

Board of Trustees
Village of Chestnut Ridge
277 Old Nyack Turnpike
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977
Attn: Rosario Presti, Jr., Mayor

September _____, 2018

Re: Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Law-Places of Worship

Dear Mayor Presti and Members of the Board of Trustees:

I, _____, residing at _____
_____ in the Village of Chestnut Ridge am writing to express my sincere concerns about, and opposition to, the proposed amendments to the Village of Chestnut Ridge's zoning law regarding places of worship.

The two very well attended public hearings clearly demonstrate that the proposed amendments have gained the attention of all Village residents who recognize the importance of the issues. No one can dispute the right of every resident to freely practice their religion. The Village's current zoning laws have not violated this right as evidenced by the multitude and diversity of old and new places of worship in the Village. The proposed zoning law amendments effectively grant blanket variances for places of worship and accessory uses without regards to the legitimate rights and concerns of all Village residents and the existing neighborhood character. I do not agree with the proposed hollowing out of current zoning which has served the Village well over the last 32 years for the following reasons:

- Many statements by the Mayor, Trustees and Village Attorney that the proposed amendments are required in order to comply with Federal and State law are wrong and misleading.
- The proposed amendments are the product of closed door and unrecorded negotiations between only one group of residents, their engineer consultant, the Village land planner and perhaps others. Efforts to obtain public information about the timing and content of these negotiations have been rebuffed by claiming that no such records exist.
- The Village Planning Board has not supported the proposed amendments.
- The CUPON of Chestnut Ridge land planner has provided their professional determination that the proposed amendments would have serious negative impacts over 90% of the Village's geographic area, will create life and safety issues, will negatively affect the Village's tax base and the Village, Town of Ramapo and Rockland County infrastructure.
- The Village has not conducted the Environmental Impact Statements required by SEQRA on the effects of the proposed amendments nor have they determined how to do so.
- The Village has not adequately enforced existing zoning laws and has negligently failed to apply existing building and zoning standards to building permit applications which should be corrected before adopting new poorly drafted zoning laws.
- The proposed amendments may be unconstitutional and prohibited pursuant to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

As a resident of this Village, I urge you to put these proposed amendments aside and develop a Comprehensive Zoning Plan that reflects the diversity in our community and balances the needs of all residents in a safe, equitable and respectful manner.

Yours truly
