

To: Tim Miller Associates, Inc.
10 North Street
Cold Spring, New York 10516
845.265.4400
tim@timmillerassociates.com

From: Laura Rainoff
28 Fawn Hill Road
Tuxedo, New York 10987
914.262.4296
laurarainoff@gmail.com

Date: 6 March 2015

Re: Comments on Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Proposed 507-acre and 146-acre annexations to the Village of Kyras Joel

The Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“DGEIS”) for Kyras Joel’s (“KJ’s”) petitioned 507-acre and 164-acre annexations is a sham. It does not address the full build-out of high-density housing that the KJ leadership has stated in publicly-filed documents that it intends for the annexed area(s).

The inevitable build-out and population explosion that will take place will have devastating and irreparable consequences for all of Orange County. This would include unworkable traffic, air and water pollution, lack of water resources, more sewage than can be treated, and unbearable tax burdens on the entire county to pay for it all, plus the enormous costs of the social services that the KJ population requires.

I address specifically the incompleteness of the DGEIS with respect to the impacts that either the 507 or the 164 acre illegal annexation petitions will have on the Monroe Woodbury Central School District. We do not have to speculate as to what impact the annexation(s) would have on the school district. The East Ramapo School District in Rockland County, New York, shows exactly what is in store.

When I was in high school in Rockland County in the 1970s, the East Ramapo School District was excellent, offering advanced placement courses, drama, music, arts and sports programs. It was a leading school district in the state.

Now, after the local Hasidic community has voted themselves onto the school board, public high school students cannot meet the New York state requirements to graduate in four years *because insufficient classes are offered for them*. There are no music, arts or sports programs or advanced placement courses. The formerly excellent East Ramapo School District has been eviscerated. The budget has been starved.

This has happened because the huge population of Hasidim in the school district have no interest in supporting the public schools that their children do not attend. Their only

interest in the school budget is the public funding that specifically supports the private religious schools and transportation provided for their special-needs students. This part of the East Ramapo school budget remains robust.

The facts of this situation have nothing to do with freedom of religion, anti-Semitism, or any fear or hostility towards a population of folks different from me. The facts show that the Hasidic members of the East Ramapo school board are willing to take any measures to promote their own community's interests, even when this deeply and irrevocably harms their neighbors. Our laws do not allow people who do not have children in the school system to refuse to pay their school taxes. It is equally wrong that a community who chooses to educate their children privately should deny education funding to the public school children in their school district *in order to benefit only themselves*.

Where in the DGEIS is any analysis of the devastating impacts of high-density housing development of the proposed annexed areas? *It is not there*. It is not there because the results of the high-density housing development would so deeply harm the non-Hasidic members of the Monroe Woodbury Central School District that the KJ leadership knows that that situation alone would doom their petition(s).

Instead, the KJ leadership claims that the KJ and Monroe Woodbury school districts have the ability between them to rectify this situation by separating the school districts. This not true. That action would require New York state involvement.

If the KJ leadership really wants to resolve this issue fairly, where in the DGEIS or either of the annexation petitions is the legally binding obligation from the petitioners that will guarantee the protection of the excellent Monroe Woodbury School District? The public school students of the school district desperately need and deserve that protection.

My husband and I own a 5-bedroom home in the town of Tuxedo, within the Monroe Woodbury School District, but outside the town of Monroe. This is relevant to the annexation petitions for several reasons.

First, the only potential buyers of our home will be families with children in the school district. The devastating impacts of the proposed annexations on the school district will harm the students in the district and will render my residence deeply devalued and unsaleable. Again, we do not have to speculate about this effect. Home values in Ramapo, Clarkstown and Haverstraw – the towns served by the East Ramapo School District – have plummeted from their market values before the Hasidic members of the East Ramapo school board destroyed the East Ramapo public schools.

Second, because I reside in Tuxedo, I have no vote with which to express my political opinions as to how the Town of Monroe board votes on the annexation petitions. Indeed, I have to beg their indulgence to even be allowed to speak at public comment during board meetings. If either of these illegal annexation petitions are granted, I – and all the other homeowners outside of the town of Monroe and within the Monroe Woodbury Central School District – will watch the financial value of our homes and the educational value of the school district plummet *with no political representation*.

The petitioners knew the state of zoning, roads, water, sewer, emergency services, sidewalks and street lighting that governed their properties when they purchased properties in Monroe. If they now do not like these governing laws and regulations, an illegal land-grab by annexation is not the way to change them.

It would be lovely for our family if our adult children could live close to us. But it would be illegal for me to try to annex my neighbor's land to fulfill this selfish desire and would deeply harm my neighbor. This is precisely what KJ is attempting with its illegal annexation petitions.

Cc:

Elsie Rodriguez, Interim Superintendent of Schools, MWCSO
Jon Huberth, President, Board of Education, MWCSO
Lorraine Carroll, Board of Education, MWCSO
Don Beeler, Board of Education, MWCSO
Natalie Brooks, Board of Education, MWCSO
Eleni K. Carter, Board of Education, MWCSO
Suzanne Donahue, Board of Education, MWCSO
Daniel Ezratty, Board of Education, MWCSO
Mark O'Brien, Board of Education, MWCSO
John Otero, Board of Education, MWSCD
Michael Rost, Supervisor, Town of Tuxedo
Steven M. Neuhaus, Orange County, New York Executive
Barry J. Cheney, Orange County District 8 Legislator
The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of New York State
John J. Bonacic, New York State Senate
Karl Brabenec, New York State Assembly