

Thank you letter for financial support of the Watch Program  
and also informing of possible upcoming litigation

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David DeRienzi  
North Shore Unitarian  
Universalist Veatch Program  
Plandome Road  
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Re: New Jersey Zoning Litigation

Dear David:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the financial support the Veatch Program has extended to the New Jersey zoning litigation. The civil rights cases remanded under Mt. Laurel II are now extremely active and your support to the Mahwah and Middlesex County cases makes possible proper preparation.

I would like to bring you up to date on what is happening in the Mahwah case. As you probably know, a master was appointed to assist the trial court in implementing the Mt. Laurel II ruling in Mahwah. He is Philip Caton, a housing specialist from Trenton. Mr. Caton was recommended to the Court by the plaintiffs.

With Mr. Caton's assistance, Superior Court Judge Smith, on September 16, 1983 determined that Mahwah must make possible construction of 699 low and moderate income housing units (its fair share number) and that the Township had 90 days in which to rezone to accomplish that goal. This week, Mahwah was given an extension of time to January 22, 1984 to enact a new zoning ordinance. In the event the Township fails to adopt a proper implementing ordinance by January 22, the Court will rezone Mahwah.

What has occurred in Mahwah since the September 16 order has been simply extraordinary. As of this date, seven separate developers and landowners have come forward requesting that their lands be rezoned for multi-family use with an agreement that 20% of the units to be built will be affordable by low and moderate income persons. These seven private development proposals involve a total of 360 acres of land, call for construction of 923 low and moderate income units and would lead to over 4,500 total multi-family housing units.

Because of the impact on the Township of providing fair share housing through the 20% mandatory set aside mechanism, Mahwah is desperately

looking for alternative means of meeting its fair share housing obligation. Thus, Mahwah is virtually begging the Bergen County Housing Authority to construct public housing units in Mahwah. The Township would take 699 units of public housing at this time if the Authority had adequate funds. In any event, it is clear that some public housing units will find their way to Mahwah.

The local citizens, of course, are not taking all of this lying down. It is inevitable that an appeal will follow whatever action the Superior Court takes early next year. For your information, I am enclosing a copy of a publication put out by a newly formed organization called "Mahwah Concerned Citizens Committee Against Mt. Laurel II." The Township's representatives are clearly in the middle. They must respond to the Court order, while their loyalties certainly are with the protesters.

Events are also heating up in Middlesex County. I am told by Bruce Gelber at NCDH that numerous developers are also coming forward in that area seeking Mt. Laurel II zoning. We will attempt to keep you apprised of what is happening in both the Mahwah and Middlesex County cases.

Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
  
Richard F. Bellman

RFB:PC

Enclosure

cc: Bruce Gelber  
Alan Mallach  
Paul Davidoff  
Jeffrey Fogel