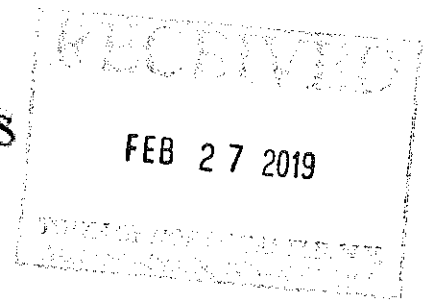




St. Stephen's
Episcopal
Church



Supervisor Schiliro and members of the Town Board, thank you for the opportunity to speak at this Public Hearing. I am Father Nils Chittenden, Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church which, as well as being the oldest building, and institution, in the hamlet of Armonk, is at the heart of the Bedford Road Historic District, and a neighbor of the proposed development site at 45 Bedford Road.

St. Stephen's created Armonk's first residential sub-division in around 1850 and, indeed, at one time owned the land which is now occupied by Mariani Gardens. For almost one hundred eighty years, St. Stephen's has been a careful custodian of its surrounding neighborhood and has, on many occasions, found itself balancing the need to conserve the best of its heritage with the need to embrace growth and new development. St. Stephen's has the best interests of this neighborhood at heart and it was for that reason that, for example, we opposed the proposal last year for Mariani Gardens to become a Soul Cycle location. It is for that same reason that St. Stephen's supports, in principle, the change of zoning of this site from Nursery Business to Residential Multifamily.

Official positions on all matters at St. Stephen's are determined by an elected board known as a "Vestry". The Vestry has followed every stage of this development proposal since last summer, and has reviewed and discussed all the paperwork which has been submitted to the Town. On that basis, the Vestry voted, in the fall of 2018, to support both the zoning amendment and the development plans as they currently stood at the time. Contrary to some recent rumor and hearsay, the Vestry authorized Neal Baumann to speak on this matter on its behalf, and I can confirm that Neal reported accurately St. Stephen's official position. St. Stephen's very much values, and thanks, Neal for his counsel on matters relating to 45 Bedford Road.

Last month, the Architectural Review Board discussed the development proposals and issued a memo. Having read this memo, and respectful of the professional opinions expressed in it, the Vestry last week discussed at great length its position and then decided to amend it by passing the following resolution:

"WHEREAS Mariani Gardens is seeking a zoning change from Nursery Business (NB) to R-MF-DA, Multifamily-DA Residence District, and

WHEREAS St. Stephen's views a residential project at the Mariani location as in the critical, long-term best interests of this community, including the Bedford Road Historic District, be it now

RESOLVED that, in light of the North Castle Architectural Review Board's recently-published objections to the Mariani Gardens redevelopment proposal, we will support a residential redevelopment plan only with a design acceptable to the Architectural Review Board and the Town Board."

Wednesday, February 27, 2019