

**MAYOR KELLY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM MS. ELLA LANSFORD'S  
QUESTIONS FOR THE WEST MORRIS MENDHAM HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER**

Q- Combined with each round, how many people are estimated to be added to the Mendham Borough Community. Mayor Glassner mentioned that with the combined 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> round obligations it would require us to allow over 1450 new housing units. Is this correct?

**A- Those calculations were based on early numbers released by the Department of Community Affairs provided Statewide. The Borough has already successfully been able to reduce its Fourth-Round gross prospective need obligation to 124 units. However, the Governor and State Legislature has come up with a high-density development scheme that rewards private builders for building affordable housing. This scheme allows private developers to construct high-density market-rate housing at a rate of 4 units for every 1 affordable unit. Meaning that if a developer proposes to build 100 dwelling units, only 20 units would be restricted for affordable housing while 80 units would be sold at a much higher value. This makes it very difficult for a municipality to meet its affordable housing obligation, while at the same time not straining existing local resources and infrastructure.**

**However, this does not mean the Borough must build each and every one of these units at an 80/20 split. At this time, it is difficult to predict the exact number of market rate units and affordable units that will be built within the next 10 years, as there are so many variables. There are a variety of ways through smart planning, credits and adjustments that the Borough can rely on to meet its affordable housing obligation.**

**Our goal is to meet the State's requirements without a sudden, massive influx of construction that dramatically changes the landscape of the Borough. We have put together a team of experienced professionals to guide us through this process so that the Borough continues to comply with Trenton's new laws without drastically altering the landscape of our community.**

Q- In Reference to the "Save Mendham" movement there are environmental concerns associated with the development disrupting the Raritan Headwaters, wetlands and wildlife. Could you elaborate on these concerns and dose this violate State Law conditions mandating these housing developments aka Mount Laurel Doctrine?

**A- The NJDEP issued the environmental permits for the V-Fee project after reviewing extensive environmental information regarding the property. We cannot comment further on pending litigation, but we were surprised that "Mendham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation," which is primarily based in Mendham Township, has filed this litigation.**

Q- What is the timeline of the construction? When should the community expect this housing to be finished?

**A- If you're referring to the V-Fee project, there are no exact timelines at this time, especially due to the lawsuit filed by the Mendham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation. It is the developer's responsibility to complete construction with reasonable speed and diligence, while fully complying with the law. Timelines often change based on legal and construction variables. The lawsuit filed by the Mendham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation will result in increased costs for the Borough to defend at the expense of our taxpayers.**

Q- Are there any other future developments being considered at the moment?

**A- Yes. The Borough's Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan will contain these details. Once it's published, a fully noticed public hearing will be held so that anyone can attend and comment on the proposed Plan.**

Q- What message would you like to share with residents that are concerned about the development?

**A- We hear the needs and concerns voiced by our community. The best interests of our residents are always at the forefront of every decision we must make, and we have put together a team of experienced professionals to help us plan for the future development of our community in the right way. It is important to note that for the third round the Borough had one major project and that was the V-Fee project, which resulted in a total of 75 units of which 15 are affordable units. If you look around throughout the County, that is one of the smallest projects that was part of any affordable housing plan.**

**When you have a desirable community like the Borough of Mendham, you will always have development pressures. This is especially true now because of the new housing mandates that have been imposed by our Legislature, and focus on rewarding developers that force high density projects.**

**Ironically, the State's new affordable housing law exempts big cities in New Jersey from having to comply. New Jersey voters voted for Governor Murphy and the State legislators that voted YES on these new housing laws, and ultimately share responsibility for what is now happening at the local level. The State's new housing laws are a direct example of what we mean when we say that "elections have consequences." For first time voters, I cannot stress enough that your vote counts. Before you go out and vote, become informed about the candidates and their stance on the issues and challenges that our local communities are now faced-with.**

Q- Overall, what are your thoughts on the Mount Laurel Doctrine/"S50/A4"? Do you have any concerns about development and its impact on the community?

**A- This has been a partisan effort at the State level to address a very difficult challenge in New Jersey. Unfortunately, the way law was written it exempts many of New Jersey cities and larger municipalities from having to zone for or construct new affordable housing. For example, Hoboken, Montclair, Newark and Jersey City are exempt. In fact, the law shifted Montclair and Newark's obligations onto smaller community, so a large portion of the 124-unit obligation allocated to the Borough comes from Montclair and Newark. Unfortunately, this puts a lot of pressures on desirable communities such as the Borough of Mendham and has put an overwhelming amount of costs and work on the Borough, including our employees and professionals. Due to this, the Borough is one of more than twenty participating municipalities challenging the exemptions and allocation of these obligations in a case entitled Montvale v. State of New Jersey.**

Q-Do you have any concerns about the impact on the community? How will this positively affect the community?

**A- I have lived in Mendham Borough my whole life 65 years growing up on Main Street and have been through a lot of change with the developments, shopping center, condominiums, Middle school, High School, Post office, Senior Housing, Churches and Banks. That growth was challenging, but over time was accepted to what many of us know as our home.**

**At the same time, housing and rent prices have soared over the last decade, especially in New Jersey. Everyone should be able to have access to safe, decent, affordable housing in the community of their choice. That is a good thing. But the difficulty has been, and will continue to be, how to come to a solution without destroying our precious environmental and historic resources, or straining public resources and infrastructure.**

**The new housing laws feel different from how New Jersey previously sought to solve housing problems. Now it seems that there is loss of local control on how to manage development competently in order to properly plan for the future. It seems this was more of an afterthought at the State level. I have concerns about the environment and increased stress on our roads, water and sewer usage, and other public infrastructure. There will also be increased strain on our public resources and employees such as our public schools, police, volunteer fire and first aid, and public works. We are simply not large enough to handle increase population demand and housing construction. Honestly looking beyond our own backyards ask yourselves how this is going to impact everyone in small**

**communities that simply do not have the funding and staffing to be able to meet these new and ever-increasing demands.**