

Future Marriott on Tuckahoe Toxic Dump Despite Citizen Protest Over Safety

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In a careless and arbitrary move, the Tuckahoe Village Planning Board, on October 18th, 2016, prioritized expedience over public health and denied the requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the 163 room Marriott Springhill Suites project on the Marbledale Road Quarry Dump.

The Dump is a highly contaminated disposal site, believed to contain hazardous chemical filled drums.

Without any proof, the Board affirmed a Negative Declaration, which said that there would be no environmental or health impacts from disturbing this industrial waste site. Tuckahoe completely ignored the demands of over 2,700 petitioners for an EIS, not to mention the presence of over 250 members of the community at the meetings.

Adding insult to injury, the Planning Board refused to allow any public comment before the vote. As Commissioner Clare Gorman read the Negative Declaration, the community began to sing “God Bless America,” in desperation to be heard. Distraught community members reacted with tears, and jeers. Three members of the Planning Board turned a blind eye and deaf ear to their community: Clare Gorman (local Audubon society board member), Ann Marie Ciaramella, and Raymond Nerenberg, all voted against the EIS, and approved the project. Valiantly voting for community safety, were Commissioners Melba Caliano and David Barra.

Once the source of world-famous Tuckahoe Marble, the Quarry was operated as a Dump by Tuckahoe from the early 1950s to the late 1970s. The Dump is ~100 feet deep, and contains ~500,000 cubic yards of industrial and pharmaceutical waste.

Disbelief turned to cynicism as Tuckahoe Mayor Steve Ecklund, a long-time advocate of the project, said that the Hotel will not generate enough tax income to reduce any property taxes. Mayor Ecklund continued that costs for Police and DPW to service the Hotel may increase.

Neither the developer nor his contractors have the necessary experience working with contaminated waste sites. The remaining portions of the Quarry Dump are in the Super Fund (P) program, and remain untested. Aggressive construction activities will affect the vast contamination buried underneath. Environmental experts agree that highly contaminated vapors and dust will be released into the community.

DEC approved an incomplete and flawed remediation plan from the developer, despite warnings from environmental experts and objections from the public.

This misguided hotel project is a perfect storm of disregarded guidelines, and misaligned incentives. The development oriented Brownfield Cleanup Program is ill-equipped to address such a highly contaminated site, in the middle of a Super Fund site, slated for such an aggressive project.

Refusing to accept the risks of these careless decisions, a group of concerned citizens organized as the Marbledale Road Environmental Coalition. They are challenging the actions of these negligent parties by assisting in bringing an Article 78 proceeding. A reversal of the arbitrary and careless decisions can lead to a proper environmental review and cleanup. This would be a great victory for both the community and our environment.

For more information about the Coalition's efforts, and ways to Contribute, visit www.MarbledaleRoad.com or e-mail OurAirOurLives@gmail.com.