

TOWN OF HARRISON
MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD
(VIRTUAL PROCEEDINGS)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2020 7:00 P.M.

B E F O R E: SUPERVISOR RON BELMONT

A P P E A R A N C E S:

COUNCILMAN FRED SCILIANO
COUNCILMAN FRANK GORDON
COUNCILMAN RICHARD DIONISIO
FRANK ALLEGRETTI,
 Town Counsel

JACKIE GREER,
 Town Clerk

JANINE M. COLASANTI, RPR
OFFICIAL REPORTER

1 (Meeting already in progress without
2 the court reporter signed on.)

3 MAYOR BELMONT: -- our monthly
4 reports items one through six. I make
5 a motion.

6 COUNCILMAN DIONISIO: Second.

7 COUNCILMAN GORDON: Second.

8 COUNCILMAN SCILIANO: Thank you,
9 Richard. Thank you, Frank.

10 All in favor?

11 (Whereupon, all Board members
12 replied, "aye.")

13 MAYOR BELMONT: I make a motion to
14 open a public hearing. Public hearing
15 under the Eminent Domain Procedure Law
16 for 123 North Street, better known as
17 Willow Ridge Country Club.

18 COUNCILMAN SCILIANO: Mr.
19 Supervisor, if I could just pass along
20 a message from Councilwoman Leader, she
21 is sorry she cannot make this meeting
22 tonight. She wasn't feeling well. She
23 really regrets that she is unable to
24 attend on this very important topic.
25 She is doing fine and expects to

1 recover tomorrow, but she will view the
2 recording of this meeting and will, of
3 course, observe and listen to all the
4 comments given in the public hearing we
5 are about to have. Thank you. I'm
6 sorry for the interruption.

7 MAYOR BELMONT: I'm sure we are
8 all going to review again all the
9 comments being said here tonight.

10 I make a motion. I have a second.

11 All in favor?

12 (Whereupon, all Board members
13 replied, "aye.")

14 MS. GREER: I didn't get a second.

15 COUNCILMAN DIONISIO: I'll second.

16 MAYOR BELMONT: All those in
17 favor?

18 (Whereupon, all Board members
19 replied, "aye.")

20 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Good evening,
21 Supervisor Belmont, members of the Town
22 Board. This is a public hearing. We
23 do have a stenographer, a court
24 reporter who is taking down word for
25 word what is being said. So before I

1 make my opening comments, I just wanted
2 to say that as an opening comment, so
3 when people speak, please identify
4 yourself, speak clearly and speak
5 slowly.

6 With that said, Supervisor Belmont
7 has asked that I provide opening
8 comments for this hearing to give an
9 overview of what has transpired over
10 the last few months with Willow Ridge
11 and why this matter is on the agenda
12 tonight for a public hearing on the
13 potential acquisition of the Willow
14 Ridge property by use of eminent domain
15 procedure.

16 There is a huge amount of public
17 concern over this issue. There are, I
18 believe, over 300 people who have
19 registered to watch and are
20 participating in this public hearing on
21 the zoom platform, and there will be a
22 large number of residents also watching
23 this which is being live streamed on
24 the Town's Facebook web page.

25 For a little history, I went back

1 and reviewed the Town Board resolutions
2 that we have on prior attempts by the
3 Town to acquire Willow Ridge.

4 In 1966, the Town Board authorized
5 the purchase of Willow Ridge in the
6 amount of \$1.75 million.

7 The Town held a public referendum
8 on the issue and the residents approved
9 the acquisition by a 350 vote margin
10 out of 2,500 votes.

11 Based upon the appraisal, the
12 number was just about worth
13 1.25 million.

14 For reasons not stated in the
15 resolutions, the purchase was never
16 consummated, and in 1967 the Town Board
17 approved the use of eminent domain to
18 acquire the club.

19 According to a Town Board
20 resolution in 1970, the eminent domain
21 matter was brought before a judge who
22 decided the Town had the legal right
23 and could acquire the club for Town
24 recreational facilities and that was
25 upheld by the Appellate Decision.

1 A pursuit was ended, and then
2 Supervisor Passidomo thought it would
3 cost about \$3 million to acquire the
4 club.

5 Most long-time residents of the
6 Town that I have spoken to over the
7 year, have expressed regret that the
8 Town did not acquire the ownership of
9 Willow Ridge when it had the
10 opportunity over 50 years ago.

11 Turning to the present, during the
12 first week of October, Mayor Belmont
13 heard the club was up for sale possibly
14 closing its doors.

15 The Mayor attempted to reach the
16 club president every day over the span
17 of five days, leaving voice mails and
18 following up with emails to express the
19 Town's interest and having a
20 discussion. Not one of the numerous
21 messages were returned by the president
22 or anyone else from the club.

23 I then reached out to members of
24 the club, and I did in fact ascertain
25 that the club was actively seeking

1 potential buyers.

2 Mayor Belmont and I had a meeting
3 with Willow Ridge on Monday, October 19
4 where they expressed the Town's strong
5 interest in acquiring ownership of the
6 club.

7 We advised the club that we would
8 need to perform some due diligence,
9 which includes an appraisal and engage
10 in consultants before we would be in a
11 position to extend any sort of offer to
12 purchase the club.

13 Two days later, the club called me
14 and asked for us to come back and
15 continue our discussions with them. We
16 scheduled that meeting for the
17 following Tuesday, October 27th where
18 we also had a site visit of the
19 property.

20 At that time, I advised the club I
21 already engaged an appraiser and that
22 there was an approximate three to
23 four-week time frame to receive that
24 appraisal.

25 I also advised the club that I was

1 in the process of getting True Golf on
2 board as one of our consultants that we
3 would need some time to do some due
4 diligence for the Town.

5 True Golf is the largest
6 professional golf management company
7 that provides services for 470 plus
8 courses all over the world.

9 During our first meeting, Willow
10 Ridge advised us that they had three
11 other interested groups that they were
12 in discussions with; two that wanted to
13 continue its golf operations and one
14 that wanted to residentially develop
15 the property.

16 Notwithstanding the fact that
17 Willow Ridge was aware that the Town
18 was acting in complete good faith in
19 getting its due diligence started and
20 that the Town would need a short period
21 of time to accomplish it, the club only
22 two days later, on October 29th, sent
23 out a letter demanding that all
24 interested parties were required to
25 submit written offers by a detailed

1 letter of intent by Saturday,
2 November 7th, at 5:00 p.m. effectively
3 cutting off negotiations with the Town.

4 The Town Board authorized
5 retention of eminent domain counsel at
6 a special meeting of the Town Board
7 October 30th to pursue the acquisition
8 of the club.

9 I had several phone conversations
10 with the club's attorney between
11 October 30th and November 2nd that I
12 thought were productive. I expressed
13 the Town's hope that we could still sit
14 down with the club and negotiate a
15 transaction at arm's length.

16 I also asked when the club set a
17 time for offers on November 7th, when
18 they knew the Town needed time to even
19 be in a position to put forth a bona
20 fide offer. The attorney advised me
21 that the club was running out of cash
22 and bills are going unpaid. I advised
23 the attorney that it really should not
24 matter, if there was several months of
25 unpaid bills as they would all be paid

1 at a closing in a near future term.

2 I further told the club's attorney
3 that a Troon report had a timeline of
4 30 to 45 days of whether they would be
5 able to access the club and perform a
6 complete audit and assessment of their
7 facility.

8 This Troon team was on site
9 Friday, November 6th. The club was
10 previously advised that Troon would
11 like to speak with the superintendent
12 on the golf course while they were
13 there.

14 The club's attorney responded by
15 an email stating there would be no
16 access to their employees and all
17 requests for information were to be run
18 through her. The club refused to make
19 the superintendent available to answer
20 basic questions on the course
21 maintenance and operations.

22 The Troon team reported that it
23 was apparent from the get-go at the
24 site visit, the president of Willow
25 Ridge and the lead negotiator did not

1 want Troon there and they wanted them
2 off the property is as soon as
3 possible.

4 They were also not forthcoming on
5 many things we were even going to
6 visit.

7 I submitted to the club's attorney
8 a list of items that Troon needed as a
9 follow-up to the site visit.

10 Willow Ridge supplied some
11 information and flatout refused to
12 provide information as to other items,
13 including certain liabilities for the
14 employees and their unions, which I
15 considered a bit unusual; insofar as
16 Willow Ridge asked us at our meetings
17 whether we would consider taking on
18 their employees and/or their respective
19 unions.

20 Willow Ridge advised us last month
21 that the Town would not be allowed to
22 conduct a phase one environmental
23 assessment, which is typically part of
24 everyone's due diligence on an
25 acquisition of this magnitude.

1 I advised the club's attorney that
2 the Town's environmental consultant
3 would need to perform a noninvasive
4 site inspection of the property and
5 that they would like to speak with the
6 golf course superintendent to get an
7 understanding of what chemicals were
8 being used on the property.

