

TOWN OF CLARKSTOWN
 INFORMATIONAL MEETING ON ST. DOMINIC'S HOME
 COMMUNITY RESIDENCE

Town Hall

9/3/86

8:00 P.M.

Present: Supervisor Holbrook
 Councilmen Carey, Lettre, Maloney, Nowicki
 John Costa, Town Attorney
 Patricia Sheridan, Town Clerk

Supervisor Holbrook declared Informational Meeting open and Town Clerk read notice calling Informational Meeting.

Town Clerk read the following letter from Lucille Whalen:

*64 Ridge Road
 Valley Cottage

August 8, 1986

Mr. Charles Holbrook, Supervisor
 Town of Clarkstown
 10 Maple Avenue
 New City, New York 10956

Dear Suprvisor Holbrook: RE: GROUP HOME, VALLEY COTTAGE

I am the mother of a mentally retarded son who has lived on Ridge Road (approximately 6 houses from the proposed group home) for over 30 years. I am and will always be supportative of these homes, however, the home proposed at the location on Ridge Road is not a suitable location.

Several years ago my husband and I offered property in the back of our home to build a group home. We were turned down, and the reason was given as it was not an appropriate location.

The proposed site was once an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals, Serratore, requesting 280a, access by right of way, for building another home in the rear. That access is the minimum allowed by law, and in the event of an emergency, you would be hard pressed to get in and out of there safely.

In my mind a group home should be so located as to be safe for those residents, located within walking distance of stores or a library, which they could not safely do in this case. To me it looks more like a hideaway to get them out of the way. From time to time the Clarkstown Police Department has had to post police cars to pick up the speeders. Ridge Road does not have sidewalks, and is not a safe place to walk.

It is my opinion as the mother of a retarded child, that the residents of any group home should deserve to be offered a safe haven.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lucille Whalen*

Supervisor Holbrook then read the following letter:

LETTERHEAD OF VALLEY COTTAGE FIRE DISTRICT

*September 2, 1986

Charles Holbrook
 Supervisor Town of Clarkstown
 New City, New York

Dear Mr. Holbrook:

Continued on Next Page

Informational Meeting - Saint Dominics Home
Page 2

This is to notify you of my personal feelings regarding the proposed group home on Ridge Rd. Valley Cottage. After an inspection of the general lay out of the site I found it totally inappropriate due to the limited access. The length and width of the driveway prohibits the use of our apparatus from any place other than out on Ridge Rd. With the nature of the site being what it is a fire at this location would demand a swift and well co-ordinated attack, in order to prevent the loss of life. Due to the conditions I mentioned I feel that it would be very difficult to get the type of co-ordination needed.

If you have any questions that I can help you with please feel free to call.

Respectfully,

/s/ E. Gerald Horgan

E. Gerald Horgan*

Supervisor spoke to the article appearing in the Rockland Journal News that implied that there would be a public hearing on this item. He stated that there is no such thing as a public hearing on a group home, only an informational meeting which is being held this evening. He said that the residents in the area were notified by letter because the original informational meeting was to be held in August. He had been asked by the residents in the area to put off the meeting until September because of vacations.

Supervisor Holbrook explained the options which were available regarding the group home being located in this particular location.

Town Attorney John Costa explained to the residents that the State supercedes the local zoning authorities.

Sister Joseph Mary, Director of St. Dominic's Home explained that it was the intention of St. Dominics to open this residence for 14 residents. The site has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with the State requirements. These people would be coming from a restrictive environment to a more normal environment in this intermediate residence where they will lead lives similar to those of the people already living in the area, in so far as they will go to work during the week and their weekends will be free for socializing, recreation, etc.

Sister stated that transportation will be provided for the people living in the home and that safety problems have been addressed. The residents must pass a test in order to be able to live in the group home. Only those who qualify will be allowed to participate in the program, and this could include those in the area living at home who might want to participate.

Appearance: Mr. Hal Ciappa, Director
Residential Services at Saint Dominics

Mr. Ciappa explained the average day in the life of a resident which included their week days and their weekends. He also gave the credentials of the staff which would be supervising.

Appearance: Ms. Marilyn Hyde
Valley Cottage, New York

Ms. Hyde said she was opposed to the proposed site since she did not believe that the property was suitable.

Sister Joseph Mary said that the site met the requirements and further explained why the property was suitable.

Continued on Next Page

Informational Meeting - Saint Dominic's Home
Page 3

Appearance: Mr. Walter Boden
Valley Cottage, New York

Mr. Bowden said he was concerned regarding the maintenance of the home and said he had been to see the group home on Svahn Drive and used that as an example of poor maintenance.

