

PUBLIC SCOPING SESSION

FOR THE
Annexation of 507 acres from the town of Monroe to
The village of Kiryas Joel

March 3, 2015

1 The meeting commenced.)

2 MR. WELLS: Good evening. I welcome everyone to
3 tonight's scoping meeting. We'll start our evening with
4 the Pledge of Allegiance by Constable Constaglio (phonetic
5 spelling).

6 MR. CONSTAGLIO: Whoever is wearing a hat,
7 please take it off.

8 I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United
9 States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands,
10 one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice
11 for all.

12 MR. WELLS: Before we get started, the exits are
13 at the rear of the hall here. And there's one on the
14 right, one on the left. Men's and ladies' rooms are
15 directly back with labels by the doorways.

16 My name is Frederick Wells. I'm from Tim Miller
17 Associates Planners. We've been retained by the Village to
18 prepare the environmental impact statement. And tonight,
19 I'm facilitating this meeting.

20 Before I get into protocol for tonight's
21 session, I'd like to introduce the village mayor who has a
22 few words of welcome.

23 MR. WIEDER: Good evening. My name is Abraham
24 Wieder. I'm the mayor of the Village of Kiryas Joel. On

1 behalf of the village trustees, Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Landau,
2 Mr. Reisman, and Mr. Freund, and on behalf of the Monroe
3 Town Board members, Supervisor Doles, Mr. Burke, Mr.
4 Walters, Mr. McWatters, Mr. Colon, welcome to Kiryas Joel.
5 I thank you for taking the time to join us in this
6 evening's scoping session.

7 Also joining me on the dais is Village
8 Administrator Mr. Szegedin, Government Relations
9 Representative, Mr. Felberman, along with a team of
10 professionals who tonight's emcee will introduce you
11 shortly.

12 The purpose of this voluntary scoping session is
13 to receive public comments on the proposed annexation of
14 five hundred and seven acres from the Town of Monroe into
15 the Village of Kiryas Joel. This proposed annexation was
16 initiated by the owners of the five hundred and seven acres
17 -- by the owners of the five hundred and seven acres,
18 themselves. And in response to their petition, the State
19 D.E.C., on January 28, 2015, designated the Village Board -
20 - the Village Board of Kiryas Joel as the lead agency.

21 In its decision, the D.E.C. lauded Kiryas Joel
22 development practices as follows, and I quote, compact,
23 high-density development is more likely to result in a
24 community that is more walkable, bikeable, and more

1 conducive to mass transit while reducing vehicle miles
2 traveled and generation of greenhouse gas -- greenhouse
3 gases, emission from combustion.

4 As a general rule high density development
5 appropriately cited is considered more environmentally
6 sustainable and conserve open space -- and conserves open
7 space.

8 I thank the D.E.C. for that decision.

9 In this capacity, the Village Board is now
10 conducting an environmental review on what impact to adding
11 five hundred and seven acres to the Village of Kiryas Joel
12 would have on the village and on the town as a whole. The
13 village trustee and I are pleased to host tonight's session
14 and to listen to your comments. We look forward to hearing
15 you -- to hearing from you.

16 And for those who are unable to attend this
17 evening session, we invite them to submit written comments
18 to Mr. Miller's office by March 10. All comments, both
19 verbal and written, will receive equal consideration.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. WELLS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

22 With me tonight as part of the environmental
23 team, Mike Sterthous from the law firm of Whiteman,
24 Osterman, and Hanna, who is advising the Village on SEQRA

1 matters.

2 By way of background, a petition was filed with
3 the Town of Monroe and the Village of Kiryas Joel to annex
4 approximately five hundred seven acres of land presently in
5 the Town of Monroe to the Village. This petition was filed
6 pursuant to New State General Municipal Law in December
7 2013. There're maps posted that show the location of the
8 proposed annexation. The smaller map here is just Kiryas
9 Joel with a greenish area is the petition annexation
10 territory. And the larger map shows all of the Town of
11 Monroe with the Villages of Kiryas Joel and Harriman, and
12 Monroe shown in various colors. The same maps are in the
13 back of the hall, as well.

14 The Village and Town's consideration of the
15 annexation petition is an action that's subject to the
16 requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality
17 Review Act, also referred to as SEQRA. Under SEQRA, the
18 Village will be the lead agency for this review. The Village
19 has adopted a positive declaration, requiring a Generic
20 Environmental Impact Statement, or G.E.I.S. The Town of
21 Monroe is an involved agency and the only other decision-
22 making body involved in this action of annexation.

23 The E.I.S. is called generic because the
24 proposed action does not include any decision on site-

1 specific development proposals. Tonight's meeting is for
2 the express purpose of soliciting input to finalize the
3 draft scope for the generic E.I.S.

4 This is a scoping session, not a public hearing.
5 A draft scope has been prepared by the Village's
6 consultants and advisors, and copies are available at the
7 back of the room. The scope is basically the outline of
8 what will be used to prepare the draft E.I.S. That scope
9 is also posted online at W W W dot K J dash SEQRA dot com
10 slash five O seven acres. That website will have all the
11 documents that will be publicly filed in connection with
12 this proceeding, including the environmental impact
13 statement when it is prepared.

14 There are signup sheets in the back of the room
15 for anyone wishing to comment on the scoping outline
16 tonight. If you wish to speak, please be sure to get your
17 name on one of the sign-up lists in the back. If you have
18 written comments to submit, please be sure to hand them to
19 me before the end of the meeting.

20 The goals of the scoping meeting are to focus
21 the environmental studies on potential adverse
22 environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the
23 annexation and to eliminate from consideration those issues
24 that are irrelevant or non-significant. Scoping is not

1 required under SEQRA, but the Village understands and
2 appreciates the community's interest in the proposed action
3 and seeks input for addressing potential environmental
4 issues and defining the analysis that will be provided in
5 the impact statement.

6 The draft scoping outline is like a table of
7 contents for the G.E.I.S. The purpose of this meeting is
8 to take your comments on that outline to ascertain if
9 there's anything missing that should be further examined
10 under the environmental review. As you can see from the
11 draft scoping outline, the document will include a detailed
12 description of the proposed action, along with the
13 projection of the future development and growth likely to
14 take place in and around the village without the
15 annexation, compared to what might happen with annexation.

16 It -- as already been identified in the scoping
17 outline, the E.I.S. will contain chapters on land use and
18 zoning, demographics and housing, economics, including tax
19 implications to the school districts with and without
20 annexation. It will address community services, such as
21 police and fire protection, schools, utilities such as
22 water and sewer services, traffic, transportation, natural
23 and cultural resources. The E.I.S. document will also
24 include an assessment of the one-hundred-sixty-four-acre

1 annexation petition as an alternative that was filed in
2 August 2014.

3 The document will also set forth thresholds for
4 future reviews as independent development proposals are
5 advanced in the annexation lands.

6 After tonight's meeting, there will be a period to
7 receive written comments on the draft scope. These
8 comments can be addressed to Tim Miller Associates. Our
9 mailing address is on the public notice for this meeting
10 and they should be postmarked no later than March 10th.
11 You can also email comments to Tim at Tim Miller Associates
12 dot com. And please indicate your name and address on any
13 comments that are submitted.

