

September 16, 2014

Town of Amenia Planning Board
Amenia, NY 12501

Dear Chairman Fontaine and members of the Planning Board,

Comments on the Silo Ridge Amended Master Development Plan and Special Use Permits

My focus is on the purely objective goal of ensuring that the permitting process uphold the essence of the Town's 2007 Comprehensive Plan and the integrity and spirit of the Zoning Law, so that these public tools may continue to be used for the orderly and intelligent use of land in Amenia. A massive public investment was made in these documents and they have already proven their worth as evidenced by the steady increase in large lot land values, despite the recession.

The two most important sections of the Zoning Law, as regards this application, are the Resort Development Overlay District and the Scenic Protection Overlay District. Passages from the "Purpose" paragraphs in each are instructive.

RDO Section 121-18 A. "In exchange for granting permission for use flexibility and more intensive development than is allowed by the underlying zoning, the Town seeks to achieve significant protection of open space resources, especially scenic viewsheds, ridgelines, water resources, and ecosystems"

SPO Section 121-14.1 A. "...to regulate land uses within designated scenic corridors and ridgeline areas to protect the Town's scenic beauty and rural character. This section is intended to apply to those sections of ridgeline areas and road and trail corridors that are visible to the public and that substantially retain their scenic character."

This Master Development Plan requires waivers to enable the construction of "estate houses" high on the slopes of a pristine mountain-side that is an iconic component of the character of Amenia. The simple statement that their approval is key to the feasibility of the project is entirely inadequate. Making the case for this waiver should be a high hurdle for the applicant.

I suggest the following categories that need to be satisfied in order to justify waivers:

- If, as presentations and documents suggest, this is a case of financial feasibility, a full disclosure and explanation of the financial parameters must be presented.
- A watertight case should be made that there are no other feasible sites...technically or financially feasible.
- That the impact (for which a waiver is required) is limited to the absolute minimum...that there are as few structures, as low on the mountainside, as small and unobtrusively constructed and sited as possible.

If this application process does not adhere to a strict interpretation of the land use laws of the town, a highly visible precedent will have been established and the very reason for the existence of such a prestigious private resort will gradually cease to exist. The mountainsides and ridges will be developed. Quite likely Rattlesnake Mountain will be the first...all because proponents of this Silo Ridge will have been successful in making the case that this project will bring money into town. In other words...everything is for sale in Amenia.

Well everything in Amenia is not for sale. Years of public input on two Comprehensive Plans attest to the fact that residents of Amenia value the natural resources as a fundamental component of that which makes Amenia a special place to live.

It is in the interest of residents of Amenia to ensure that this process is carefully undertaken to the letter of the law to be sure, but it is surely of critical importance to the financiers and investors in Silo Ridge, who risk immense financial loss. This resort must be a good fit for the land and visitors and residents of the town alike, for a successful investment of this scale to endure. That "good fit" and endurance must include the defense of our Town Laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Doyle', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark Doyle

Box 1275
Sharon, CT 06069-1275
18 September 2014

Amenia Town Board
Amenia Town Hall
Amenia, NY 12501

Ladies and Gentlemen:

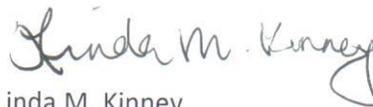
It is hard to believe that Amenia's Town Board would allow the destruction of one of the most scenic parts of Dutchess County! Silo Ridge Country Club is ruining an area that Mr. Segalla preserved through careful development.

Tears fill my eyes when I drive up Delaverne Hill and find that I can no longer enjoy the iconic view. Large berms and pine trees block much of the vista I've loved all my life. It is heartbreaking to think that future generations will not be able to enjoy it, too.

Is having a larger tax base worth losing the rural character of the town? How many of Amenia's residents can afford a home in the proposed community?

Please give more consideration to the project so Amenia can continue to live up to its name.

Sincerely yours.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda M. Kinney". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Linda M. Kinney

Scan +
file to
board

9/22

38 Railroad Avenue
Amenia, NY 12501
September 18, 2014

File copy
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Chairman J. Fontaine
Amenia Planning Board
4988 Route 22
Amenia, NY 12501

Re: Public Hearing September 18, 2014, 7PM

Amenia Town Hall; Silo Ridge Project

This is a copy of the Statement I read at the September 18 public hearing. Please include it in the minutes of that meeting.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Amenia Planning Board: you are all members of the public while also entrusted with protecting the public good. You have taken an oath to represent and protect the interests of the people of the town of Amenia within the guidelines of the comprehensive plan. You are deliberating on what is the most extensive and complex plan that has been ever submitted to our Planning Board. It has the potential to change the entire character of the town and can effectively isolate rather than unite our community. Because of the scope and nature of this project, it can devolve from wonderful to blunderful and also assault our social and land use environments forever.

It is too easy to get caught up in the technicalities of development issues and lose sight of the fact that some developments are just not appropriate for all locations. Discovery Land Development is the well funded, well capitalized force behind the Silo Ridge Venture. They have developed luxurious recreation and golf resorts in such desirable locals as Baja Los Cabos, Mexico; the big Island of Hawaii, and Whiteface, Montana but have never executed a development in the highly populated North East US. Such a sighting implies the possibility that proposed luxury second homes could morph into primary residences because of the accessibility to NYC. This would imply a range of issues not even considered in the plan before you but is a real possibility.

Discovery Land Development's only concurrent project in the North East is "The Hills" in Southhampton, Long Island, in the village of Quogue. This project is meeting with significant local civic criticism for its environmental threats to the local aquifer, wet lands, wild life, beaches and zoning. In addition, changes in scope, regarding their golf course land allocation is also a contentious issue which they face.

I am asking the planning board to identify what legally binding accountability have you placed on Discovery Land Development to ensure the proper execution and completion of this project.

Mr. Chairman and Planning Board Members, please recognize that while Discovery Land Development can be held harmless without requiring a realistic monetary performance based surety bond for each aspect of this project, the town of Amenia can be held hostage for any environmental degradation and even possible abandonment of the Project.

Thank you.

D. Vincent Biase