9 I'm not sure how Willow Ridge can
10 maintain with a straight face that they
11 were being cooperative with us and our
12 requests considering these undisputed
13 facts.

14 Then, on November 18th, the club
15 issued a self-serving press release
16 titled, "Why Harrison should cease
17 consideration of eminent domain
18 proceedings" that are just littered
19 with false and inaccurate statements.
20 They have continued this campaign since
21 then with a website and mailers to the
22 residents of the Town.

23 They list a slew of reasons as to
24 why this is purportedly not the best
25 interest of the Town or its residents,

1 which I will address in the order.

2 The club continuously asserts that
3 this will be a huge burden for the
4 taxpayers and that it will cost tens of
5 millions of dollars to take Willow
6 Ridge.

7 The fact of the matter is that we
8 do not know yet what the exact price
9 point will be for the Town to acquire
10 the club. That would take various
11 factors into account, including an
12 appraisal, the environmental conditions
13 of the property and its immediate
14 capital needs.

15 We do know the club's own
16 appraisal came in at less than \$14
17 million as a highest best valuation
18 about one year ago, and we do know the
19 club has been losing money for years
20 and most of the members have left
21 Willow Ridge to join other clubs.

22 Selling the club as an ongoing
23 concern with few members remaining will
24 not reap the club the tens of millions
25 of dollars they think they will obtain.

1 We are consulting with Troon for
2 the very reason that they will provide
3 us with various models of how this club
4 can be operated without this being any
5 burden on our taxpayers. In other
6 words, they will help us to figure out
7 how we can generate sufficient revenue
8 to help cover the anticipated expenses,
9 both the capital and operational.

10 The City of Rye owns and operates
11 Rye Golf Club, the Town of Eastchester
12 owns and operates Lake Isle Country
13 Club. Both clubs are run successfully
14 by each municipality with the revenues
15 more than covering their expenses.
16 There are no financial burdens on the
17 taxpayers.

18 Next, the club claims there will
19 be a loss of tax revenue. The fact is
20 the club is only paying Town taxes of
21 about \$47,000 per year. Our total tax
22 levy for the entire Town is
23 approximately \$47 million which makes
24 the club's Town taxes one one-hundredth
25 of one percent of our total taxes.

1 Moreover, the current school
2 budget is \$123 million, and a possible
3 loss revenue of \$111,000 is also less
4 than one one-hundredth of one percent
5 of the school taxes.

6 Finally, the County budget is over
7 \$2 billion and a possible loss of
8 revenue of \$35,000 is microscopic at
9 worse. This tax revenue scare tactic
10 is a nonissue.

11 Next, the club claims that
12 COVID-19 economic impacts are
13 negatively impacting the Town for the
14 loss of tax revenue. That is simply
15 not true. The Town has collected most,
16 if not all the Town taxes that have
17 been owed since the start of the
18 Pandemic.

19 Next, the club is asserting that
20 they have other options from private
21 investors. While this may be true,
22 this just completely ignores the
23 potential benefits the Town would
24 provide to its residents and our
25 community. And in keeping this as open

1 space for active recreational use,
2 including tennis and a pool as well as
3 golf.

4 Make no mistake, Willow Ridge is
5 and has been negotiating with private
6 developers such as St. Regis, Toll
7 Brothers and Woodmont Properties out of
8 New Jersey who would want to
9 residentially develop the club to
10 1 acre homes on this 121-acre site.

11 They are also in discussions with
12 a private school about relocating
13 there. This is not even a permitted
14 use on an acre residential zone.

15 Next, they claim the vast impact
16 of the eminent domain process comes
17 with risks and variables. The
18 procedures of eminent domain are not
19 overly complicated. The Town Board
20 conducts the public hearing and hears
21 from all interested parties, if they
22 find a public use, benefit or purpose
23 will be accomplished by the
24 acquisition, they may issue findings in
25 that regard. You appeal that ruling

1 and go straight to the Appellate
2 Division in Brooklyn who issued summary
3 rulings on eminent domain appeals.

4 There will be no protracted
5 litigation. Any and all litigation
6 that does occur, will be because the
7 club has chosen to contest the matter
8 and file suit in what I consider to be
9 a losing proposition.

10 The club further maintains that
11 there are golfing opportunities minutes
12 away. There are six other private golf
13 courses in Harrison and the two county
14 public courses nearby. This ignores
15 the reality that most of our residents
16 do not have the \$150,000 initiation fee
17 to join exclusive private clubs like
18 Westchester Country Club or Old Oaks
19 Country Club.

20 It also ignores the explosion of
21 the amount of people who try to play
22 golf on public courses, especially this
23 past season. I seriously doubt that
24 anyone at Willow Ridge has tried to
25 make a tee time on a public course

1 lately. If they had, they would not be
2 continuing to push the narrative that
3 there are numerous opportunities to
4 play golf nearby.

5 It was virtually impossible to
6 play golf on a weekend on public course
7 this past season which is when most
8 people can only play.

9 It is quite clear that all actions
10 of Willow Ridge towards the Town have
11 not been in good faith. The press
12 release and negative social media
13 campaign is just proof positive of
14 this. They even go as far to make the
15 absurd and unsupported claim that,
16 "This initiative is not in the best
17 interest of the residents of Harrison
18 with no tangible benefits."

19 It is concerning that Willow Ridge
20 sees that there is no upside to the
21 Town and its residence, pursuing the
22 club and having a first class
23 recreational facility that residents
24 benefit from and ensure that this large
25 tract of land is kept as open space.

1 It seems to me that rather than try to
2 work cooperatively with the Town to
3 ensure that our residents do get the
4 chance at a tremendous opportunity
5 here, they are looking at other groups
6 in a misguided effort to bring in more
7 money that they can sprinkle around to
8 their small group of investors.

9 The Town does have the resources
10 to purchase the property and
11 successfully operate the club as an
12 ongoing concern.

13 The Town has built up a
14 significant fund balance and has the
15 highest grade rating for Moody's and
16 S&P that any municipality can have.
17 Specifically, our last overall audited
18 fund balance was over \$30 million and
19 our credit rating means that the Town
20 could borrow money with an interest
21 rate of less than 2 percent these days.

22 With that said, I'm now going to
23 turn this over to our attorney, Brody
24 Smith, who will provide a presentation
25 on the acquisition.

1 Also on hand is Archie Cart of
2 Troon Golf, vice president of
3 operations who will give a
4 presentation.

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you,
6 Mr. Allegretti, and thank you,
7 Mr. Mayor for giving me the opportunity
8 to speak to the Board tonight about
9 this project. I'm going to share my
10 screen with you here. We have a
11 Powerpoint that will help walk you
12 through the eminent domain process.

13 Can everyone see that all right?

14 So this is an EDPL Article 2
15 public hearing. EDPL stands for the
16 Eminent Domain Procedure Law. The
17 purpose of the public hearing is to
18 satisfy the Harrison's obligations
19 under Article 2 of that chapter.

20 We start with an introduction.
21 This public hearing is being hosted by
22 Harrison. The first step will be --
23 I'll read out a copy of the notice and
24 legal description of the subject
25 property into the record.

1 Next, myself, along with
2 assistance of Mr. Cart from Troon, will
3 give a presentation providing the
4 details of the proposed taking.

5 And then finally, members of the
6 public will be given the opportunity to
7 comment on the proposal. Comments will
8 be -- there are a lot of people who
9 want to comment. We would ask the
10 comments be limited in terms of time.
11 We want people to be able to finish
12 their thoughts. We just ask that you
13 try to make them as efficiently as
14 possible.

15 A copy of the meeting notice is
16 being included in the record as Exhibit
17 A. The meeting notice reads as
18 follows:

19 Please take notice the Town of
20 Harrison will hold a public hearing
21 open to all persons on December 17,
22 2020 at 7:00 p.m. to be held by video
23 conference on Zoom platform.

24 Pursuant to Sections 201-204 of
25 the New York State Eminent Domain

1 Procedure Law to consider the proposed
2 acquisition by the eminent domain of
3 certain real property known as block
4 522, lot 7, and more commonly known as
5 the Willow Ridge Country Club, 123
6 North Street, Harrison, New York.

7 For the purpose of public health,
8 well-being and recreation by
9 establishing and maintaining public use
10 of an 18-hole golf course with tennis
11 courts, pool and dining facilities.

12 The purposes of the public hearing
13 are to review the public use to be
14 served by the acquisition and the
15 impact of the acquisition on the
16 environment and residents of the
17 locality of where the project is
18 proposed to be constructed, pursuant to
19 Article 2 of the EDPL, and to give all
20 interested persons an opportunity to
21 present oral or written statements and
22 to submit other documents concerning
23 the acquisition of property to be
24 acquired.

25 The proposed property acquisition

1 involves the exercise of Town of
2 Harrison of its power of eminent
3 domain, either with or without a
4 negotiated agreement to all or part of
5 the property described as follows:

6 Willow Ridge Country Club, Inc,
7 reputed other, Tax map parcel number,
8 block 522, lot 7, address 124 North
9 Street, Harrison, New York.