14 Everyone, tonight, that wishes to speak will be
15 given three minutes. Please respect this time so that all
16 who wish to speak can be heard. We will -- we are
17 recording this -- videotaping this meeting and the
18 videotape will be transcribed so there will be a written
19 record that will also be posted on the website.

20 We'll start with a representative of the
21 Applicant, and then continue with a list of other speakers.
22 The first speaker will be Simon Gelb.

23 Before we begin, I'll go over few items. I
24 invite everyone to follow a few guidelines for tonight's

1 meeting. Please state your name and address before you
2 make your comments. Please address your comments to me.
3 This is not a meeting to answer questions or respond to
4 comments, but rather, to gather information and your input
5 on the scope so that we can develop a scope for the E.I.S.
6 Pertinent questions and comments will be added to the scope
7 and that final scope will be adopted by the Village and
8 posted on the website, as well.

9 Once the scope is adopted that will be the -- as
10 I said, the table of contents for the E.I.S., which will
11 then be prepared and once it's adopted or accepted by the
12 Village, it will be posted on the website again for public
13 review. And at that time, there will be a formal public
14 hearing held on the G.I.S. (sic) and the annexation
15 petition, and there will be further opportunity for the
16 public to speak at that time.

17 And I'd like to indicate there's no need to
18 repeat comments if someone before you has made the comment.
19 We will incorporate all comments into the record and into -
20 - take them under consideration for the draft scope.

21 So I invite the first speaker, Mr. Gelb, to --
22 as a representative of the petition, annexation
23 Petitioners.

24 MR. GELB: Honorable Village Mayor, Village

1 Boards of Trustees of the Village of Kiryas Joel, Town
2 Supervisor, Town Board Members of the Town of Monroe, good
3 evening. My name is Simon Gelb and I filed the annexation
4 petition on December 27th, 2013 on behalf of the property
5 owners, which is the subject of tonight's scoping meeting.

6 As Mr. Steven Barshov, the counsel to the
7 property owners who have petitioned the annexation, was
8 unable to attend tonight, I am here to recite his statement
9 as follows.

10 (Reading) It is very important that the Village
11 Board hears and receives public comment concerning the
12 scope of the draft environmental impact statement that will
13 analyze the potential impacts of the proposed five-hundred-
14 and-seven-acre annexation. Although scoping generally and
15 the scoping -- and the public scoping meeting, in
16 particular, are not required by law, the annexation
17 Petitioners are very pleased that the Village Board has
18 elected to commence tonight's public meeting on the scope
19 of the draft environmental impact statement.

20 We suggest that the Village Board accepts
21 written comments for ten days after tonight's public
22 scoping session so that those who might not have been able
23 to attend here tonight can have the same input as those who
24 are present tonight. We are looking forward to a robust

1 and total environmental review, one that will carefully
2 analyze all of the potential significant adverse
3 environmental impacts of the proposed annexation in
4 accordance with the requirements of the New York State
5 Environmental Quality Review Act.

6 Thoughtful public comments can aid in assuring
7 that the environmental review is properly focused and
8 targeted. So with that in mind, we eagerly await the
9 public's thoughts and input regarding the scope of the
10 draft environmental impact statement.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. WELLS: Thank you, Mr. Gelb.

13 The next speakers, in order, are David Church,
14 Steven Welle, Dan Richmond.

15 Mr. Church?

16 MR. CHURCH: Mayor Wieder, Gentlemen, thank you
17 for the time. My name is David Church. I'm the
18 Commissioner of Planning of Orange County, 124 Main Street,
19 Goshen, New York. I'm here to make comments for the County
20 of Orange coordinated with the county executive, Steven
21 Neuhaus.

22 First and foremost, the executive has asked me
23 to note that he's going to continue to pursue New York
24 State statutory change to ensure that counties have a more

1 robust and significant role statutorily in annexation
2 reviews, particularly at this scale and a scale at which
3 the county has significant involvement, both in terms of
4 lands and services.

5 Second, a procedural matter, we want to again
6 reinforce the notion that we anticipate to be treated, the
7 County, as an interested party under SEQR and, therefore,
8 we get to share all documentation as it's come forward and
9 as you have done previously.

10 We provided a series of technical comments. I
11 provided them to your consultant and your attorney, as
12 well. I'll just take one minute, I guess, it's not three
13 hours, it's three minutes to make -- just highlight some of
14 those.

15 First and foremost, the County's interests are
16 largely related, particularly given the scale of this, to
17 the impacts on the county services provided, which range
18 from the support of bus services through to Medicaid and
19 other services. We're interested in that, in particular.

20 We also have a role to play here because there
21 are county lands affected, both easements right-of-ways
22 and, in the case of this proposed annexation proposal,
23 actual county-owned land, the gateway parcels to the
24 Gonzaga Park. So we're particularly and acutely interested

1 in how annexation will proceed and what the ultimate
2 outcome is in terms of development of building on those
3 county parcels and those county services.

4 Second, we think that the D.E.I.S. needs to
5 cover as adequately as possible a series of reasonable
6 alternatives to annexation, as well as, if annexation were
7 to proceed, alternatives to how that property may be built
8 out, either under current zoning or other zoning proposals
9 as are possible.

10 That buildout analysis, we suggest, should
11 include a demographic profile to offer both sociologically
12 and demographically what kind of residents are expected,
13 what kind of service demands would be needed, and, in
14 particular, what kind of county services and facilities
15 might be required to meet those expanded needs.

16 We're prepared to help. The county executive
17 has requested that my department actually not only comment
18 on your process, but we expect to run what's been described
19 as a parallel review process, where the department is
20 planning to do independent buildout analysis once we get
21 additional information on what you expect to be in terms of
22 reasonable alternatives.

23 Additionally and in the interest of time, we
24 provided some previous technical comments. We note, in

1 particular, that our adding to that some concern about
2 impacts on aquifers and surface water resources,
3 particularly as they relate to both the Moodna Creek and
4 Ramapo Watershed.

5 And I appreciate the time.

6 MR. WELLS: Steven Welle?

7 MR. WELLE: Good evening. I'm Steven Welle, the
8 Mayor of Village of Harriman, 1 Church Street in Harriman.

9 I'm here this evening to listen to what you and
10 other speakers have to say regarding the proposed five-
11 hundred-and-seven-acre annexation. Unfortunately, this is
12 probably a waste of time for everyone in the audience
13 because you've proven your lack of interest in cooperating
14 with your neighbors in following the laws of the land.

15 On February 25th, 2014, the Village of Harriman
16 sent a request, requesting involved agency status in
17 connection with the proposed five-hundred-and-seven-acre
18 annexation request. No response.

19 On September 9th, 2014 the Village of Harriman
20 requested involved agency status in connection with the
21 proposed one-hundred-and-sixty-four-acre annexation
22 request. Again, no response.

23 On September 30th, 2014, Village of Harriman
24 Attorney Ostrer sent a letter to your consultants and to

1 Mr. Szegedin, regarding your lack of communication
2 regarding our request to be an involved agency and again
3 requested involved agency status. No response.

4 You have not had the decency or courtesy to
5 reply to any of these requests. You just keep moving
6 forward, like the rest of us don't exist. Why should we
7 believe that now you're going to listen to our concerns
8 tonight?

