

Inc. Village of Floral Park

Comments Regarding Belmont Park Re-Development:

Belmont Park Redevelopment Listening Session: July 10, 2017

Elmont Library, 6:00-8:00 pm Host: NYS Officials

Good evening Senators, Assembly-members & members of the Empire State Development Corporation. I want to thank you on behalf of the residents and business owners in the Incorporated Village of Floral Park for your time and consideration of our concerns regarding any proposed development at Belmont Park

The basic premise of my comments on behalf of the Village will be focused on keeping Belmont Park the beautiful park that it is and the continuation and enhancement of this crown jewel of thoroughbred racing nationwide.

At the outset I wish to state that the Incorporated Village of Floral Park is a neighbor with Belmont Park sharing a border adjacent to the entire West End and a large portion of the south side of our Village. This is significant in that it has created a long-standing working relationship over many years that we look forward to continuing and fostering as time goes on.

In regard to the upcoming RFP being prepared and released by the Empire State Development Corporation, we wish that you take the following into consideration as you review and deliberate the future of Belmont Park.

As stated, Floral Park wishes to see Belmont Park remain as a premier thoroughbred horse racing facility. This does not mean that enhancements, development and mutually-promoting interests cannot be considered or explored. As was stated by Deputy Mayor Kevin

Fitzgerald in his remarks, a comprehensive plan for the future of Belmont Park must and should be crafted and utilized in order that any development that takes place is done so with the following criteria:

- Constructive input from all concerned parties.
- Solid pre-planning and thought processes to ensure all concerns and issues are addressed to satisfaction prior to approval of any plans.
- The vision and future will keep Belmont Park viable and prosperous as a thoroughbred horse racing facility.

The plan for the future of Belmont Park must include input from members from the surrounding communities. While this forum is very welcomed, the establishment of a more formal and permanent means of community input from the surrounding areas can be beneficial to all concerned and help pave the way for improvements and growth at Belmont and its related concerns.

I wish to address some of the items that have been explored or rumored as possibilities for development at Belmont.

On the Topic of **Rearrangement of Track and Grandstand** we ask that a plan be developed to maintain, improve and redevelop the Grandstand in its current position. The inclusion of restaurants and entertainment within the current grandstand could help bolster horse racing and other activities at Belmont Park. The Village would absolutely oppose any relocation of the grandstand along its shared border with Belmont Park.

Night Racing:

The Village wishes to work with Belmont regarding this program. While we are always cautious given effects night racing may have on the quality of life our village residents enjoy, we also see the importance of programs like this and their value in creating and maintaining Belmont Park as it is today.

The Village would ask that plans currently in process through a NYS Senate bill be used as they include:

- Limiting night racing to Thursday thru Saturday no later than 10:30 pm
- Establishing a lighting plan so as not to create undue burdens on Floral Park residents living adjacent to the track
- Ensuring strong security measures to ensure safety

Entertainment Destination:

The Village would welcome options to improve and develop Belmont Park as an entertainment destination for people to enjoy. The Village would require consultation, input and effective communication regarding the development of entertainment options at Belmont Park. The quality of life is something that is cherished in our community. Development options such as restaurants, stores, a hotel and an arena, would require such input and definitive planning to ensure the safety of our residents and the continuation of the community we enjoy today.

Areas Adjacent to the Border of Floral Park:

The Village would require that the lots behind the Floral Park- Bellerose Grammar School and those along our borders remain undeveloped. Improvements such as plantings, berms and landscaping can be discussed to help ensure the quality of life for those neighbors and the protection of our school children.

Traffic Planning:

Use of the LIRR, Hempstead Turnpike and the Cross Island Parkway should be established as the means of entrance and exit for all traffic in and out of the proposed development project areas. Use of the Plainfield & Mayflower gates should be of very limited access.

Casinos, Racinos, etc:

The Village of Floral Park opposes any type of casino style gambling at Belmont Park.

Housing or Residential Development:

The Village of Floral Park while we prefer other types of development, will review any type of housing or residential development proposed at Belmont Park. A determination as to our position will be made based upon what might be proposed.

This is only the beginning. This is a high level overview of the concerns the Village has on this issue. The Village of Floral Park will remain vigilant as the ESDC develops and goes through its RFP process. We will work to ensure that the quality of life our residents have worked for is protected. At the same time we wish to continually work with our neighbors and legislators to help develop, promote and enhance Belmont Park and continue the fine and proud tradition that has been established here for almost 150 years.

Again, thank you for listening to our concerns.