10 More particular information
11 concerning the property being acquired
12 under the EDPL, including description
13 of maps. Any acquisitions are
14 available for public inspection during
15 normal business hours at the Town
16 clerk's office.

17 All persons having an interest in
18 the acquisition are invited to attend
19 the public hearing to give oral or
20 written statements and to submit other
21 documentation concerning this proposed
22 publicly needed project.

23 According to EDPL 202-C2, those
24 property owners who may subsequently
25 wish to challenge the condemnation of

1 their property via judicial review, may
2 do so only on the basis of issues,
3 facts and objections raised at the
4 hearing.

5 Comments on the proposed
6 acquisition may be made orally or in
7 writing at the public hearing on
8 December 7, 2020 or presented in
9 writing to the Town's address at 1
10 Heineman Place, Harrison, New York,
11 10528 on or before December 17, 2020.

12 That completes the public notice.
13 This notice was personally served on a
14 representative of the club on
15 December 7th and sent by certified mail
16 pursuant to EDPL Section 202, a copy of
17 meeting notice was also published in
18 the news each day from November 24,
19 2020 through November 28, 2020.

20 A copy of the affidavit of
21 publication is also included in the
22 record.

23 The legal requirements for this
24 meeting under the Eminent Domain
25 Procedure Law, there are two things we

1 need to discuss:

2 One, whether a public use to be
3 served by the proposed public project
4 and two, the impact on the environment
5 and residence of the locality where the
6 project would be constructive.

7 So let me begin with an
8 introduction to the subject property.
9 The subject property is currently own
10 by Willow Ridge Country Club, Inc. and
11 has been since November 27, 2012.

12 It is a private 18-hole golf
13 course and country club. The address,
14 as I mentioned before, and tax map
15 number reflected on the front and the
16 side is located at 123 North Street, in
17 an area that is zoned R1, one-family
18 residential in Westchester County.

19 A deed from Dean Levren and DLH
20 Investment, LLC to Willow Ridge Country
21 Club, Inc. is included in the record.

22 The deed contains a metes and
23 bounds description of the property was
24 also made part of the record herein.

25 A survey of the property was

1 prepared by Stephen F. Hoppe, and
2 dated, June 15, 2011, and that is also
3 included in the record.

4 This is the survey that I just
5 mentioned. You can see on the left
6 side of the survey, the clubhouse and
7 the structures associated with the
8 facility are located there. As you
9 move north and east, you see the layout
10 of the golf course unfold in that
11 direction. There is frontage both on
12 North Street and on Park Drive.

13 The property is approximately
14 122 acres. It includes the following
15 improvements:

16 An 18-hole private member owned
17 golf course and country club with a
18 clubhouse, swimming pools, tennis
19 courts and other facilities. There is
20 frontage both on North Street and on
21 Park Drive. Most of the frontage is on
22 North Street. There is over 1,500 feet
23 of frontage there.

24 You are going to see in this map
25 the location of the subject property in

1 terms of the region. In terms of the
2 local map, you can see North Street on
3 the southern end of this map here on
4 Park on the north.

5 This is the tax parcel as recorded
6 in the County records. The property
7 issues are outlined in yellow.

8 The configuration of the golf
9 course is also included in the record
10 through this depiction here.

11 And I also include some
12 photographs of the public view with the
13 golf course.

14 The first view is the golf course.
15 You can see the pool and tennis
16 facilities and a view of the clubhouse
17 from the front.

18 Harrison has the authority to
19 condemn by virtue of Town Law Section
20 64, paragraph two, which states that
21 the Town may acquire by lease purchase
22 in a matter provided by law or by
23 acquisition in a matter provided by
24 Eminent Domain Procedure Law, any lands
25 or rights therein, either within or

1 outside the boundaries of the Town
2 required for any public purpose and may
3 upon adoption of the resolution convey
4 or lease real property in the name of
5 the Town which resolutions shall be
6 subject to a permissive referendum.

7 Eminent domain process involves
8 several steps. The first is this
9 public hearing, which provides
10 residents the opportunity to learn
11 about the details of the project
12 through this presentation, its purpose
13 and to give the public an opportunity
14 to provide comments.

15 The public hearing is a
16 preliminary step in the eminent domain
17 process.

18 In the event that a mutually
19 agreeable settlement cannot be reached,
20 the land owner, Harrison, has the
21 option to petition the Westchester
22 County Supreme Court for an order to
23 acquire the property and determine its
24 fair market value.

25 So, as I stated in the

1 introduction, the two main topics that
2 will be covered in the presentation are
3 the public purpose for the proposed
4 taking and secondly, the environment
5 impacts for taking.

6 Harrison, in terms of public
7 purpose, may only take real property
8 through emanant domain when the taking
9 will serve a public use.

10 Public use is broadly defined by
11 the Courts to encompass any use which
12 contributes to the health, safety,
13 general welfare, convenience or
14 prosperity of the community.

15 Harrison stated purpose for the
16 proposed condemnation is to create a
17 public golf course in order to expand
18 recreational opportunities for
19 residents.

20 Accordingly, the exercise of
21 eminent domain power here is rationally
22 related to a conceivable public purpose
23 which is the legal standard.

24 We will begin with the plan.
25 Harrison has retained Troon to develop

1 options for format, management of the
2 corp.

3 Archie Cart from Troon is on this
4 call and will describe Harrison's plans
5 for the property.

6 I'll turn this over to Archie to
7 talk about those plans.

8 MR. CART: Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Smith.

10 My name is Archie Cart. I'm the
11 vice president of operations for Troon.
12 I've been with the company now going on
13 23 years. I have been in the north
14 east with Troon since 2003. We are
15 very familiar with the market, did a
16 lot of it in the market for the last
17 six months.

18 The plans we are coming up with
19 all contemplate public access. All of
20 the plans contemplate our financial
21 sustainability which is really
22 important.

23 The public access part of it is
24 really what stood out immediately.

25 If you look at, as nice as some of

1 the property is -- of course, it will
2 give the residents of Harrison a great
3 opportunity to play a quality golf
4 course in their own backyards.

5 We've also contemplated in all of
6 the models that not all of it will be
7 public access to golf course, but all
8 that --

9 (Lost connection to Zoom feed) .

10 -- Harrison residents.

11 Couple of things, it's worth
12 noting that the high-end experiences
13 that --

14 (Lost connection to Zoom feed.)

15 -- previous years, prior years,
16 historically, are in high demand.

17 We think when you're having --

18 (Lost connection to Zoom feed.)

19 -- the type of people you
20 encourage to come to the area, to come
21 to the Town of Harrison, are people
22 that are well off and can afford to
23 spend money with different Town
24 merchants.

25 We think that it is also a great

1 opportunity to hire the local
2 residents, at least the length and
3 majority of the models, not just golf
4 vanity but with also the pool, the
5 tennis and banquet facilities are being
6 contemplated.

7 We think there are some great
8 opportunities for the Town to have
9 multiple benefits and a sustainable
10 business or a sustainable entity going
11 forward.

12 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Archie.

13 In addition to the public use and
14 benefit description that is required
15 pursuant to the law, we also need to
16 discuss any potential environmental
17 impacts that the taking will result in.

18 The thing I think that is
19 important to remember about this
20 particular eminent domain acquisition
21 is the acquisition of property and its
22 conversion to public golf course will
23 not change its current use.

24 Thus, it's unlikely the change in
25 ownership will result in any

1 significant impacts on the environment.
2 Harrison anticipates taking over the
3 property and implementing a new
4 membership/fee structure will increase
5 the use of property of over current
6 levels.

7 This modest increase and intensity
8 use of the property should be
9 considered by the Board.

10 There are many areas that are
11 required to be looked at for a proper
12 environmental review. I'll highlight
13 briefly some of the sections the Board
14 will ultimately have to make a decision
15 on what makes it a SEQRA determination.

16 In terms of impact on lands,
17 geological features, aesthetic
18 resources, critical environmental
19 areas, plants and animals, the taking
20 will not result in the construction of
21 any new structures or the physical
22 alteration of the property. The
23 property will appear the same from the
24 perspective of North Street or Park
25 Drive. There are no agricultural

1 resources in the vicinity.

2 In terms of air quality, energy,
3 human health, the taking will not
4 result in the adverse impacts on air
5 quality exposure to contaminants or the
6 use of significant additional amounts
7 of energy.

8 In terms of historic resources,
9 given the property has been used as a
10 golf course for many years, it is
11 unlikely that there are any
12 archeological resources on site.

13 To the extent that there are any
14 unknown resources, the change of
15 ownership will not disturb those
16 resources by resulting in negative
17 impacts.

18 I included here an aerial
19 photograph of the property from the
20 County GIS system showing the existence
21 of steep slopes and certain parts of
22 the property to give you an indication
23 of the slope of the land on the golf
24 course.

25 You see, between the main golf

1 course and the clubhouse is a series of
2 steep slopes, and then again, another
3 series of steep slopes on the other end
4 of the property as you get closer to
5 Park.