9 I know that these annexation requests only
10 relate to the land, not any particular development, but we
11 all know you're not interested in annexing this land to
12 leave it zoned as is. You are looking to accommodate your
13 population explosion with high-density housing. If there
14 is going to be any credibility to this scoping session and
15 the subsequent SEQR process, it has to be looked at and
16 studied as though it were developed as high-density housing
17 and its ability to be sustained by the property owners, not
18 us.

19 Once again, unfortunately, I believe that this
20 is a waste of all of our time due to your history of
21 ignoring your laws and your total lack of cooperation with
22 your neighbors. And I don't see that that's going to
23 change now. But you have an opportunity to prove me wrong.
24 Do an honest and open SEQR based on reality, not a fairy

1 tale.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. WELLS: Dan Richmond?

4 MR. RICHMOND: Good evening. My name is Daniel
5 Richmond. I'm a partner with the law firm of Zarin and
6 Steinmetz which represents United Monroe, which is a
7 citizens group committed to transparent and open
8 government.

9 First, United Monroe wants to make it clear that
10 it has no issue with the Village residents, themselves,
11 many of whom are friends and who would very likely want to
12 see the same transparency and open government that United
13 Monroe seeks.

14 Also United Monroe is appearing tonight under a
15 full reservation of rights. United Monroe, for example,
16 believes this entire annexation violates the establishment
17 clause of the United States' constitution, which prohibits
18 political line drawn based on religious criteria.

19 United Monroe also believes that the Department
20 of Environmental Conservation erred in selecting Kiryas
21 Joel as the lead agency for this review, which I would
22 submit is confirmed by the Village's insistence on going
23 forward with this hearing this evening when inclement
24 weather prevents many potentially impacted residents from

1 attending. Frankly, it shows complete disregard for the
2 public and is contrary to SEQRA's intent of promoting
3 public participation.

4 Subject to these reservations, United Monroe
5 must advise you that the scoping document is wholly
6 deficient. The scoping document, for example, does not
7 clearly require the E.I.S. to discuss the impacts of high-
8 density development in the annexed areas, which is the
9 primary purpose of the annexation. According to the
10 business plan that the Village submitted to the State
11 Environmental Facilities Corp in connection with its
12 aqueduct project, there will be eight hundred and fifty-
13 five new residential connections and fifteen hundred new
14 commercial connections by 2045.

15 The Village told the State E.F.C. that the
16 rezoning and redevelopment of the annexed area, quote,
17 would accommodate the anticipated growth described in the
18 business plan. Assuming six people would live in these new
19 residence, this means more than fifty thousand additional
20 people. The E.I.S. obviously needs to consider the adverse
21 impacts of this extraordinarily high-density development on
22 the environment and on the neighboring communities.

23 Moreover, the E.I.S. needs to consider the
24 Village's systemic disregard for environmental regulations

1 and other laws affecting the public interest and the
2 unregulated development this situation allows. Last year,
3 United Monroe made a Freedom of Information request to the
4 Village -- request to the Village that it provide basic
5 information relating to its planning, zoning, and
6 environmental review processes.

7 The Village's response confirms that the Village
8 routinely ignores basic land use environmental laws,
9 including that the Village never makes any determinations
10 under SEQOR for projects under consideration within its
11 boundaries, never refers any land use applications to the
12 Orange County Planning Department as the law requires, and
13 so on.

14 Additionally, the Village's repeated violations
15 of state environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act,
16 further demonstrates its inability or unwillingness to
17 protect its citizens and the environment. Given that the
18 SEQOR review is intended to assist the Village and the Town
19 of Monroe in determining whether annexation is in the
20 public interest, the E.I.S. must consider the adverse
21 impacts of high-density housing, unregulated development,
22 and legal non-compliance that the annexation would bring.

23 The scope contains multiple other gaps and a
24 variety of critical substantive errors which United Monroe

1 will expand upon in its forthcoming written submission.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, John Allegro. And
4 after Mr. Allegro, Bruce Pollack.

5 MR. ALLEGRO: Good evening. I would like to say
6 that it's a shame that anybody had to leave their homes
7 tonight. It's a disaster out there and no thank you to the
8 Village of K.J. for refusing to postpone this meeting.

9 In 1801, the Danbury Baptist Association of
10 Connecticut wrote a letter to President Jefferson, their
11 concern that the state government whose ancient charter
12 considered religion as the first object of legislation
13 would treat religious opinion as favors granted by
14 government, rather than inalienable rights.

15 President Jefferson responded in agreement. He
16 wrote, Believing that religion is -- believing with you
17 that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and
18 his God, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of
19 the whole American people which declared that their
20 legislature should make no law respecting an establishment
21 of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

22 What would this nation be had Mr. Jefferson and
23 our founding fathers not had the foresight to build that
24 wall that separates church and state?

1 Sadly, I stand before a government that is
2 utterly lost on the lessons of history and the rule of law.
3 What legitimately functioning constitutional government
4 would endorse a letter to the D.E.C. from their own council
5 which states that petitioners want the additional services
6 of places of worship and mikvahs as a reason for
7 annexation? What kind of municipal governments signs off
8 on a village comprehensive plan that states there are also
9 other developed properties occupied in part by persons who
10 currently use Kiryas Joel facilities and houses of worship
11 that could be annexed into the village and could almost
12 double the current village area?

13 Planned land grabs. Why would a government
14 official like Mr. Szegedin state the Petitioners are a
15 bunch of Hasidic Jewish families who reside in homes on the
16 outskirts of K.J. and have a desire to associate with the
17 residents of K.J. with whom they share much in common,
18 including religion?

19 These points are false and repugnant because no
20 municipal boundaries hinder any citizen within or outside
21 of Kiryas Joel from exercising their inalienable rights to
22 religious opinion. Kiryas Joel is a monotheistic,
23 monocultural aberration. Quite plainly stated, it is a
24 theocracy. A yes vote for Kiryas Joel annexation is, by

1 design, an allocation of political power based on a
2 religious criterion, a violation of the law of the land,
3 the establishment clause of our great constitution.

4 This is one reason why this hearing is a fraud.
5 No matter how you abuse the legal process, the rule of law
6 will ultimately be served. We will not back down.

7 MR. WELL: It will be most helpful if we keep
8 our comments to the scope as that's the purpose of the
9 meeting so that we can work with the scope to prepare the
10 E.I.S. that then will be subject to your review.

11 Bruce Pollock, the next speaker?

12 MR. POLLOCK: Ladies and Gentlemen who bothered
13 to come out tonight in this terrible night, thank you for
14 coming. And I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to
15 express my concerns about the proposed annexation. Some of
16 the points have been stated before; yet, they bear
17 repeating until you realize just how important and correct
18 they are.

19 The Village of Kiryas Joel, through its minions,
20 is attempting to circumvent the master plan of the Town of
21 Monroe by filing this annexation petition. This attempt to
22 grab land from the Town of Monroe is not in the best
23 interest of anyone in the Town of Monroe, except for the
24 Kiryas Joel community.

