

**From:** Residents United To Save Chappaqua Hamlet Inc. [mailto:[contact@savechappaqua.org](mailto:contact@savechappaqua.org)]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2021 5:51 PM  
**To:** PublicComment <[PublicComment@mynewcastle.org](mailto:PublicComment@mynewcastle.org)>  
**Subject:** Public Comment Submission by RUSCH



*Note: The comments that follow were made on behalf of Residents United to Save Chappaqua Hamlet Inc. during the public hearing on 1/19/21 and were read by its President, Margaret Ferguson.*

Good Evening,

I speak on behalf of a local, grassroots not-for-profit, Residents United to Save Chappaqua Hamlet. In our January 11 letter, we implored this Board, as others have implored this Board tonight, to pause the Form-Based Code process until residents and other stakeholders are able to come together to participate in a charrette, which is a multi-day design workshop focused on what *we, the community, collectively* want for the future of *our* Hamlet. It is widely acknowledged that a Form-Based Code is only appropriate if it implements a *community's* vision for its future. This was even recognized in the Town's 2018 RFP which said a charrette was needed "to obtain maximum hamlet input so as to produce the best possible plan on which to base the new [Form-Based Code]." Yet, here, the proposed Code does not reflect what the community wants because *no charrette was ever done—the community has never been brought together to collaborate, engage in design-decision making and come to a consensus about how the Hamlet should evolve.*

Instead, the Form-Based Code before us came out of a small Downtown Working Group that included two local developers who own property in the Hamlet and an architect who works for one of the developers. Now, this Board has taken the stance that the massive flaws in that developer-friendly Code will be addressed by *the Board* taking comments from individual residents (who cannot even see each other let alone collaborate as to a community consensus), by *the Board* talking with its hired pro-developer consultants and finally by *the Board* deciding on what changes to make to the Code. *However, this process is wrong.* It is wrong because no charrette has happened and so no community vision has been articulated. In its place, all decisions as to how our Hamlet will look, feel and function for the next forty years will reflect the individual mindset of *just* you five people; they will be filtered through *your* individual life experiences and values. This is not how a good Form-Based Code is done. *To be blunt, this is wrong because it is not for any individual or small group—not me, not Residents United, not the Downtown Working Group, not you Lisa, not you Lauren and Lori, not you Jeremy, not you Ivy—not for anyone to make decisions about the collective future of our Hamlet.* The only way to do this right is for decisions about the Hamlet's developmental future to be the result of community consensus and the collaboration that will lead to such a New Castle consensus can only emanate from a charrette.

In closing, we again implore this Board to do what is right for this Town. You have the power to PAUSE this radical plan so that *we, as a community, can find common ground for a Hamlet that we will be proud of!* By doing that, the possibilities will be endless and the results will be so much more than the pro-developer, residential and garage heavy, tired and uninspired plan before us now. We again implore you to take the *just* road, do the *right* thing and turn the design decisions that will guide our Hamlet for the next forty years back to the people...*where such decisions belong!*

RESIDENTS UNITED TO SAVE CHAPPAQUA HAMLET INC.

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