

February 16, 2016

Mr. Carl Weisbrod
Chairman
NYC Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

Re: Procedural Revisions

Dear Chairman Weisbrod:

In light of many constituent concerns, buttressed and confirmed by my own experiences, I would like to begin a dialogue with you to explore new methods of preserving our quality of life on Staten Island. I believe it is time for us to take a fresh look at unwanted and inappropriate development, particularly as it affects those living in older, established communities.

It has been more than a decade since our diligent efforts to preserve the character of Staten Island neighborhoods resulted in the designation of Lower Density Growth Management Areas (LDGMA). Prior to LDGMA, zoning districts were often not aligned with the context of the existing streetscape.

As the economy rebounds we have seen an increase in development – but not just in commercial areas. Soft sites are being sought by developers seeking to fully build out underdeveloped lots in residential areas: in some instances we have seen as many as six homes constructed where only one formerly stood. Area residents are understandably upset, as their bucolic streetscape and open space corridors transform into what they believe to be overdevelopment. In some cases, new homes are even being sited behind other homes at the rear of deep properties.

To reiterate, I am asking to begin a discussion about zoning revisions that will discourage these practices, that will make this kind of unwanted development – let's call it the "new inappropriate model" – more difficult to realize. Understanding the work load of the DCP, I believe this effort can become a grassroots initiative with industry, community and elected official participation, all basically overseen by the Borough Office. I envision exploring the universe of ills and potential solutions to address these new inappropriate models, which I believe will continue to evolve with increased demand.

Thank you for your kind attention and I look forward to beginning this dialogue soon.

Sincerely,

James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