1 Time and time again, the Village of Kiryas Joel
2 has proven it has a blatant disregard for the environmental
3 laws, the building codes, and the welfare of its neighbors.
4 Kiryas Joel has a lengthy track record of being terrible
5 stewards of the environment. Some recent examples include
6 the K.J. sewage plant, which had been operating without
7 proper permits since last summer and releasing effluent
8 into the Ramapo River.

9 In October, the K.J. poultry plant was fined for
10 discharging slaughterhouse waste into our waters. And
11 after receiving permission to build a water pipeline with
12 an eighteen-inch diameter, Kiryas Joel completely
13 disregarded that order and installed a twenty-four-inch
14 pipeline instead. Compound this with a village government
15 that has been completely uncooperative and lacks
16 transparency to the rest of Monroe citizens.

17 I've repeatedly filed FOIL request for
18 information, never getting a response even though the state
19 law requires one.

20 Next, shall we talk about the financial burden
21 this will bring upon Orange County residents and the state,
22 as well? With already ninety-three percent of its citizens
23 on Medicaid, as well as a myriad of other social programs,
24 how does this community reconcile their actions with their

1 beliefs? Each of us must have a moral compass.

2 And when you, as a community, turn a blind eye
3 to the fact that you are building a village on the backs of
4 other hardworking, taxpaying Orange County citizens,
5 counting on social programs to grow, it's not right and
6 it's not fair.

7 I understand and appreciate the historical
8 imperative that drives the growth of this community. Yet,
9 it does not excuse the heavy-handed disregard for your
10 neighbors.

11 And to the leaders of Kiryas Joel, I ask you to
12 take good care of your people. Reach deep into your own
13 pockets to finance your growth, instead of counting on
14 others. Teach your citizens to be independent and self-
15 supporting. Social programs are designed to give people a
16 helping hand, not as a way of life.

17 This annexation will destroy the natural
18 ecosystem on the five hundred and seven acres, displace the
19 wildlife currently living there, and further pollute our
20 waters, create a large drain on the infrastructure of the
21 area, and benefit only the Village of Kiryas Joel.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Liz Ridgeway.

24 MS. RIDGEWAY: Liz Ridgeway, Town of Monroe. I

1 have something to hand in to you and I'll do that after I
2 speak.

3 I'd like to take the rest of my minutes to
4 discuss the following. There are many flaws in the way the
5 New York State annexation laws are written. One of these
6 flaws is that the requesting municipality is given lead
7 agency in the SEQR review. This requesting municipality,
8 the Village of Kiryas Joel, has had many environmental
9 deficiencies and fines levied against them in the past, as
10 well as very recently, but nonetheless was awarded the lead
11 agency role.

12 The even bigger flaw is whom the financial
13 decision maker is. Our flawed decision maker is the Town
14 Board of Monroe, a board who has shown it lacks consistency
15 in decision making, lacks the ability to properly run a
16 town board meeting, and lacks the ability to make the
17 simplest of decisions, a board that has stated over and
18 over again, since this petition was submitted back in
19 December of 2013, that it is not capable of making this
20 decision and that a host of others take over for them such
21 as the D.E.C., the county executive, Steve Neuhaus, Senator
22 Larkin, Congressman Sean Maloney, and the list goes on.

23 The Monroe Town Board recently made a decision
24 on an annexation petition that was before them. The

1 decision was made February 3rd in 2014. Ironically, the
2 name of this petition was the All Mine Annexation Petition.
3 Ironic, because Kiryas Joel's mantra seems to be what's
4 mine is mine and what yours is mine.

5 The land in this annexation petition was
6 approximately forty-five acres and was a single, unimproved
7 lot zoned S.R. ten, single family residential. The builder
8 was seeking to annex because he was given preliminary
9 subdivision approval by the Town of Monroe Planning Board
10 contingent on the Petitioner securing an agreement with the
11 Village of Monroe to supply water to the proposed twenty-
12 one-lot subdivision. The Town of Monroe does not have a
13 central water supply to serve the development.

14 The Town Board declined the annexation on the
15 basis that the All Mine Annexation is not in the best
16 interest of the overall public interest pursuant to 711 of
17 General Municipal Law in the State of New York. The Board
18 went on to say the property in question doesn't have
19 central water supply to serve the development, a situation
20 which existed when the Applicant purchased the property.
21 The Petitioner can develop the land consistent with the
22 Town's water services.

23 I guess they're saying buyer beware. Know where
24 you bought and live within the rules. The Town of Monroe

1 stands to lose tax ratable should the property be annexed
2 and developed as part of the Village of Monroe.

3 The Petitioner said the Village has a police
4 department and the Town of Monroe doesn't, to which the
5 Board responded police services are provided through the
6 state police, who will continue to provide services to the
7 subject property, thereby negating the reason as a basis
8 for annexation. Any proposed infrastructure change would
9 directly impact the Town of Monroe. Any park land that the
10 Village has with the exception of a small park is available
11 to town residents and would remain available and/or
12 monitored and maintained by a joint park commission through
13 the town and the village.

14 Based on these reasons set forth therein, the
15 property should remain within the Town of Monroe. One of
16 the best ways to make decisions is to be consistent with
17 all of your decisions, so as not to show favoritism to one
18 party over another.

19 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Dr. Steven Pavia. And
20 then Emily Convers after that.

21 MR. PAVIA: Good evening. Thank you for having
22 us tonight.

23 Recently I heard a rabbi from your village speak
24 and I learned a lot. He was very interesting. He said

1 that, according to the Torah, one of the main principles of
2 the Torah is that the people respect their neighbors, live
3 in peace and harmony with their neighbors.

4 Having this meeting tonight, I called Mr.
5 Szegedin's office, asking to have another meeting at some
6 point because a lot of the people could not make it tonight
7 because of the weather. If you do that, that would be
8 respectful to your neighbors. I would like to see that
9 happen. That's not why I came up here tonight.

10 But I own a chiropractic office on Route 208,
11 right off the exit of 130 on Route 17. I want to know if
12 you -- if this annexation goes through and you build high-
13 density housing, how are people going to come in and out of
14 that village or out of that new community? Are you going
15 to take Route 17 and have all the people come off of 17
16 onto Exit 130 onto Route 208? If that's the case and I'm
17 figuring roughly, I heard, a population estimate of twenty
18 to fifty thousand more people.

19 Considering the vehicles, the private vehicles
20 that you own, the taxicabs, the construction vehicles, the
21 business vehicles that will come in and out of that
22 village, how do you expect to get all those vehicles in and
23 out of that Route 130 exit? Do you plan to expand the ramp
24 to the exit? Do you plan on widening Route 208, which is

1 right now a one-lane highway? It's not even a highway,
2 it's a one-lane road. It's a country road.

3 Even tonight with the weather, people were all
4 backed up. If one car has a problem on exit -- on Route
5 208, there's a line of cars waiting because it's a one-lane
6 highway.

7 I don't believe that this annexation can go
8 through without the proper studies of Route 208 into South
9 Blooming Grove, of Exit 130 on Route 17, and please
10 consider the businesses that are in that area and the
11 office complex that I happen to be across the street from
12 that, right off that exit there are radiology offices,
13 there are doctors' offices in that complex that will be
14 severely impacted by not only the buildout of that
15 community, but the construction to get that to happen.