6 In terms of open space and
7 recreation, I think you see the biggest
8 impact here from an environmental
9 review point of view and its composite
10 impact. The taking will increase the
11 availability of open space and
12 recreation opportunities for Town
13 residents. Activities shall include
14 golf, tennis, the public pool and the
15 availability of banquet space.

16 In terms of noise, odor and light
17 impacts, the activities available on
18 the property will be the same as they
19 were before the taking.

20 Even with the increase use of the
21 golf course, Harrison does not
22 anticipate any increases and noise,
23 odor or light that would be perceptible
24 or any way impacting neighboring
25 residential areas, the hospital located

1 to the west or neighboring golf courses
2 located to the north and east.

3 In terms of traffic, Harrison does
4 anticipate an increase in vehicle
5 visits after the taking. The new
6 ownership model should increase the
7 number of golfers at the property from
8 65 to 125 per day during the golf
9 season. However, there is no credible
10 concern about whether existing
11 transportation infrastructure of the
12 roads can support the use of the
13 properties of the golf course with no
14 more than 60 members can visit per day.

15 In terms of tennis, pool, dining,
16 events, traffic, the property is
17 currently available for special events
18 by rentals to the public. And so
19 Harrison does not really anticipate any
20 change in the intensity use due to
21 that. And the tennis courts, pool, and
22 dining facilities and the intensity of
23 the use will be the same.

24 A portion the property does lie
25 within a hundred-year flood plain.

1 There are also designated wetlands,
2 including fresh water ponds and a water
3 course, Beaver Swamp Brook. The taking
4 will not impact the surface water
5 features. The reason is, the
6 configuration of the golf course will
7 not be changed and all those features
8 are on the golf course.

9 There is an attempt to replace an
10 existing irrigation system which is not
11 in good repair. This upgrade, if
12 anything, will reduce water usage and
13 increase efficiency, only helping
14 reduce negative impacts to water
15 resources on the property.

16 The taking will not have any
17 effect on the quality of ground water
18 on the property.

19 I've included in the record the
20 flood plain information from the County
21 GIS system. You see there is a flood
22 plain on the golf course portion of the
23 property, mainly in the northern half.

24 This map from the U.S. Fish &
25 Wildlife Service depicts the inventory

1 of wetlands, again, located on the golf
2 course as the flood plain and shows the
3 location of the water courses creek.

4 This map, finally, from the New
5 York DEC Environmental Resource mapper,
6 there is a red arrow towards the center
7 middle of the map that points to the
8 state classified water course which is
9 the Beaver Swamp Brook that runs
10 through the golf course.

11 That completes the presentation
12 summarizing the proposed taking. I'm
13 going to pause before we end here.

14 Mr. Cart, were there any
15 additional points that you wanted to
16 make about the proposed plan?

17 MR. CART: No. The only thing I
18 would point out is that relative to
19 traffic, that even if it is mutually
20 successful and it's a new proposed
21 operation, they will likely be no more
22 than, be consistent, I should say, with
23 what a thriving Willow Ridge looked
24 like years ago.

25 MR. SMITH: I think that's a good

1 point. There has certainly been a
2 downtick in the use of the course in
3 the last few years as a private club.
4 But in the past there was much more use
5 of the golf course. And, if anything,
6 the taking would just return the
7 intensity use of the course to previous
8 levels, levels that were infrastructure
9 supported, the neighborhood supported,
10 and so forth.

11 MR. CART: The new irrigation
12 system -- excuse me, Brody.

13 The new irrigation system proposed
14 also would allow the courier there to
15 be more sufficient in maintaining the
16 turf and the landscape. So there would
17 be, if anything, a slightly less burden
18 on the water supply.

19 MR. SMITH: I think it's important
20 to also know that after the
21 improvements of the irrigation system
22 are completed, that the land will be
23 returned to the same condition that it
24 is now. You wouldn't see any lasting
25 effects in terms of esthetics or impact

1 based on the irrigation system being
2 upgraded.

3 Before I move on to public
4 comment, Mr. Allegretti, is there
5 anything you wanted to add surmising
6 the project?

7 Hearing none, I've been asked to
8 read the following ground rules for
9 comments.

10 First, comments should be limited
11 to a three-minute per person. Please
12 direct your comments to the Board. The
13 Board is here to listen to all comments
14 offer by the public. However, in order
15 to provide enough time for everyone to
16 be heard, we may not have time to
17 answer questions at this meeting now.
18 We will take notes on all questions
19 posed in an attempt to address those
20 questions at a later date or in
21 writing.

22 The public hearing will be left
23 open. The written comments will be
24 accepted until January 7, 2021. Please
25 provide your name and address, whether

1 you are a current member of Willow
2 Ridge before addressing the Board.

3 With that, I will turn the meeting
4 back over to Mr. Allegretti, and we can
5 proceed with the public hearing.

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: During the last
7 week or so, we've received
8 communications from attorneys
9 representing Willow Ridge. I think it
10 would be appropriate at this point that
11 we allow counsel to speak. I believe
12 we got a letter from Cuddy & Feder from
13 Mr. Andrew Schriver, and a notice of
14 appearance from Jonathan Houghton. I
15 don't know if they both are on.
16 Certainly, if either of them are on or
17 both are on certainly, Michael Piccinni
18 you can let them in and let them speak
19 up.

20 MR. PICCINNI: Sure, if they can
21 raise their hands, it would make it
22 easier for me to find them on the list.

23 Here is Andrew Schriver.

24 Can you see me? Can you hear me?

25 MS. GREER: We can hear you.

1 MR. PICCINNI: We can hear you.

2 MR. SHRIVER: I wanted to raise my
3 hand to let you know -- I wanted to
4 make sure that Mike Rikon who is
5 eminent special counsel for Willow
6 Ridge is on the chat. I asked you to
7 locate him because he had planned to
8 speak in this area.

9 MS. GREER: It looks like his hand
10 is raised.

11 MR. RIKON: Hello.

12 MS. GREER: Can you hear me now?

13 MR. RIKON: Can you see me?

14 MS. GREER: No.

15 MR. RIKON: Let me proceed then,
16 if I can. First, good evening to
17 everyone. My name is Michael Rikon.
18 I'm a partner with law the firm of
19 Goldstein, Rikon, Rikon & Houghton. We
20 represent Willow Ridge Country Club.

21 My firm specializes in the law of
22 eminent domain. On behalf of my
23 client, I would like to make two
24 points.

25 The first is that we will require

1 strict adherence to the requirements of
2 the Eminent Domain Procedure Law and
3 Article 8 of the ECL. We will look at
4 everything very carefully to make sure
5 there is absolute strict compliance.

6 The second is that my client
7 believes that the project is going to
8 be much more expensive than this Town
9 has estimated the total cost.

10 What property is condemned in New
11 York State and other places? The law
12 requires the payment of just
13 compensation, and that just
14 compensation is based on the highest
15 and best use of the property, not it's
16 current use, not as a golf course but
17 its highest and best use.

18 This property enjoys superb zoning
19 and other abilities to make it at least
20 five times more expensive than the Town
21 has anticipated.

22 Now, I know that you were gracious
23 and left the hearing open for 30 days,
24 and we will submit other documents as
25 well. Thank you very much for your

1 attention.

2 MR. SMITH: Hearing from the
3 property owner -- are there any other
4 comments from representatives to the
5 property owner before we move on?

6 MS. GREER: There are people with
7 their hand raised.

8 MR. SHRIVER: Can you hear me?
9 This is Andrew Schriver again.

10 MR. SMITH: Yes, we can hear you,
11 Andrew.

12 MR. SHRIVER: If I may, I just
13 want to supplement a few of the points
14 that Mr. Rikon made. It won't take
15 long because I know that there are a
16 lot of people that want to speak.

17 We have indicated a concern that
18 this is happening in the wake of the
19 Pandemic. I can take note of the
20 Mayor's comment in the beginning of
21 this that we are up to 1,119 people who
22 have contracted Covid which is 312 more
23 than the last time.

24 We've heard the statements that
25 they don't anticipate there being a

1 significant economic impact from that,
2 but respectfully, we think that this is
3 a difficult time for the Town to be
4 pursuing this acquisition.

5 Particularly, as we noted in our
6 correspondence, there was about
7 20 percent or less, and this is a
8 statistic according to the National
9 Golf Association, of the population
10 actually plays golf. When you talk
11 about public benefit during a time when
12 you are investing significant resources
13 in this, there is a concern, not just
14 for the members of Willow Ridge, but we
15 think for the entire community.

16 I did hear Mr. Allegretti speak
17 about credit rating orally, but the
18 fact of the matter is, the club is
19 going to have to -- excuse me -- the
20 Town is going to have to come up with
21 really two tranches of money. And the
22 first, as was indicated, \$14 million
23 was an approximate appraisal. I don't
24 believe that was based on the highest
25 and best use from my recollection.

