

Inc. Village of Floral Park: Dominick A. Longobardi-Mayor

Comments Regarding Belmont Park Re-Development DEIS:

Belmont Park Redevelopment Hearings: January 8-10, 2019

Elmont Library, Elmont NY Host: Empire State Development Corp

Good evening 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

Back on July 10, 2017, a listening session was hosted by members of the state legislature regarding proposed development at Belmont Park.

Many of you were in attendance. At that time I stated, "The Village of Floral Park will remain vigilant as the ESD develops and goes through its RFP process. We will work to ensure that the quality of life our residents have worked for is protected."

In addition, we stated that the Village has always advocated for a comprehensive plan for the future of Belmont Park to 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 ESD process that went forward has allowed such input and I want to thank you for allowing this input and working with the Village to help address issues.

While this is all well and good; to date, some issues have been addressed, but, new, more detrimental issues to our Village have been raised. And, they have only been raised as a result of the ever-changing re-design of the project.

This project started out as “an 18,000 seat arena with stores, a hotel and some restaurants” all north of Hempstead Turnpike located on the property south of the grandstand of Belmont Park and parking on the lot south of Hempstead Turnpike.

Today, This project has spread out to encompass retail stores on the south side of Hempstead Turnpike where parking was supposed to go, use of parking lots adjacent to schools and homes that originally and expressly said were not going to be used, absolutely no infrastructure improvements to the main arteries of Hempstead Turnpike and the Cross Island Parkway, two LIRR trains for events instead of a full service train station that project participants said was essential to moving forward with the project.

What does this do? It creates the following issues, not only for the Village of Floral Park, but, its neighbors in the surrounding communities of Bellerose, Bellerose Terrace, Queens Village, South Floral Park and, of course, Elmont.

- TRAFFIC: The increase in daily traffic that will be heading toward this destination will be re-routed through all of the above communities as the lack of infrastructure improvements only causes drivers to explore other options. Truck traffic for deliveries during construction and beyond will cause major decomposition to secondary and tertiary roadways as these are the only options for travel to the facility. First responder response times, inability to access routes to homes and businesses for residents and patrons. The list goes on and on.

And, as an aside, as for ESD’s plan to get people to change their driving habits.....It is better that I leave my comments unsaid.

- PARKING: Several issues arise by the aspects of the draft plan. The first is the use of the North and East parking lots adjacent to the Floral Park-Bellerose Grammar School and the borders of the Village of Floral Park. Verbal discussions of a natural barrier or berm to help alleviate the detrimental effects of the noise, light and air pollution that will occur with the development of these lots is a good first step. However, the lack of any detail or plan in the DEIS can only lead one to believe that these detrimental effects may not be addressed and will become actual ways of life for our school children and the residents bordering Belmont Park.

Another issue regarding parking is the use of on-street parking in surrounding communities to avoid parking fees at events. It's the nature of individuals that this happens. This will cause traffic, safety and other issues throughout the local communities. Other parking issues are prevalent as well.

- LIRR TRAIN STATION: A full service, full time train station was an integral part of the development of the Arena project at the outset. The developers were pretty adamant that this project would not work without it. Obviously this isn't going to happen.

The lack of train access at the facility would cause other options to be explored. The Floral Park and Bellerose train stations could become hubs for attendees, cause serious increases in traffic, use of car service, safety concerns for our Village and surrounding roads and through our residential areas and harmful issues for our residents.

While these are major issues and my comments only brush the surface, the Village will be submitting detailed comments to the DEIS and we fully expect those comments to be given your full attention and responses. Again, the size and expanse of this project has created more issues than the initial project proposed.

Tonight, I simply ask you to listen to the many concerns that will be expressed by our residents and business owners both here over the next few days and in writing to be submitted later.

Tonight, I ask you to understand that we are not opposing development. And, we are certainly not opposing the NY Islanders Hockey Team. The Islanders will be a tenant for 40+ nights along with the other tenants on other nights.

I ask you to understand what we understand. This is a development project being done by Governor Cuomo and New York State through the Empire State Development Corp. All of whom are responsible to the taxpayers of this Great State. It's not about where the Islanders will have their home. It is about the use of NY State land that belongs to each and every one of us here in this room.

And as you, the ESD, are responsible to ensure a good process, what I do ask you to absolutely understand is what I stated at the top of this statement, "We will work to ensure that the quality of life our residents in Floral Park and our neighbors in other communities have worked for and are entitled to, is absolutely protected."

Thank You.