16 All right. So I hope that you will please
17 consider that in your SEQRA.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. WELLS: Emily Convers?

20 MS. CONVERS: Emily Convers, Village of Monroe.

21 First of all, I find your decision not to
22 reschedule this evening's public scoping session extremely
23 telling. It tells me a few things. One, you have no
24 regard for public participation. Two, you have no regard

1 for public safety. And three, you clearly have a stake in
2 the approval of this annexation, since, by having it on the
3 night of a blizzard, you are assured fewer comments.

4 Most public sessions produce many more verbal
5 comments than written ones. And by holding this meeting,
6 you are sure to receive less input on the five-hundred-and-
7 seven-acre annexation than you would have had you
8 rescheduled. This scoping session is a farce.

9 You continue to claim that this annexation was
10 simply the work of a group of homeowners who wish to be
11 part of the K.J. community. In Ari Felberman's letter to
12 the editor, in last Friday's Photo News, he confirmed for
13 me that you are still sticking to that story. You, the
14 Village Board of K.J., have a stake in the approval of this
15 annexation. You are biased. You want this land. You've
16 expressed a desire for expansion. Your proxies and
17 trustees have said it's inevitable. The D.E.C.'s decision
18 to give K.J. lead agency is ridiculous.

19 In a normal annexation proceeding, the two
20 municipalities don't have a specific interest in the
21 proceeding. If a developer requests that the land he hopes
22 to build homes on can be moved to village land instead of
23 town land in order to provide municipal water to his newly
24 constructed homes, then the village may very well think

1 sure, it would be nice to have additional tax money to play
2 with, but said village surely won't be making twenty-five
3 thousand dollars per water hook-up as is the case in this
4 annexation.

5 And in an average annexation, you certainly
6 won't have a massive water pipeline loan, which requires
7 annexation in order to collect the twenty-five thousand
8 dollars per water hook-up in order to repay the loan.

9 We have a conflict here, ladies and gentlemen, a
10 big conflict. And the D.E.C. made a big mistake in handing
11 the review process to the Village of Kiryas Joel since you
12 have a proven track record of environmental violations.
13 But here we are, going through the motions, you acting as
14 though you have every right to do what you do, and the
15 voting majority of Monroe outside of Kiryas Joel are
16 opposed to this process. And by your words and your deeds,
17 you have shown us that you simply do not care.

18 I wish that you wouldn't insist on forcing our
19 hand, but we will be taking legal action should you move
20 forward in approving this illegal annexation.

21 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Jason Gabari and then
22 Debbie Behringer.

23 MR. GABARI: How you doing? I'm Jason Gabari.
24 I live at 258 Elm Street in Monroe, New York.

1 I'm just going to get my notes up. I wanted to
2 say before I started that last week my mother broke her
3 leg, tripping on ice. To have people come out in this
4 weather is disgraceful. The Town Board of Monroe, I can't
5 believe you would not even ask K.J. to delay this. It's
6 completely a disrespect to all your people and I'm very
7 upset about that.

8 Now, on a lighter note tomorrow is Purim. May
9 you all celebrate it with the greatest of lust for life.
10 I'm a nurse. I work in an operating room. This last
11 month, I can't tell you how many people I saw break their
12 legs because of bad weather like this. It's truly a
13 disrespect for humanity and I'm very upset about that, once
14 again.

15 The last time I came here to a scoping session,
16 I saw garbage all over the streets. Is that what we want?
17 I mean, we should -- yes, cities are great and they can be
18 very environmentally sound, but how can we trust that with
19 garbage all over the streets?

20 On another note, I wanted to talk about the
21 people of K.J. that have no voice, that are afraid to speak
22 up because they're afraid to lose their children's schools,
23 their -- their temple. They have no voice because they
24 live in a theocratic fascist society that doesn't give them

1 the permission to speak their mind about things.

2 And from one of them, I was told to say this
3 today. And please forgive me; I've never spoken Hebrew
4 before, so it may be kind of crappy but.

5 (Speaking in Hebrew).

6 I want to talk about population. Every ten
7 years, the population is going to double. Now that means
8 right now you're going to get about double the amount of
9 acreage that you have. In another ten years, you'll need
10 two more acres. That's four -- two more square miles.
11 That's four square miles. The Town of Monroe only has
12 twenty square miles, from what I understand from reading on
13 Wikipedia. That means in twenty years, you're going to
14 need eight and in thirty, you're going to need sixteen. In
15 less than thirty-five years, the population will exceed
16 that of the whole Town of Monroe.

17 And with all this garbage, where are we going to
18 be living? It's about respect. It's about sustainability.
19 I've seen the ads we've gotten. It is about those things.
20 And please think about that because we are all human and we
21 all deserve that respect that any god would want.

22 And I would welcome any of you to my home to see
23 what I live like. We are not animals. We are very
24 respectful of all people and all religions. But when you

1 enforce your religion on your people and your own views of
2 your religion, you are asking that you are -- it's fascist
3 and I think you guys know something about fascism.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Debbie Behringer and
6 then Fran Perchick.

7 MS. BEHRINGER: Hi, my name is Debbie Behringer
8 and I live in the Village of Monroe.

9 You know, one thing, it's probably been said
10 before, but we hear a lot now from your P.R. firm that
11 you're good neighbors. And I'm repeating it about the
12 weather. I had read on our town website and I heard at our
13 town board meeting because I attend just about all of them
14 that we would be able to get a dial-a-bus here. And I
15 wasn't going to take the dial-a-bus until I saw what the
16 weather was like because it quickly went from no snow to a
17 really big storm.

18 So when I called Mr. Burke to find out about our
19 dial-a-bus because I know there would probably be more
20 people here, I was told that we could fit in a Tahoe. They
21 were going to drive back and forth on a Tahoe. Well, that
22 doesn't work because that holds probably six people. So I
23 don't know how you're being good neighbors also here when
24 we're having this meeting in the snow. Luckily, I have a

1 friend who drove me with four-wheel drive. This is
2 supposed to be for the public and we need to look out for
3 each other's safety.

4 I've lived in Monroe for forty years. My
5 parents grew up Brooklyn and we moved to Monroe because
6 it's such a great community. They moved here for the rural
7 character, the mountains, the yards, the schools.

8 And my husband and I decided that we wanted to
9 raise our four children here, also. The people are
10 friendly. We bought a house in an existing neighborhood.
11 We didn't expect someone to give us land. We bought a
12 house that had already been built. And I really appreciate
13 the mountains as I'm driving home.

14 I teach up in Pine Bush and when I come home I
15 look at the beautiful mountains. But now as I'm going down
16 Rye Hill Road, I see beautiful mountains and then water
17 towers and huge high-density housing right in the middle.
18 And it's not really nice to look at. I like to look at the
19 beautiful mountains.

20 I graduated from Monroe Woodbury and I know
21 that's an amazing school district. That is one of the main
22 reasons why we chose to raise our children here. People
23 move here from Rockland, Westchester, Long Island, and
24 Bergen County because of the phenomenal school district.

1 We pay a lot in taxes and it's mostly school taxes and we
2 know that. I'm okay with that because of what a great
3 district it is, the teachers, the administrators, the
4 coaches, the sports programs, the music programs.

