

To Ryan Courtien, Supervisor, Dover Town Board:

I have been a resident of Dover for more than 16 years. I support the positions of the Coalition for the Responsible Growth of Dover and its actions. I might not have been inspired to state my solidarity for the public record if it were not for a puzzling comment in a letter to the Editor of the *Harlem Valley Times*. It was suggested that the Coalition for the Responsible Growth of Dover is in fact for no growth. It is a curious statement. Everyone is for development of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center. No one could be satisfied with that deteriorating eyesore. This is not the case with many development proposals, against which a minority or a majority advocates for the status quo. Any of us may disagree on the process - and on the form and extent of that development. But we agree that it is needed. To mischaracterize the motives of our concerned fellow citizens is injudicious and polarizing as we begin a long and vigilant effort together. Indeed, the great strength of this project is the unanimity that action must be taken. We should be respectful of the good intentions of our neighbors.

And we should be realistic about what has happened in the world since the first development proposal was withdrawn. The economic climate for it has deteriorated, and a credit crisis is impacting the potential purchasers of these 1,376 units, whoever they may turn out to be, and it is impacting developers. Several developers in the New York area have gone bankrupt in the past few months. This applicant is not seeking financing for this project yet, and by the time the SEQRA process has been completed, the economic climate may have improved, and the credit crisis may have abated.

Or they may not have, for a project of this scale in this location. The final scope should be at least as rigorous, thorough, transparent, and verifiable as was the original, before the credit crisis. This scope mentions four phases, not more and not fewer. It is not apparent what they are. By the time the SEQRA process has been completed, we must all know, first, what the phases are in detail and, secondly, how the phasing was determined in a way that can be verified. To what extent is the phasing justified by engineering and construction practices and efficiencies? To what extent is the phasing determined by marketing considerations? And to what extent is the phasing driven by the financial requirements of the applicant or its lack of financing capability at the time?

Any of these factors might be valid reasons for the phasing, and it will probably be determined by a combination of them and many others that I am not expert enough to know about. In that context it is mystifying to see the deletions on pages 11 and 12 under “Phasing Plan.” Details on “all project components with expected year of completion for each component and detailed information on areas affected with specific location and acreage and marketing of commercial development” must be required. The “discussion of steps to be taken in the event the project is not completed at any phase” must be restored.

Long after this applicant has moved on to new challenges, this community will have to live with the state of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center property, what may be done and what may have been left undone.

George Nichols