Appearance: Ms. Esta Baitler
Resident of Venture East

Ms. Baitler read the following letter:

"Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Costa and Members of the Town Board

As a Developmentally Disabled adult who lives at the Venture East Community Residence in New City I feel very strongly that there is nothing more beautiful than living with fourteen developmentally disabled brothers and sisters. Living at Venture East is living with a real family. I sincerely hope that you will allow Saint Dominics to open their unique community residence for fourteen developmentally disabled adults.

Developmentally disabled adults make the best neighbors anybody could ever want to have and I can sincerely verify to that.

By

Ms. Esta Baitler
a Developmentally Disabled adult who
lives at the Venture East Community
Residence in New City"

Appearance: Mr. John Tirino

Mr. Tirino said he was opposed because of its location. He felt it was unaccessible to stores. He said there would be problems with snow removal and property maintenance.

In response to a question from the audience Supervisor Holbrook stated that group homes were considered single family residences and that the State would regard the fourteen residents as a family unit.

Town Attorney further explained that the power to zone is granted to the towns by the State. The State supercedes local zoning and those people who have a problem with this should contact their State officials.

Supervisor Holbrook again explained the options on the home selection site and said that the only way it could be denied is if saturation in the area were proved or an alternate site was acceptable.

At this point Sister Joseph Mary explained the funding involved.

Appearance: Mr. Bill Sheffler
Valley Cottage, New York

Mr. Sheffler spoke regarding what he believed was a safety problem. He said there are no sidewalks and new development would cause increased traffic.

Supervisor Holbrook said that the Town was waiting for the traffic study on Ridge Road from Mr. Howard Lampert.

Appearance: Ms. Ann Kambriel

Ms. Kambriel was opposed to the site selection.

Continued on Next Page

Sister Joseph Mary spoke with regard to the site selection and possible alternative sites.

Councilman Lettre explained that the site selection was not the responsibility of the Town Board but rather the Site Selection Committee.

Supervisor Holbrook said that residents may propose alternative sites as well as board members and in fact anyone may propose an alternative site.

Sister Joseph Mary then asked Ms. Violet Engels to give the criteria for accepting a site.

Ms. Engels gave her credentials. She said there must be bedrooms of 160 square feet to accommodate two people so that in this house there would have to be seven bedrooms. The living area and dining area must be large enough to accommodate fourteen people. The kitchen must be large enough to prepare food on a daily basis for fourteen people. There must be a leisure room that would be large enough to provide space for those not interested in watching television in the living room. There must be a laundry room. There must be off street parking. They must be in a residential area. There must be city water and sewers and it should be a minimum lot size of one acre. The budget for this depends on the program and there is no set dollar amount.

A member of the audience inquired as to the number of bedrooms and the price of the house. Ms. Engels said at present there were five to six bedrooms but when the renovations were completed there would then be seven bedrooms.

Sister Joseph Mary stated that the price of the house was privileged information between Saint Dominics and the person from whom they were buying the house.

Appearance: Ms. Marilyn Hyde
Valley Cottage

Ms. Hyde said that it would be very expensive to install sewers since there would not only be fourteen residents but four staff. She confirmed that there were only five bedrooms at present in the residence and said there were two ponds nearby which she felt were dangerous.

Councilman Carey asked Sr. Joseph Mary if she had had contact with the Valley Cottage Fire Department because they had recommended against it. He further inquired about the five similar facilities listed in the area.

Sister Joseph Mary went through the listed facilities and explained that they were not similar to this proposed facility.

Councilman Carey then inquired about the extension and modification to the existing structure and Sister said the basement floor would be renovated to provide the additional space required and there would be no live-in staff.

Councilman Maloney inquired as to the staffing pattern during the day and night. Mr. Ciappa explained the proposed staff with regard to hours, etc.

Councilman Maloney then referred to the negative comments of Mr. Horgan of the Valley Cottage Fire Company and asked where the seventh bedroom would be located?

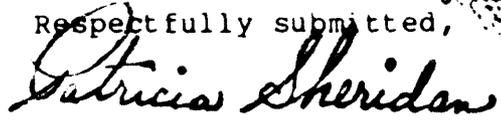
Sister Joseph Mary said the seventh bedroom would be in the renovated basement.

Informational Meeting - Saint Dominic's Group Home
Page 5

There was extensive dialogue between the Town Board members and the representatives of Saint Dominics.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 P.M. Supervisor Holbrook said that he would make a site inspection.

Respectfully submitted,



PATRICIA SHERIDAN,
Town Clerk