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## *Incorporated Village of Floral Park*

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March 12, 2018

Mr. Howard Zemsky  
President & CEO  
Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

RE: Proposed Development at Belmont Park Request to Extend  
Scoping Document Period and to Provide Additional Public Hearings

Dear Mr. Zemsky:

We write on behalf of the Incorporated Village of Floral Park (Floral Park), and its residents and the local business community. On February 27<sup>th</sup>, Empire State Development (ESD) released a Draft Scoping Document (Draft Scoping Document) for the proposed development at Belmont Park. In conjunction with the release of the Draft Scoping Document, ESD announced two public hearing sessions to be held back to back on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, with hearing times offered only in the afternoon and starting early evening. Further, the comment period for the submission of written comments, which will end on April 6, 2018, is barely more than the absolute minimum required under New York State's Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

For a project of this scope and magnitude, limiting public involvement and input in this manner is inadequate and unacceptable. Floral Park strongly urges ESD to modify and greatly expand opportunities for public review and comment at this critical stage of the SEQRA process. Doing so will also allow ESD to address and correct what appear to be several points of confusion and inconsistencies in the documentation it has released to date concerning the Belmont Park proposal. The affected communities and their representatives need sufficient time to analyze and assess the impacts this dramatically altered proposal will have on their communities and their quality of life. The problematic nature of this unnecessarily brief scoping period is compounded by the fact that it falls during the Easter and Passover holidays, when the thoughts and attention of the residents of the impacted communities will rightfully be focused on their faith and families.

The need for more time is reinforced by the fact that the proposed project described in the Draft Scoping Document is materially different than what has been previously disclosed. The Draft Scoping

Document just released by ESD reveals for the first time a significant expansion of the breadth of this project and the residents of the affected communities need time to analyze its impacts. It cannot be argued that the public has had several months to absorb the details of this project because certain key aspects of this project that were disclosed in the Scoping Document are in direct contradiction to what the public had been previously told in writing. The changing and expanding breath of the project has created confusion within the affected communities, undermining the ability of the public to meaningfully comment on the Draft Scoping Document. Among the most troubling additions to this proposal are: (1) the plans to now use the North Parking Lot (which borders the Floral Park Bellerose School and many residences in the Village of Floral Park), despite prior written representations that excluded the North Parking Lot from this proposal; (2) the addition of a 40,000 square foot electric substation to be situated next to the Floral Park Bellerose School; and (3) the significant expansion of the previously proposed hotel to now be a 265 feet high hotel, which would be one of the tallest buildings in Nassau County if approved, with zoning setbacks, lot size, and building coverage requirements waived.

These problems are compounded by the fact that the Scoping Document proposes a study area of only ½ mile from two "Project Site" parcels to the south of the Belmont Race Track property for many analyses, even though it is now clear that the project will utilize significant areas to the north of the Race Track property as well. The scope of the project now reaches well outside the two parcels to the south of the Belmont Race Track property. Thus, while the RFP process targeted development of two clearly defined vacant parcels within the Belmont Park property, the Draft Scoping Document refers to significant use (including new construction) of property beyond those parcels on the Belmont Park property.

Further, Floral Park officials have become aware that the project likely will require additional construction activities even beyond the boundaries of the Belmont Park property. This is not even addressed in the Draft Scoping Document.

How can the public's opportunity to participate be considered sufficient when the project is not even adequately or fully described? ESD **first** needs to disclose more information about this project, and **then** offer the public an opportunity to comment on its scope and proposed analyses.

Further, I am advised by our counsel that the brief scoping period proposed by the ESD is unnecessarily restrictive. Normally, the lead agency is obligated to finalize a scoping document within 60 days of receipt of a proposed scope from the project sponsor. However, this timeframe is often extended by agreement for large, complicated projects. Since ESD initiated and sponsored the RFP process and is also acting as the SEQRA lead agency, we see no barrier to it allowing impacted communities and the public sufficient time to study, review and comment on the Draft Scoping Document. One of SEQRA's overriding mandates is to provide for **meaningful public review and assessment**.

As we have previously expressed to our residents, although the Village has significant reservations about the proposal, we are committed to working with all parties in good faith so that the Village's very legitimate concerns can be addressed and the proposal can be properly vetted and evaluated under the State's Environmental Review Process. While we recognize the efforts of the ESD to engage with the Village in this process to date, for our good faith approach to succeed, our residents' and our business communities' right to meaningfully participate in this process must be respected. For a project of this magnitude and complexity, a minimum of 90 to 120 days must be provided for public

review and comment on the Draft Scoping Document, and additional dates and more convenient times must be established for public hearings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Dominick A. Longobardi*

Dominick A. Longobardi

Mayor

*Kevin M. Fitzgerald*

Kevin M. Fitzgerald

Deputy Mayor

cc: Senator Elaine Phillips  
Senator Leroy Comrie  
Senator Todd Kaminsky  
Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages  
Assemblyman Clyde Vanel  
Assemblyman Edward Ra  
Nassau County Executive Laura Curran  
Nassau County Legislator Vincent Muscarella  
Nassau County Legislator Richard Nicoello  
Town of Hempstead Supervisor Laura Gillen  
Town of Hempstead Councilman Edward Ambrosino  
Ms. Holly Leicht, EVP, Real Estate & Public/Private Partnership  
Mr. Marion Phillips, III, Sr. VP Community Relations, Empire State Development