it seems unconscionable that the Town hasn't actively sought to engage taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Larry Watson
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Claryville, NY
798-7922