1 In a highest and best use
2 situation when you are dealing with
3 121 acres that would be part of a
4 subdivision, when you are talking about
5 multiple in terms of the houses that
6 can be developed, and we know that is
7 part of the standard. That's where we
8 discussed that multiple.

9 For us, there is a concern we are
10 in a disagreement, I suppose, the way
11 that discussions happened with the
12 Town. I think it is safe to say that
13 on behalf of the club that we disagree
14 with the matter the way it was
15 characterized. We are happy to
16 continue with discussions. In fact, we
17 believe that any arm's length
18 transaction, be it through the Town or
19 anybody else, quite frankly, is
20 healthier economically.

21 It has been suggested that the
22 Town would be studying how it will pay
23 for this with more specifics.

24 But I, respectfully, urge the Town
25 to answer the question that is on

1 everybody's mind, which is before you
2 move forward with this process and
3 elect to go down this road, that you go
4 beyond saying that you are going to
5 study it, and, in fact, show concrete
6 evidence this is going to be beneficial
7 to the tax payers.

8 We are concerned that some of the
9 data that you are citing is
10 inconsistent with the published data.
11 For example, you cite the fact that the
12 claim that Rye, as an example, of the
13 club that is self-standing and
14 continues to make money. But, in fact,
15 in my letter from December 11th, which
16 I'll refer to as part of the record, I
17 do want to point out that that
18 according to Rye's own annual report in
19 five or less, in ten years lost money.

20 I think what this boils down to on
21 that front is a question that is on a
22 lot of people's mind, other than the
23 people at Willow Ridge, which is
24 exactly how is the Town going to pay
25 for the acquisition. That will be some

1 multiple, in our view, of \$14 million,
2 whatever that winds up being, and just
3 using that number, not to commit to it
4 but by way of example.

5 On top of which, when we talk
6 about public use and recognize the
7 statistic that less than 20 percent of
8 the population actually plays golf,
9 coupled with the fact that there are
10 two County run golf courses and four
11 public golf courses all within 30
12 minutes of driving distance, while I
13 understand that people may be
14 frustrated in terms of not being able
15 to necessarily get a tee time when they
16 want, we would submit this a far more
17 important time to be focusing on issues
18 that affect the taxpayers in a way
19 that, you know, it helps them rather
20 than expanding and pledging tax payer's
21 funds. Even to the extent of taking up
22 debt, the fact of the matter is that
23 the debt needs to be repaid too, and
24 all of that is through the taxpayers
25 pockets.

1 We would respectfully ask that the
2 Town tread carefully in the direction
3 that they are going. We do want to
4 reiterate that in our view we have been
5 cooperative. For what it's worth,
6 today being the first day of the rest
7 of ours lives, we are happy to continue
8 to be cooperative.

9 We hope this is not the end of
10 discussion, both with the Town and the
11 people with the Town. We just ask that
12 you proceed cautiously. Thank you.

13 MR. SMITH: Thank you,
14 Mr. Schriver. I think we can now move
15 on to comments from the public.

16 Mark Spano has his hand up. I'll
17 unmute him.

18 Mr. Spano, can you hear me?

19 MS. GREER: Yes, we can hear you.

20 MR. SMITH: No, this is Brody
21 speaking.

22 Mr. Spano, can you hear us?

23 MS. GREER: You are on mute,
24 Mr. Spano.

25 MR. SMITH: We can't hear you yet,

1 Mr. Spano. There is a mute button on
2 the bottom left side of your screen if
3 you are using a PC.

4 MR. SPANO: Can you hear me now?

5 MR. SMITH: We can. Can you
6 please provide us with your address?

7 MR. SPANO: Yes. I'm a life-long
8 resident of Harrison, currently living
9 at 98 Sunny Ridge Road. Prior to that,
10 I spent my life growing up on Park
11 Avenue in downtown Harrison. The
12 reason I bring that up is because as a
13 young man I walked to Willow Ridge,
14 formally the Harrison Country Club and
15 spent my youth caddying there, which
16 allowed me, and the rest of the caddy
17 chord that play golf on Mondays, that
18 was my introduction to golf, which has
19 been my life-long sport.

20 Additionally, this has some
21 significance to me personally because
22 my uncle, Al Sulla, tried desperately
23 to get the club for the Town of
24 Harrison in the early '60s, and it was
25 the single biggest disappointment in

1 his political career not having been
2 able to affect that.

3 The Town Board's efforts to pursue
4 the Willow Ridge Country Club is a once
5 in our lifetime opportunity.

6 Putting aside the numerous
7 positives that this would bring to the
8 Town, real estate appreciation, added
9 prestige, the single most compelling
10 argument for the acquisition and
11 undisputable reason is simple, the
12 youth of Harrison. There is nothing
13 that we can do that could benefit the
14 kids in our Town more than a world
15 class facility like Willow Ridge, and
16 that's my comments. Thank you.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Spano.
18 Can we move on to the next
19 commenter, please?

20 MR. BERKEY: Mr. Berkey.

21 MR. SMITH: Mr. Berkey, state your
22 address, for the record.

23 MR. BERKEY: First of all, it's
24 David Berkey, B-E-R-K-E-Y. I'm here
25 with my wife, Rachel. Our address is

1 68 South Road in Harrison. We've lived
2 here for more than 30 years.

3 I'm also a member of Willow Ridge
4 Country Club. We have been members for
5 more than 25 years. I've served as
6 president of the club and have been on
7 the Board for more than a dozen years.
8 I recently rejoined the Board to see if
9 we could find the best solution for the
10 membership of Willow Ridge and for the
11 Town of Harrison.

12 I must say that I am very much
13 opposed to the Town of the Harrison
14 trying to take Willow Ridge by eminent
15 domain. When if the Town Board tried
16 to make an offer to us after having
17 said it was going to get an appraisal
18 in 30 days, and much longer than 30
19 days have past and no offer was
20 presented, I don't think the Town Board
21 is really acting in good faith.

22 The Town Board had obtained Troon
23 Management to talk to it about the
24 costs of operating Willow Ridge. We
25 know Troon Management manages

1 Westchester Hills. They could have
2 presented the estimated cost of
3 operating Willow Ridge Country Club
4 within a week of coming through our
5 property. They were given a tour for
6 longer than two hours. They were shown
7 all of the operational portions of
8 Willow Ridge Country Club. It's not a
9 secret that they know what it costs to
10 operate a golf course. They know what
11 it costs to operate catering
12 facilities, and they know what it costs
13 to operate tennis and pools. The
14 information I'm sure it readily
15 available.

16 I submitted a list of questions
17 which, unfortunately, I have not heard
18 any answered, one of them being what
19 was the appraisal that the Town
20 obtained, because the Town, as we all
21 have heard, is supposed to offer
22 highest and best use value to us.

23 I am assuming that the highest and
24 best use value is being held closely to
25 Town Board's chest and maybe it would

1 be released at some point in the future
2 to the public so you can be aware of
3 what the risks are.

4 My most motivation has been to try
5 to work out a deal with Town of
6 Harrison that would benefit the Town
7 and benefit the members of Willow Ridge
8 Country Road.

9 If the Town is going to become the
10 future owner of the club, it would be
11 best served if it was done by a
12 negotiated deal, rather than
13 undertaking the huge risk of going
14 forward in eminent domain proceeding
15 where the cost of the Town for
16 acquisition could be multiples of what
17 a negotiated deal could be.

18 We have heard in your presentation
19 today that right off the bat after
20 spending what could be tens of millions
21 to buy Willow Ridge, you could put
22 another million dollars in to fix the
23 irrigation system or upgrade the
24 irrigation system.

25 And I'm sure you are aware that

1 the operating budget of Willow Ridge
2 over the past several years has been at
3 least \$5 million for those years.

4 This is not an inexpensive
5 operation to takeover. You have to do
6 it with your eyes wide open.

7 For all of those reasons, and
8 those set forth in my letter to the
9 Town Board of December 16th, and the
10 future submissions that we will make
11 before January 7th, we really urge the
12 Board not to go forward with eminent
13 domain but instead to try to work with
14 the Board of Willow Ridge to come up
15 with a deal that is a win win for
16 residents of the Town of Harrison and
17 for the membership of Willow Ridge
18 Country Club.

19 Respectfully, I hope you come to
20 that decision. Thank you all.

21 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
22 time, Mr. Berkey.

23 Who is the next speaker?

24 MR. MINTZER: Lawrence Mintzer.

25 MR. SMITH: Mr. Mintzer, you are

1 still on mute.

2 MR. MINTZER: My name is Lawrence
3 Mintzer. I am the president of Willow
4 Ridge Country Club and have been a
5 Board member for several years.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to
7 speak this evening. I would like to
8 get several points on the record just
9 to correct some of the
10 misrepresentations and misperceptions
11 and the inaccuracies that have been put
12 forth tonight.

13 First, among them is that the club
14 has not been willing to engage in
15 negotiations with the Town and that the
16 Town was left with no choice but to
17 pursue eminent domain. You've heard
18 from a few other speakers, I will echo
19 that is simply not true.