5 This annexation cannot happen. The land sits in
6 the Monroe Woodbury School District. It affects
7 everything. You'll be able to run for the school board.
8 You won't have the same interests that we have. There'll
9 be a lot of people living in those high-density housing.
10 And I really also do not believe that that is better for
11 the environment. The amount of water that's going to be
12 used for showers and sewers and everything. How is that
13 better for the environment? I don't know.

14 We've seen what happened in East Ramapo where
15 programs were cut and nobody was listened to. And we don't
16 want that to happen. This scoping session should not be
17 happening. You should not have lead agency.

18 You've not been good neighbors. You violate
19 environmental laws. There's big buses driving to Target
20 and Walmart. There's a lot fumes coming from them. We
21 know what's happened with the chicken plant. There's salt
22 that goes into the drinking water. Building codes are
23 ignored. How is this being a good neighbor?

24 Then I was offended when a flier was sent to my

1 home that was also printed in the Photo News. It was sent
2 out, conveniently, yesterday. It came to my house right
3 before the scoping session. It was half a page in the
4 Photo News. I want to put us here. Us, the other citizens
5 from Monroe that they don't have our voice heard, not at
6 our town board meetings and not here.

7 We, the people of Monroe, we respect tradition
8 and opinion. We commit to quality education and
9 opportunity. We care for the vulnerable. We seek
10 solutions to complex problems. We ensure a sustainable
11 future. This should not be happening --

12 MR. WELLS: Ms. Behringer, I ask that you wrap
13 up, if you would, please.

14 MS. BEHRINGER: -- and annexation does not mean
15 taking away land and rezoning it to best suit your needs.

16 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Fran Perchick and then
17 Carlos Valle.

18 MS. PERCHICK: Hi; I'm Fran Perchick from the
19 Town of Monroe and I appreciate your time tonight.

20 I'm here because I have serious concerns, as do
21 my neighbors, about the threat of this proposed annexation
22 to a sustainable future in the Town of Monroe and in the
23 surrounding area. Should the five hundred and seven acres
24 in question become annexed into Kiryas Joel, there would be

1 many negative impacts across the region.

2 During the SEQRA process, it is required by law
3 that very careful attention be paid to clearly and
4 accurately identify the many serious impacts to land, water
5 quality, the Ramapo River, quality of life, and rural
6 community character of the entire area and surrounding
7 towns, our beautiful viewscape, and impact to wildlife as
8 projected clearcutting and unrestrained development will
9 surely occur.

10 High-density housing is what you want, but
11 that's not sustainable. And it's not sustainable here and
12 it's not what everyone else wants. Your plan and your
13 history of ongoing environmental violations does not
14 inspire confidence that Kiryas Joel will do its due
15 diligence during the SEQRA process or be environmentally
16 responsible after that process, should the land become
17 annexed.

18 Alternatives to annexation really should be
19 considered that better serve all of the residents of our
20 region. We must emphasize that we're all in this together.
21 We're neighbors. We need to plan a sustainable future for
22 everyone, all of us, that protects the environment and
23 everyone's interests.

24 I thank you for listening.

1 MR. WELLS: I have two more speakers listed. If
2 anyone else wishes to speak, please sign up in the back.

3 MR. VALLE: Thank you, Village Board and
4 Officials, for the opportunity to speak.

5 I'm here on behalf of Assemblyman James Skoufis,
6 who is up in Albany this evening participating in important
7 budget conferencing. Assemblyman Skoufis has sent the
8 following statement to be read into the record.

9 MR. WELLS: Can you state your name, please, for
10 the record?

11 MR. VALLE: Carlos Valle.

12 (Reading) Thank you for a chance to provide my
13 thoughts on this very important issue. That said, I'm
14 deeply concerned that the decision was not made to postpone
15 tonight's scoping session in light of the winter weather
16 advisory in effect until ten a.m. tomorrow. Many residents
17 are not here due to the inclement and dangerous weather
18 outside, thereby disenfranchising countless people,
19 rendering this scoping session unequivocally inadequate.

20 As your recent mailer to Monroe states, I
21 respectfully remind you that a community strength is
22 revealed in its values. While I will reiterate the points
23 I raised at the first scoping session last year,
24 particularly the fact that Kiryas Joel officials, not

1 independent property owners, are the driving force behind
2 this petition, I will raise another set of concerns.

3 Namely, as you know, Kiryas Joel proceeded with
4 a second scoping session for a hundred-and-sixty-four-acre
5 petition last year despite the fact that a five-hundred-
6 and-seven-acre petition encompassing the same land was
7 filed first. Now, Kiryas Joel has sued individuals that
8 have submitted a petition to move much of the same land
9 into the Town of Blooming Grove. On what grounds? That
10 the K.J. petition was filed first? This double standard
11 would be laughable if the issue wasn't so serious.

12 Regardless of what your interpretation of
13 annexation law is on the matter, the law applies to
14 everyone, all the time, not just when it's convenient. No
15 number of mailers or statements from your P.R. firm will
16 result in peace amongst neighbors. Taking concrete actions
17 that demonstrate a willingness to work together will.

18 So again, I call on you to withdraw your
19 annexation petition and constructively meet with all of our
20 community stakeholders. Anything less, and you're
21 continuing to prove that peace and harmony is nothing more
22 than a nice slogan.

23 Thank you for letting me speak.

24 MR. WELLS: I have one more speaker on my list,

1 Chaya Wieder.

2 MS. WIEDER: Good evening. Thank you, everyone,
3 for your time.

4 My name is Chaya Wieder, a resident in Seven
5 Springs Road in the Town of Monroe. I'm one of the many
6 applicants of the five O seven acres annexation application
7 and I thank you for the opportunity to listen to our
8 concerns.

9 I would like to bring up some points and
10 recommend that appropriate studies be done regarding the
11 issues of great concern to me, my family, and my neighbors.
12 My husband and I are hardworking people. We are blessed
13 with four children and we both work hard to raise them
14 while holding a job to help provide for their needs.

15 We pay one of the highest rates of school tax in
16 New York State. We pay county and town tax on our
17 property. Obviously, we pay utility tax, sewer tax, sales
18 tax. We pay social security tax. Yes, contrary to popular
19 belief and to what people have accused us, we do pay income
20 tax, too.

21 I'd like to point out to you that the director
22 of transportation of Monroe Woodbury School District once
23 told a family member of mine that Seven Springs Road, where
24 we live, is the most or one of the most dangerous roads in

1 Orange County. I would ask you to study how to improve
2 pedestrian safety in my neighborhood. In addition to being
3 an unsafe road, there are no streetlights and no sidewalk
4 to speak of. I cannot allow my children to go to the next-
5 door neighbor alone, not in daylight and definitely not in
6 the dark.

7 I would hope that under the leadership of Kiryas
8 Joel Village, these issues can and will be addressed. I
9 would also like you to study if my family and I will be
10 eligible to have the services of the K.J. fire department
11 and K.J. public safety. It's so sad. Both stations are
12 right around the corner from me, but when I call for help,
13 I'm told they can't service our area because I live outside
14 of the village.

