

Belmont Park Redevelopment Project – Public Hearing
3/22/18

Speaker: Dr. Lynn Pombonyo, Trustee
Inc. Village of Floral Park, 1 Floral Blvd., Floral Park, NY 11001

Good evening. My name is Dr. Lynn Pombonyo. I am here as a resident and Trustee of the Village of Floral Park. I will be addressing specific information-gathering processes in the Belmont Park Redevelopment Project, Draft Scope for Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), issued in February 2018.

I refer you to page 10 of the Draft Scope document, Part E: Scope of Work and page 20, Task 11: Transportation. The Scope of Work, enumerated on page 10, includes the following process described in the second bullet: “An evaluation of the potential significant adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Project, including short- and long-term and cumulative impacts, when considered with other planned developments in the area.” The key words in that bullet include “potential,” “long-term,” “cumulative,” and the consideration of all “the other planned developments in the area.” Such a comprehensive evaluation, as described on page 10, requires considerable expertise and experience in data gathering, which includes a strong, collaborative relationship with local, expert stakeholders who have knowledge of the Proposed Project site and surrounding areas.

The Village of Floral Park and our residents have numerous and serious concerns about the degree to which the Proposed Project, with its many interconnected component parts, will significantly alter our Village. You will hear about those impacts of concern today and in future written comments. I will focus on one critical area of this Proposed Project: Task 11, Transportation.

The Draft Scope states that the Proposed Project encompasses an arena; a retail village; hotel; open space; and a modest amount of office and community space. The proposed power substation must also be considered in any and all cumulative impact evaluations. Per page 21, traffic count analyses will include six intersections within the Village of Floral Park and another six that lead directly into the Village. A number of these thoroughfares are presently crowded with traffic, with peak volume gridlock often occurring during the late afternoon and early evening hours. It is essential that the traffic analyses for the Proposed Project be conducted in collaboration with the Floral Park Police Department, an expert, local agency that has already accumulated relevant data relating to the high volume of traffic on key intersections listed on page 21.

We can assume that, if the Proposed Project goes forward, as described in the Draft Scope, with the necessary mitigation measures and modifications, there will be aggressive marketing campaigns aimed at assuring the success of all the component businesses. Measures of success will likely include maximum utilization. That being the case, the all-important traffic analyses must take into account best case business scenarios and cumulative effects for every component of the Proposed Project. So, let’s envision sell-out crowds at the Islanders games and other arena events; robust business in the retail village; full capacity at the hotel; total occupancy in the office space; high community interest in the community space; and increased crowds at the racing venue as a result of a spectacular grandstand renovation project, the possibility of night racing and, in the future, year round racing occurring at the same time as the arena events. Not to be forgotten is vehicular traffic occurring in conjunction with the power substation, both employee and commercial, which must be part of the analyses of cumulative impacts.

In closing, we call on the New York Racing Association (NYRA) to be precise, forthcoming and public with respect to that agency’s long-term plans for racing. Furthermore, it is crucial for the Empire State Development Corporation, New York Arena Partners, NYRA, and all other partners in this Belmont Park Redevelopment Project to actively seek out, embrace and utilize the valuable information and data offered by the Floral Park, Bellerose and South Floral Park Village governments; Bellerose and Elmont leaders; the Floral Park and Nassau County Police Departments; and other local stakeholders who are able to provide significant, meaningful input and data regarding the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Project.

Thank you.