20 I will also put in for the record,
21 while it may have been frustrating, no
22 phone calls or emails were received by
23 me.

24 I'm guessing that they weren't
25 placed or sent, but none of those were

1 received by me. So I apologize for any
2 miscommunication, but I would like to
3 add that as was said by someone else
4 who spoke for us, that we did meet with
5 the Town on three occasions, two of
6 which I was present for, and the first
7 of those meetings was quite early in
8 our process and both the mayor and Town
9 attorney were there and expressed
10 interest in engaging in further
11 discussions.

12 At no time did we say to exclude
13 the Town from continuing in that
14 process, in fact, we offered to extend
15 the time frame for the Town to
16 participate, which was also cited
17 earlier, and we have yet to date have
18 received any such proposal.

19 The Town also indicated this
20 evening that we did not cooperate with
21 your golf consultants, when, in fact,
22 we did spend over two hours touring
23 them through property and only complete
24 the tour when they indicated they were
25 done. I would like to get those things

1 on the record to correct some of the
2 inaccuracies that have specifically
3 been leveled towards me and towards the
4 club.

5 I would also like to add just one
6 more piece of information that the
7 attorney mentioned, the public filings
8 for Rye indicate five over the last ten
9 years.

10 I would like to add filings
11 towards Eastchester indicated that in
12 seven of last ten years they have lost
13 money as well.

14 Thank you very much. I
15 respectfully submit those for your
16 consideration as topics to consider.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Mintzer
18 any others commenters?

19 MR. PICCINNI: Angela Spizado.

20 MS. SPIZADO: Good evening,
21 everybody. I'm Angela Spizado. I'm a
22 lifelong resident of Harrison, 13
23 Gleason Place. I appreciate all the
24 feedback.

25 I just wanted to add that I have

1 been a member at Rye Golf Club for over
2 40 years. I also sit on the Commission
3 and Board of Rye Golf Club, and have
4 in-depth knowledge of the financials
5 and how that club is run. And not a
6 penny of that sub-staining financial
7 club comes out of the taxpayers or the
8 residents of Rye. The members -- all
9 the members, the pool and golf members
10 sustain that golf club. And we have
11 done a great job as long as I have been
12 there. I have been there since I was
13 ten, as a kid, and became a member on
14 my own.

15 It's a great opportunity. I love
16 being at Rye, but I would love to have
17 my own course within Harrison. I'm an
18 avid golfer. I'm a single digit
19 handicap, and to play at Willow Ridge
20 would be ideal for the Harrison
21 residents.

22 My father, who is 90 years old,
23 has grown up in this Town as well, has
24 said it was a great opportunity to have
25 it and a missed opportunity when we

1 didn't acquire it.

2 I appreciate all the feedback from
3 Willow Ridge and their members, but we
4 would be doing an injustice to the
5 residents of Harrison if we do not
6 pursue this because it's a great
7 opportunity for this Town and the
8 growing kids of this Town and to ensure
9 the residents have a place to go, other
10 than spending five hours or six hours
11 on Maple.

12 Thank you. I appreciate all the
13 due diligence everybody is doing on
14 this.

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
16 comments.

17 I also have noted that there are
18 questions in the Q&A. We will make
19 sure to include those questions as part
20 of the record.

21 Is there another person would like
22 to speak?

23 Jonathan Burkham.

24 Mr. Burkham, unmute and state your
25 address for the record.

1 MR. BURKHAM: 9 Winfield Avenue.
2 I have been here three years. What I
3 want to mention, is it possible -- what
4 I'm concerned about is, if the club was
5 acquired for residential use, we don't
6 know where things it could be in a
7 couple of years in Washington,
8 et cetera. They could hypothetically
9 go to apartment buildings like with
10 federal decree.

11 Is it impossible that they could
12 not build apartments with the way
13 things can change with Washington and
14 our society. We don't know what is
15 guaranteed in a 1-acre zone. I'm
16 asking is that possible? Because I am
17 worried if they build apartments, it
18 will overwhelm Harrison School
19 District.

20 MR. SMITH: Mr. Burkham, if there
21 are any comments you want to make.

22 MR. BURKHAM: My comment is, if
23 you allow this property to be -- if you
24 don't -- if you take the property, you
25 know you are going to get a great

1 facility for Harrison for a hundred
2 years, we know that.

3 If you don't take the property and
4 it goes residential, it is possible you
5 could have hundreds of apartments on
6 that property. You don't to wheat the
7 Federal Government is going to do, you
8 don't know what decrees are going to
9 happen. You would overwhelm the
10 Harrison Avenue School. We don't know
11 what could happen. People need to be
12 aware of that. I'm not saying it
13 would, but it is possible, so we should
14 take the club. It would be great for
15 the children of Harrison, it would be
16 great for the community to take this
17 club. We should do it.

18 MR. SMITH: Understood. Thank
19 you, sir.

20 Are there any other?

21 MR. PICCINNI: Ms. Nancy
22 Pependretis.

23 MS. POPENDRETIS: I didn't raise
24 my hand to speak. Sorry.

25 MR. SMITH: Understood, thank you,

1 ma'am. Thank you.

2 Are there any other people ready
3 to speak?

4 MR. STEIN: Jeffrey Stein.

5 MR. SMITH: Mr. Stein, if you
6 could unmute.

7 MR. STEIN: Can you hear me?

8 MR. SMITH: I can hear you now.
9 State your name and address for the
10 record.

11 MR. STEIN: My name is Jeffrey
12 Stein. Unfortunately, I live in
13 Scarsdale, so don't hold that against
14 me.

15 I am a member of Willow Ridge and
16 a chairman of the Green's Committee,
17 and I just wanted to clarify one point,
18 and maybe this is mostly for Mr. Cart
19 and Troon.

20 We have been anticipating
21 rebuilding the irrigation system. We
22 have had multiple bids. The best bid
23 that we have is from a company that you
24 will be well familiar with called
25 Pantos, which is the biggest supplier

1 of irrigation systems in the
2 Westchester area having done many
3 clubs, and the cost will be a minimum
4 of \$2 million.

5 My friend, David Berkey, before
6 mentioned a million. We are going way
7 above that. That is just to upgrade
8 the system. That is not to rebuild the
9 system. To do that would cost 3- to
10 \$4 million. That is a normal cost in
11 this area.

12 Fairview spent over \$3 million a
13 few years ago. Apple Wallace has plans
14 to redo their irrigation system and a
15 cost of excess of \$4 million with a
16 contingency of half million dollars on
17 top of that.

18 Above the irrigation system, there
19 is a plenty of other capital projects
20 that need to be done.

21 I sent a letter the other day
22 outlining for your information what we
23 thought were the priority projects for
24 the club that includes dredging the
25 pond. We have about five acres of

1 ponds holding over a million gallons of
2 water. Although we have to buy our
3 water, we do not have our own water
4 supply. Those ponds haven't been
5 dredged in over 20 years. They are
6 maybe a foot to a foot and a half deep
7 at this point.

8 When they were done years ago they
9 were in excess of 6 feet deep. They
10 will no longer support any aquatic
11 life. All the fish that we stocked in
12 there have, unfortunately, died from
13 lack of oxygen. There is very little
14 water circulation in the ponds. They
15 are not capable anymore. As you
16 mentioned, before, we have water
17 issues -- they are not capable -- which
18 they showed a couple of weeks ago when
19 we had rains of holding enough water
20 without causing flooding on the course.

21 Lastly, and I'll finish, we have a
22 lot of maintenance equipment. The
23 original cost, we have an excess of
24 \$1.3 million in equipment. Much is
25 old. We have lots of pieces right now

1 that are not functional, that would
2 need to be repaired for next season.

3 And I'm sure Mr. Cart knows better
4 than anybody that the course has to be
5 ready to be serviced with the
6 maintenance crew by the middle of
7 March, depending upon weather because
8 the season would begin at the beginning
9 of April, and there simply wouldn't be
10 enough equipment functioning to do
11 that.

12 So there is a lot of work that has
13 to be done if there is going to be a
14 season next year. Thank you for
15 listening.

16 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Stein.

17 Are there any other citizens who
18 wish to speak?

19 MR. PICCINNI: Christine Finer.

20 MR. FINER: Hey everyone, can you
21 hear me? This is actually Mike Finer,
22 Christine's husband.

23 MR. SMITH: Yes, Mr. Finer, we can
24 hear you. State your address and you
25 may begin.

1 MR. FINER: Thank you very much.

2 2 Taconic Trail in Harrison. I
3 appreciate your time. Apologies for
4 the kid noises in the background. Just
5 trying to put them in bed now.

6 I wanted to reach out to say,
7 really, with them in mind, very
8 familiar with Troon organizations. I
9 have been in a member at Rye Golf for a
10 few years. I want to say I am very
11 confident in our Town's ability to
12 manage a municipal golf course. To me
13 it sounds similar to the Hudson Hills
14 approach of a premium municipality
15 course. I would say if the value
16 received is commensurate with what you
17 received in something like Rye Golf, I
18 look forward to what the Town has and
19 what they are able to present in the
20 future. Thank you.