15 Not to mention that on Shabbats and Jewish
16 holidays, we really feel a lack of safety and security. We
17 would hope that the K.J. public safety officers will add us
18 to the regular route. I would also hope that the village
19 bus will incorporate us into their route. We really feel
20 cut off from the entire community without easy access to
21 important destinations.

22 Every parent wants to raise their children to
23 belong in the community where they were raised. We want
24 our children to have access to the medical center schools

1 and definitely the new village park on Larkin Drive, just
2 like all the other children in our community. Please
3 include these factors in your study.

4 Last, but not least, I would hope to be able to
5 build some additional apartments on my vacant land so that
6 my four children can stay living next to us. We want to
7 enjoy the next generation and see them grow up. I want to
8 ask you to include in your study both issues, the issue of
9 building on our land and, it goes without saying, the issue
10 of providing us with water and sewer.

11 In our neighborhood, we each must maintain
12 private wells and private septic tanks. Needless to say,
13 our wells are always giving us a hard time. Will we be
14 getting water supply from K.J.? Will we finally be getting
15 sewer? We've been paying the sewer bond for many years.

16 One more question that's been bothering me for a
17 long time that I want to raise and I ask you to include in
18 your study, I want to know how much is very county taxpayer
19 saving by not having twelve thousand Kiryas Joel children
20 enrolled in the public schools funded by the taxpayers? I
21 know how much I pay in Monroe Woodbury school taxes and I'm
22 also paying tuition for my children to attend private
23 schools in Kiryas Joel. So I assume the amount is
24 significant.

1 And I also want to know why the County has
2 twenty-five hundred employees, but has not hired a single
3 K.J. resident to work in our county government.

4 I thank you all for your time and have a great
5 evening.

6 MR. WELLS: I have three additional speakers,
7 Herman Wagschal, Audra Schwartz, and then Veronica
8 Connolly.

9 MR. WAGSCHAL: Good evening, Gentlemen. My name
10 is Herman Wagschal.

11 As a resident of the Town of Monroe, I would
12 like to address an issue that many of my neighbors choose
13 not to discuss. While they call themselves United Monroe,
14 as a resident of Monroe I feel left out. While the so-
15 called United Monroe would have an entire community deemed
16 as fraudsters based on meritless grounds, I, for one, would
17 like to address some issues that are very well supported.

18 One of the concerns raised by United Monroe is
19 that the effects of annexation, if they will be approved,
20 will be potentially devastating to our environment, school
21 district, and overall quality of life. Once annexed, the
22 property will change from one point five to three acres
23 rural residence zoning to high-density building, the
24 addition of apartments and condominiums, large families

1 will increase the population tremendously.

2 It is possible that the annexation will increase
3 the population. However, how is this a negative thing? An
4 increase in population leads to a healthy economy. An
5 increase in population will increase the overall quality of
6 life.

7 Another concern raised by the United Monroe is
8 that it will have a huge impact on taxes since Kiryas Joel
9 residents are largely below the poverty level receiving
10 many government benefits which are paid for, in part, by
11 Orange County. I, for one, would like to ask how much is
12 the county taxpayer saving by not having a single K.J.
13 resident in the county jail? How much is the county
14 taxpayer saving by not having a single K.J. resident in the
15 Valley View Nursing Home?

16 How much is the county taxpayer saving by not
17 having a single K.J. resident in the county drug
18 rehabilitation and treatment center?

19 How much is the county taxpayer saving by not
20 having a single K.J. resident in the county criminal jail?
21 How much is the county taxpayer saving by not having a
22 single K.J. resident processed by the county sheriffs? How
23 much is the county taxpayer saving by not having a single
24 K.J. resident deliver a drug baby out of wedlock?

1 Another concern raised by the United Monroe is
2 that while Satmar Hasidic residents opt to attend private
3 school, if they are located within the Monroe Woodbury
4 School District they are still entitled to vote in the
5 school board elections, utilize special education services
6 and so on. While this concern doesn't even deserve an
7 answer, as every taxpayer is entitled to utilize the school
8 if they choose to, so it does to vote, this does uncover
9 your true colors. I urge the board to weigh the interest
10 of all of us equally, instead of being concerned --

11 MR. WELLS: Mr. Wagschal, please wrap up your
12 comments.

13 MR. WAGSCHAL: -- about a possibility that
14 Hasidic may choose to utilize the public school while they
15 are entitled to, look to the fact as to how much the county
16 taxpayer is saving by not having twelve thousand Jewish
17 kids in K.J. residence enrolled in the Monroe Woodbury
18 School District. Annexation will only --.

19 MR. WELLS: Mr. Wagschal, please wrap up.

20 MR. WAGSCHAL: Annexation will only boost our
21 economy -- another second -- and enhance our quality of
22 life. Never in American society has an increase in
23 population being looked upon a negative -- in a negative
24 light.

1 If this is -- if it is the people within the
2 population you have an issue with, then come out and say
3 it. Don't hide under the name of United Monroe as big as
4 an oxymoron the word united is in the sentence.

5 MR. WELLS: Next speaker is Audra Schwartz.

6 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, I don't have anything
7 nearly that dramatic. My name is Audra Schwartz. I'm a
8 Town of Monroe resident. I'm also a member of the Town of
9 Monroe Planning Board.

10 My fellow member of the planning board, Gary
11 Abrignani, is also a Town of Monroe resident. I am here
12 tonight to share his and my comments as he could not be
13 here because of the weather.

14 I'm going to stick to -- my questions are really
15 fact based. We're looking for information. Number one,
16 Section 8 housing, we're wondering the current percentage
17 of the population receiving Section 8 subsidies now in
18 Kiryas Joel. What is the projected percentage that Section
19 8 recipients will receive if annexation is approved and the
20 proposed high-density housing is built?

21 Food stamps. I understand the K.J. community is
22 assessed for food stamps, the SNAP program, at a different
23 rate than the rest of Orange County. I don't know if my
24 understanding is correct. I'd like this verified. Is this

1 true? If so, why? What is the different income
2 allocations used when calculating the benefits? In other
3 words, single senior receiving food stamps within K.J. will
4 receive substantially larger benefits than the same age,
5 same income senior outside the KJ community. What extra
6 cost will be incurred by the County if the K.J. population
7 increases and therefore food stamps benefits increase?

8 Three, Medicaid. What is the percentage of
9 current population of Kiryas Joel who receives Medicaid
10 benefits? What percentage of that cost is borne by the
11 taxpayers of Orange County? Extrapolate it out to the
12 projected population growth if the annexation is approved,
13 what would that cost the taxpayers of Orange County growth
14 become?

15 As Medicaid benefits cover health services
16 including medical and hospital care, infertility treatment,
17 childbirth, rehab services, as well as transportation to
18 and from medical appointments, medical equipment, and
19 skilled nursing services, what would this cost escalate to
20 if the population increases as projected?

21 HEAP, Heating Energy and Assistance Program.
22 What percentage of the current population of Kiryas Joel
23 receives HEAP grants at this time? What is the dollar
24 cost? What percentage of the Orange County total HEAP

1 grant is awarded within the Village of Kiryas Joel? How
2 will the projected population growth in Kiryas Joel affect
3 the availability of HEAP grants to the rest of Orange
4 County residents?

