

Revised Windy Acres Plan Has Benefits

To the Editor:

This is in response to Nick Corcodilos' Sept. 8 letter, "Windy Acres Doesn't Fit."

Neither Mayor Tom Borkowski nor the Planning Board is attempting to rush into a "deal" before the mayor leaves office in January. The Township Council has been working diligently for months to negotiate a viable solution that would not only end the Windy Acres litigation, but would also benefit the entire township, satisfy our obligations to the Council on Affordable Housing, and protect the township's substantive certification.

Mr. Corcodilos apparently does not understand that the Mews and Water's Edge are COAH developments, which explains their density. Windy Acres is also a COAH project. Pulte's original application, which was for more than 1,100 units, was reduced to 911 units, and the Planning Board denied that application in June 2001. The Planning Board's denial has caused the township to be embroiled in more than a half-dozen currently pending lawsuits and administrative proceedings, all of which are being defended with our tax dollars.

Last spring, Pulte proposed an end to the litigation if it could present a new application that would include 365 age-restricted homes

and the 90 units needed to fulfill the town's second-round COAH obligation. I ask, what's wrong with a proposal to build an active adult community and satisfy our COAH housing? What's wrong with a development that will put less stress on our township, will provide tax revenue, and won't impact the schools? The township's substantive certification would be maintained and the township would be protected against the builders' remedy lawsuit.

Hillsborough looks the way it does because it lost its substantive certification from COAH, a consequence that Mr. Corcodilos does not take seriously. We need to accept that we are on the cusp of losing our certification, and if Mr. Corcodilos continues along this path, he will bear responsibility for this. Then, as the developers line up for the builders' remedy lawsuits, Clinton Township will come to look like Hillsborough. Thank you, Nick, but I find your cavalier attitude toward COAH and the risk of a builders' remedy lawsuit reckless. You have no right to expose our residents to such risks when all experts have advised us that your course of action will likely lead to a development disaster.

We are not conceding to Pulte, we are not getting into bed with a developer and we are not afraid of being

involved in a lawsuit. If we were afraid of lawsuits, the Planning Board would not have denied the Windy Acres application. We are working diligently toward achieving a solution. Remember, however, that if Pulte cannot find an acceptable solution for treating the site's waste water, the community will not be built.

Could all this really be because Mr. Corcodilos' yard abuts the Windy Acres property? It's no secret that he and others whose property abuts Windy Acres are vehemently against this solution. They moved into their McMansions with this zoning in place, and now they object to it. They played a very active, useful and positive role during the Planning Board hearings on the old Pulte application. How unfortunate it is that all of that effort, which was so helpful, should now become so destructive.

Those who feel that council and the Planning Board should continue to negotiate a viable end to litigation, supply the township with housing for active adults, cause no additional impact to schools, retain our substantive certification and build the required COAH units should call Township Council members to show their support.

PAT PAPA

Vice Chairperson,
Clinton Township Planning Board