21 MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir.

22 Are there any other citizens that
23 wish to speak?

24 MR. PICCINNI: Ron Chamerwitz.

25 MR. CHAMERWITZ: Can you hear me

1 now?

2 MR. PICCINNI: We can hear you,
3 sir.

4 MR. CHAMERWITZ: I'm just curious.
5 My feeling is that the Board is
6 underestimating what the costs are
7 going to be both in acquiring the club
8 and maintaining the club, et cetera.

9 Are you as a Board willing to
10 commit to the residents that there will
11 be no impact in terms of an increase in
12 our taxes as a result of this
13 acquisition and maintenance of the club
14 over the ensuing period. To be honest
15 with you, it doesn't feel like that
16 based on what I'm hearing here.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chamerwitz.

19 MR. CHAMERWITZ: 12 Clinton Lane,
20 Harrison, New York.

21 MR. SMITH: Did you have any other
22 comments?

23 MR. CHAMERWITZ: No, that's it.

24 MR. SMITH: I'm sorry?

25 MR. CHAMERWITZ: No further

1 comments.

2 MR. SMITH: Thank you very much
3 for your comments, sir.

4 Are there any other citizens that
5 who wish to speak?

6 MR. PICCINNI: A Jeanette
7 Gralonstani (inaudible).

8 MS. GRALONSTANI: I want to
9 express my support for this project. I
10 have been a Harrison resident for 16
11 years now. I raised my two children in
12 Harrison. This would be a fantastic
13 opportunity for the Town residents, for
14 the families with young children.

15 I don't think the Town is
16 underestimating anything. I think,
17 from what I'm hearing, they wish to
18 have more time to consider their
19 options and study this idea.

20 I think we owe it to the Town to
21 really look into it and try for the
22 benefit of the Town to acquire this
23 property.

24 My address is 9 Belmont Avenue.

25 MR. SMITH: Thank you very much

1 for your comments, ma'am.

2 Is there anybody else who would
3 like to speak.

4 MR. PICCINNI: Elizabeth Chaeffer.

5 MS. CHAEFFER: Yes. My address is
6 Purchase Hills Drive in Purchase, New
7 York.

8 I have a questions for either the
9 lawyers for Willow Ridge or any people
10 from Willow Ridge that are still on,
11 and that is, are you considering
12 selling the club and the property and
13 the golf course and everything to any
14 real estate developers?

15 MR. SMITH: Ma'am, if there are
16 any other comments? We will make sure
17 we will record all of your questions
18 but your comments have to be directed
19 to the Board.

20 Is there anything you would like
21 to say?

22 MS. CHAEFFER: I would like to
23 thank the Board for their work and
24 their due diligence on all of this and
25 I want to thank them for their attempts

1 to develop this as a concept and a
2 reality for the Harrison residents. I
3 think it is a great effort on their
4 part.

5 And I would love to find out
6 whether or not Willow Ridge is
7 attempting to sell it to real estate
8 developers, and if you would be so kind
9 and I appreciate it.

10 MR. SMITH: We absolutely will
11 make that question part of the record.

12 MS. CHAEFFER: Thank you very
13 much.

14 MR. SMITH: Are there any further
15 applicants that would like to speak?

16 MR. PICCINNI: Elizabeth Brown.

17 MR. BROWN: Hello. This is Hunter
18 Brown. Can you hear me?

19 MR. SMITH: We can.
20 State your address.

21 MR. BROWN: We are residents of 95
22 Sterling Road in Harrison. We have
23 lived here for eight years. I would
24 love to make three points.

25 First, we are incredibly

1 supportive in this initiative involving
2 the property at Willow Ridge. The
3 first point I would like to make, and
4 this is really a compliment of you the
5 Board, in sitting at a number of school
6 board meetings, a AAA rating around
7 this area is extremely rare. And the
8 way in which you have handled our
9 finances in complex situations and a
10 multi-million dollar budget project is,
11 I think, a validation of how you can
12 take over this project and make it as
13 equally profitable and amicable as Rye
14 Golf and other places.

15 Second point, we belong to a club
16 in the surrounding area that annexes
17 the property. I have multiple friends
18 that play at Willow Ridge. The last
19 thing they want is for this to become a
20 residential development with multiple
21 houses. They want this to be a golf
22 course.

23 The third point I would like to
24 make, and I think Mr. Spano did a great
25 job earlier today when logging on, is

1 just the importance of golf, tennis,
2 swimming, and the commodity and what an
3 amazing place this would for our three
4 boys to grow up and play with their
5 friends in the community, and for this
6 to be a place where we could eat and
7 spend time with friends and family in
8 the community.

9 With that said, we are very
10 supportive of the initiative and think
11 it is a once in a lifetime opportunity.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

14 Would anybody else like to
15 comment?

16 MR. PICCINNI: Amy Lindsey. Can
17 you hear me?

18 MR. SMITH: We can.

19 MS. LINDSEY: My husband, Bob, and
20 live down the tree at 30 High Fill Road
21 in Sunny Ridge. We have lived here
22 almost 30 years.

23 I also want to commend the Board
24 for trying to make this happen. I hope
25 you can work with Willow Ridge and work

1 on all the pertinent details.

2 One overriding thing to me besides
3 everything everyone that has already
4 stated that hasn't really been stated,
5 is just the importance of preserving
6 open green space. Anyone who has seen
7 the golf course at Willow Ridge is just
8 magnificent. To think once it goes and
9 is 21 houses, it never comes back. I
10 support it, on top of all the other
11 reasons, just for that reason.

12 I also think it would be a huge
13 boost to property values and help
14 distinguish our town at a time when
15 lots of people are moving out of the
16 City and looking at the different towns
17 surrounding us. I think it would be
18 something that really can't be
19 understated.

20 The other thing I'm wondering if
21 the Board had looked into and
22 considered if the Board had not heard
23 mentioned was the opportunity to
24 monetize Willow Ridge and have it pay
25 for itself in terms of the use of the

1 banqueting facilities for people not
2 just in the Town. But it is a
3 possibility that if structured
4 correctly it could also throw off quite
5 a bit of money. Obviously, we are
6 looking into the future a bit, things
7 being what they are at the moment.

8 Down the road, this is a long-term
9 investment with long-term things that
10 need to be considered and that's
11 certainly one of them.

12 I don't even think when Willow
13 Ridge -- I don't think in the last ten
14 years that I've lived here that Willow
15 Ridge itself did a good enough job
16 modernizing their wonderful facilities.

17 Thank you very much. Good luck.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
19 comments, ma'am.

20 Is there anyone else who would
21 like to comment?

22 MR. PICCINNI: Alex Rackoff.

23 MR. RACKOFF: Hello everyone.
24 Alex Rackoff. I live in Scarsdale, New
25 York. I have been a member of Willow

1 Ridge.

2 I just want to say there has been
3 a lot of points thrown out about the
4 use of Harrison. I just graduated
5 college. The last five years has been
6 my youth here at Willow Ridge. I know
7 it doesn't sound like anyone from my
8 perspective has spoke yet and maybe
9 I'll be the only one. But, you know, I
10 have cousins, I have nieces, I have
11 brothers, sisters who are still in
12 their youth here. This is our youth.
13 If you want to talk about youth. It
14 seems like one youth getting stripped
15 from another. It just doesn't seem
16 fair.

17 I do want to make another. I
18 wasn't as involved in this entire
19 process. Through the beginning it
20 seems like it has gone pretty quickly.

21 In an opening statement something
22 was said along the lines of Willow
23 Ridge looking to sprinkle more capital
24 to their investors.

25 I am hoping that wasn't directed

1 at the members of Willow Ridge. I'm
2 not an investor. I am a human being.
3 I am a person who grew up in Scarsdale.
4 I have grandparents that grew up in
5 Harrison. My father grew up in
6 Harrison. I'm sure if they were still
7 around and heard people mentioning
8 their son and grandkids as investors
9 and not human beings in people, I think
10 they would be ashamed to hear that.

11 Thanks for listening.

12 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
13 comments, Mr. Rackoff.

14 Are there any other people who
15 would like to comment?

16 MR. PICCINNI: Jay Cannel.

17 MR. CANNEL: Yes, can everyone
18 hear me?

19 MR. SMITH: Yes. We can hear you
20 now.

21 MR. CANNEL: I am Jay Cannel. I
22 am a 30-year member of Willow Ridge.
23 I'm on the board of directors, or board
24 of governors at Willow Ridge for full
25 disclosure.

1 I want to just reiterate, as a
2 number of our other board members have,
3 is that we have been and have always
4 been willing to sit down with you and
5 to try to work this out and not go to
6 the process of eminent domain.

7 It seems to me there was a little
8 bit of miscommunication. We had
9 multiple bids, but we will be telling
10 you this now on the record and we will
11 sit down with you as soon as possible
12 and try to work something out.

