

# CHESTNUT RIDGE RESIDENTS

## ALERT TO ATTEND APRIL 26, 2018 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: **Board of Trustees Rushing Zoning Law Changes that Will Significantly Affect Our Village. Public Involvement and Comment Are Critical**

Just two days before the February 22, 2018 Village Board of Trustees meeting, troubling Proposed Zoning Text Amendments affecting land use for religious purposes were added to the agenda. The proposed land use amendments would allow residential places of worship in over 90% of the Village's geographic area. If passed by the Board of Trustees, the amendments would fundamentally change the character of the Village in many ways that materially affect all residents of Chestnut Ridge.

The proposed amendments will affect over 3,000 acres which requires the most stringent form of environmental review by New York State Law. There is no evidence that the Village has taken even a cursory review of the impact on the community, the infrastructure, traffic, public safety and each of us in Chestnut Ridge.

The proposed amendments were in development and negotiation for over a year, yet were not disclosed to Village residents until two days before the February 22, 2018 Village Board of Trustees meeting. Further, the Village Planning Board only received the proposed amendments for their comments at the same time and the Board was instructed by the Village Attorney and Assistant Attorney not to hold public hearings or to discuss the changes with Village residents. It is not clear when—**or even if**—the Planning Board comments will be made public. This complete overhaul of the Village's land use laws for religious purposes should not be carried out in rushed secrecy and not without rigorous review.

In addition to being rushed, secretive, not mandated by law, and the result of an improper process, the draft language of the proposed amendments is exceedingly vague and will lead to years of wrangling over the meaning of words, terms and phrases. During that time, property values will be seriously affected as buyers and sellers will face uncertainty as to their property rights.

The proposed amendments effectively create a blanket variance for **religious uses available to all single family residences throughout the Village**. Further, they would grant 20% relief from lot conformance requirements and would allow extra square footage allowances for religious purposes. Yet, the Village Zoning Board of Appeals has not been allowed any role in the review and drafting of these sweeping variances. In addition and inexplicably, the Village Zoning Board of Appeals would be removed from its mandated variance task for anything related to places of worship. Instead, the Planning Board has been assigned this task.

CUPON (Citizens United to Protect Our Neighborhood) has engaged legal counsel and certified land planners who will submit their professional reviews and comments at the April 26, 2018 Village Board of Trustees meeting.

### **CUPON believes that**

1. the diversity that exists in the Village is a strength that should be promoted and protected,
2. the process for legislating zoning code text amendments should be done in a professional, measured time frame with open public discussion and professional land use and environmental analysis,
3. the zoning text amendments should be balanced and fair to all residents of the Village.

We urge all Village residents to get involved in the process of amending Chestnut Ridge's zoning code immediately. Contact your elected officials. Participate in orderly and polite civil discourse to protect and enhance the beautiful Village that we all share together. **Show up at the Board of Trustees meeting this Thursday, April 26, 2018 at 7:30 pm, 277 Old Nyack Turnpike, Chestnut Ridge, New York 10977.**