5 And five, as to the Planning Board of the Kiryas
6 Joel, who are the members? When do they meet? How often
7 do they meet? How often in the past three years have they
8 met? What decisions have they made and are they qualified
9 and prepared to go forward with analyzing the SEQRA review?
10 And what, if any role, do you plan on having the Town of
11 Monroe Planning Board have in this review?

12 Thank you.

13 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Veronica Connolly.

14 And then Rich Cannava.

15 MS. CONNOLLY: Good evening. Thank you for
16 taking me out of my home in this treacherous weather, but I
17 chose to be a participating member of government and so
18 here I am.

19 I just would think it would be very important
20 for this review that a very hard look at how -- what
21 effects by overpopulation and high growth of a population
22 would have effect on county and state services?

23 And I ask this question because, as an early
24 intervention teacher, who works within this county and who

1 services many of the children of this county, including the
2 sweet children of Kiryas Joel, my program is under high
3 scrutiny right now and is being cut year after year. And
4 I've taken pay cuts year after year so as to continue the
5 services of special education needs for special needs
6 children.

7 I think it's very important that an
8 overpopulation would have a negative impact on services
9 like this because if it's going to some of the programs
10 that Ms. Schwartz brought up, the state is not going to
11 have enough money to continue to afford the services that I
12 provide. So what kind of impact will that have on the
13 children here who do need those services? I think that's
14 very important to look at.

15 And for the gentleman that spoke prior, there
16 are many family members that live in this community and
17 friends that I have who also do not use the jails or were
18 born of drug babies or any of that stuff. I don't use
19 those services. I have a very great child who uses the
20 Monroe Woodbury School District because I chose to send her
21 there.

22 When I moved her I knew what my tax burden would
23 be, especially the school taxes. I moved here for that
24 school district. If families choose to send their children

1 to private schools, that's by your choice. No one's asking
2 you to do that. I understand. I went to a private school.
3 I went to a Catholic school in Long Island. My parents
4 paid the tuition, as well as our tax, school bills and
5 county and state taxes.

6 But to say that because you don't use jail
7 services or whatever services, it doesn't really hold water
8 with me. I think an overall look at how state and county
9 taxes will be affected by high-density population and
10 overgrowth and the real significant impact that that will
11 have on the ecology of this area.

12 I didn't move here for urbanization. I moved
13 here for rural living, not high-density living. If I
14 wanted that, I would have stayed in Long Island or move to
15 New York City. It was a choice for you to move here. You
16 didn't have to, but you chose to. So respect the land and
17 respect the ecology that you moved to. If you didn't want
18 that, you shouldn't have moved here.

19 MR. WELLS: Next speaker, Rich Cannava and then
20 Anthony Rizno -- Rizzo. Sorry. And those are the last two
21 I have on my list.

22 MR. CANNAVA: Richard Cannava, Town of Monroe.
23 Moved up here about a year ago. Moved my family up here
24 from Fort Lee, New Jersey. I have a two-year-old son and

1 my wife and we moved up here in hopes of finding a
2 peaceful, rural, nice place to live, little bit slower pace
3 of life, and I feel like I've kind of stepped into a mess.

4 I don't really know how it got here, but from
5 someone who's coming in with a fresh perspective, it's
6 saddening to see. As humans, we should be able to
7 communicate with each other, get together when the time
8 allots, and speak openly with each other about how to go
9 about preserving our region together as one unit, as
10 opposed to this constant back-and-forth, backdoor bickering
11 and fighting. And it's just deeply saddening.

12 I also want to invite -- I go to the United
13 Monroe meetings. They are open to any and all who have any
14 comments or have anything to say or any questions. We try
15 to be transparent and accepting of everybody to the utmost
16 of our abilities.

17 Okay. So there's an ancient Indian proverb that
18 says we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we
19 borrow it from our children. I try to live by this
20 whenever it comes to mind. All of this trashing of our
21 environment, it's going to catch up with us. And I don't
22 mean that to any one town or municipality here. I mean
23 that as a global world. If we don't start to take care of
24 this earth, we will lose. Okay?

1 So this five-hundred-and-seven-acre annexation
2 petition gives me great trepidation. So I would like you
3 to look into the ramifications of the increased carbon
4 emissions due to the increased population. And you counter
5 that with deforestation of the five hundred and seven acres
6 of currently wooded area and what you have is another swing
7 in the pendulum towards climate change.

8 I'd also like to know how the five-hundred-and-
9 seven-acre petition benefits the rest of the town. Will
10 you build ball fields and parks and recreation areas that
11 my son can go to? Will it benefit the people in Monroe and
12 Chester and Woodbury, or will it only benefit Kiryas Joel?

13 The endangered species that live in the five
14 hundred and seven acres that you seek to annex, what will
15 become of them? I will submit a list to you, Mr. Wells, of
16 all of these endangered species that we do need to
17 consider.

18 The increase in flash flood that happens with
19 deforestation and then when you take away the trees and you
20 add asphalts, especially on the hills that we have here,
21 you increase the likelihood of a flash flood.

22 You know, again, I really just hope we can get
23 to a point where we can get together as a community and,
24 hopefully, make decisions that benefit everybody.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. WELLS: I have one more speaker on the list.
3 If anyone else wishes to speak, please sign up in the back.

4 Anthony Rizzo?

5 MR. RIZZO: Good evening. My name is Anthony
6 Rizzo, Highway Superintendent, Monroe, New York, also
7 Highway Patrol for the Town of Monroe.

8 And I just want to inform everybody road
9 conditions are deteriorating to the point it's going to be
10 treacherous getting out of here. We're doing the best we
11 can with the resources we have to keep that safe and keep
12 everybody safe that is driving in their vehicles. Be
13 extremely careful. The roads are icing up. We have
14 freezing rain, can't be controlled with salt. We're using
15 a sand-salt mix right now to prevent that.

16 The residents, the whole town, everyone, please
17 be careful because you can get in an accident right away.
18 The limited snow that's on a roads right now are giving
19 traction to all vehicles that are out there, but you could
20 slip off the road in a minute. Drive slow. Drive safe.
21 If you do get into a situation, use your cell phone,
22 contact state police or any agency that can help you.

23 If you have a survival kit in your car and you
24 can't get out of your car, please use it. Do everything

1 you can to protect yourselves if you go off the road. This
2 is just a public statement based on road conditions.

3 Again, Town of Monroe, Public Safety, Highway
4 Patrol. Thank you.

5 MR. WELLS: Mr. Rizzo was the last speaker on
6 the signup sheets.

7 We'll accept written comments on the scope until
8 March 10th. You can mail those comments to Tim Miller
9 Associates at 10 North Street, Cold Spring, New York 10516,
10 or email to Tim at Tim Miller Associates dot com.

11 I'd like to thank you for attending tonight's
12 meeting. Safe home.

13 (The meeting adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, Judith Spriggs, certify that the foregoing transcript of proceedings in the matter of the Annexation of 507 acres from the Town of Monroe to the Village of Kiryas Joel, was prepared using digital transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Judith Spriggs
Associated Reporters Int'l, Inc.

Terri Bain, Transcriptionist

K. Chevier, Proofer

Associated Reporters Int'l., Inc.
125 Wolf Road
Albany, New York

March 8, 2015

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