13 I think it is important that
14 everyone is truthful, and I'll make an
15 example of that.

16 One of the letters that we saw,
17 obviously, everyone saw coming from one
18 of your people that you work with the
19 first sentence I believe is, Willow
20 Ridge will be closing their doors on
21 December 31st.

22 Where did you get that statement
23 from? We are not closing our doors.
24 I'm not really sure, but that is
25 directly in writing coming from one of

1 your people. As we continue to read
2 the letter that goes on and on there
3 are mixed truths.

4 So the only way that this will
5 work is to sit down and try to work
6 something out. I think, as our
7 attorneys have shown, when you figure
8 out an eminent domain it is for the
9 best and the word, highest use.

10 A couple of you are --
11 assister-ance have asked about building
12 land. It has always been our least
13 option to build homes on the property.
14 However, if we are forced to go the
15 eminent domain road, we are going to
16 find the best and highest use.

17 Our main objective has always been
18 to make it whereby our members continue
19 to play golf at a club that we have
20 been at for many years.

21 As I said before, again, we are
22 willing to sit down and speak with you.
23 I believe that in the past number of
24 years there has been very, very few. I
25 believe there was two in the last 50

1 years municipalities that have actually
2 executed emanant domain on a golf
3 course such as this.

4 But as I said before, we have
5 many, many friends -- I want to also
6 make a point of the youth. For the
7 last three years we have invited the
8 youth from all of the other towns at no
9 cost to play a tournament against each
10 other.

11 We have had colleges and high
12 school at no cost practice at our
13 course during the week.

14 We have probably had 20 to 30
15 charities over each year at a minimal
16 cost to hold their operations at our
17 club, including the Mamaroneck Police,
18 we support the Harrison Police and
19 other organizations.

20 So as Mr. Rackoff has said, to
21 talk about sprinkling the money along
22 our investors, there are no investors,
23 okay? It could be further from the
24 truth.

25 But I would like to reiterate the

1 fact -- and I have heard very good
2 things about Mr. Belmont from my
3 brother that lives in Harrison, that it
4 is important that if we sit down and
5 try to figure out a way to work this
6 out, it could potentially cost your
7 Town members a hell of a lot less money
8 that we all know could potentially
9 happen if this goes the emanant domain
10 route.

11 I thank you for your time.

12 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
13 comment, Mr. Cannel.

14 Is there anyone that would like to
15 speak?

16 MR. RACKOFF: Steve Rackoff.

17 Can you guys hear me?

18 MR. SMITH: Yes, we can.

19 MR. RACKOFF: I am Steve Rackoff,
20 long time resident of Harrison now
21 living in Scarsdale.

22 I just want to thank everybody for
23 the open forumn. It seems like a real
24 collaboration of willingness to get to
25 all the facts here for each side's

1 positions. I'm not going to do a
2 carefully scripted red dialogue which
3 kind of paints the picture of what
4 happened in October.

5 I myself am very frustrated at the
6 characterizations and
7 misrepresentations in Mr. Allegretti's
8 post in his presentation. I don't
9 think we had equal access, and I'm
10 grateful that we have this access now
11 to be able to have an open dialogue.

12 I'm proud of my son, Alex, for
13 speaking for his generation. My father
14 was one of the original members in
15 1966. He got a bunch of people
16 together for this club that was
17 available for purchase. That club and
18 those members put together a group and
19 created Willow Ridge Country Club, Inc.
20 It's the same country club for the last
21 54 years.

22 What took place after that fact is
23 really a frustrating factor, a taste
24 in, I guess, the citizens of Harrison
25 who have gone on to become leaderships

1 now.

2 The Town under on John Pasadomo
3 attempted to keep Willow Ridge through
4 emanant domain in the court system.

5 What Mr. Allegretti kind of
6 alluded to is not the total picture.
7 Justice Dylan approved in favor of
8 Willow Ridge and the matter was stopped
9 because of violation of procedure law
10 in the referendum to bonds the purchase
11 of the club.

12 Why is that that important now?

13 A, I don't think there is probably
14 ever been a case of the Town taking
15 second bite of the apple of a private
16 group -- and this would be a unusual
17 precedent. I'd be curious to see how
18 that would play out in a court of law.
19 None of us would want that. But I'm
20 not going read from a carefully
21 scripted text. I'm going to state
22 this:

23 I was at the October 27th meeting
24 with Mr. Allegretti and the rest of the
25 Harrison contingent. I am frustrated

1 because you were welcome with open
2 arms, and I find it hard to believe,
3 although you were given a heads up that
4 there would be an equal process for
5 those bidding on this club and in an
6 attempt to be transparent, you then
7 stated that you couldn't move that fast
8 and that you needed to get all of your
9 ducks in a row.

10 So what's frustrated for me now
11 is, you received the same letter that
12 everyone else received on the 29th, and
13 miraculously, on the 29th you had
14 entered a Town Board vote to have a
15 meeting at 10:00 the next day. At
16 10:00 the next day, you approved
17 \$50,000 to our good friends at Bond,
18 Schoeneck & King. And I find that hard
19 to believe in less than 24 hours that
20 was followed eight minutes later by the
21 lower Hudson press release of
22 Mr. Allegretti's preprepared
23 statements.

24 I'm very frustrated because I grew
25 up in this Town. My father gave a

1 legacy to me. I intended to give a
2 legacy to my children, and I was
3 hopeful my children could give that
4 legacy to their children.

5 To my friend Mark Spano, Mark, you
6 do remember the caddy days and you also
7 remember the caddy scholarships Willow
8 Ridge has put out for 54 years. And
9 everybody knows that Willow Ridge as
10 always been a part of the fabric of
11 this community.

12 I understand fears, and I
13 understand the value of getting a
14 private club like this. There is just
15 one issue for me personally. My family
16 has worked hard, just like all of you
17 good folks, spent millions of dollars,
18 my father, myself, my brothers and
19 pumped it into this club. If you are
20 going to the tell Harrison taxpayers
21 that a drainage system or a sprinkler
22 system is an insignificant amount of
23 money when we have estimates between 2-
24 and \$4 million that has nothing to do
25 with what can go wrong with this club.

1 You can have light from diseases.

2 Sandy caused millions of dollars worth
3 of tree damage and saline, damage to
4 our greens.

5 All we're saying is, there is a
6 lot of variability to operating a golf
7 club, and you mentioned that you want
8 to operate a high-end club, and I
9 respect that.

10 Here is the question, if we are
11 paying \$25,000 plus as private citizens
12 in annual dues, and we have say 200
13 members and a \$500 million operating
14 budget, how are you going to reduce to
15 the times. Mr. Frank Allegretti, so you
16 get a tee time in your model, we had
17 more answers here than ever and we can
18 even make cost typically, exactly match
19 revenue and that's at \$25,000 plus in
20 dues each other. How are you going to
21 offer something better to the community
22 folks that is a guaranteed stabilized
23 cost that equals revenue, when,
24 respectfully, to Ms. Angelas Spizado,
25 why is it that the City of Rye posts

1 these losses on their own budget which
2 is publicly held on the Internet. Go
3 ahead and look it up. This isn't our
4 numbers.

5 So we are concerned. We feel we
6 have a rights. We think a proper open,
7 transparent, honest dialogue is much
8 more beneficial. That's what I have to
9 say in terms of that component of
10 fairness.

11 I would like for this to remain
12 transparent and for everybody to become
13 more and more educated. Our friends
14 are going to get the advice they need
15 from their counsel. We have the advice
16 we need from my counsel. And when you
17 are under attack, which is what we feel
18 we are, we are going to be put in a
19 position to defend our rights.

20 However, as a Harrison resident
21 from all those years, to all my
22 classmates out there, all I can tell
23 you is that I don't want to be taken
24 advantage of. I want to be treated
25 fairly with respect. That's the basis

1 moving forward with any positive
2 outcome.

3 So, respectfully, I thank you for
4 the opportunity to talk.

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
6 comments, Mr. Rackoff.

7 Is there anyone else that would
8 like to speak?

9 MR. PICCINNI: John Vasta.

10 If you can unmute. You are still
11 on mute. We can't hear you yet. There
12 is a button on the left-hand corner of
13 your screen, if you are using a PC. We
14 can't hear you yet, Mr. Vasta.
15 Mr. Vasta, you are still muted. If
16 could press the mute button, unmute
17 yourself.

18 COUNCILMAN GORDON: Brody, he is
19 our chief of police. He might just be
20 on our meeting and just mistakenly may
21 have hit the button.

22 MR. SMITH: We will go on to the
23 next speaker. If Mr. Vast raises his
24 hand we can try again and try and
25 speak.

1 Would anyone else like to speak?

2 MS. GREER: It doesn't look like
3 there are any more people raising their
4 hand. We do have 12 questions.

5 Do you see more?

6 MR. PICCINNI: Jason Pellagree.

7 MS. PELLAGREE: How are you? It's
8 actually Pamela Strauss Pallagree.

9 MR. SMITH: I can hear you, ma'am.
10 If you can state your address, you may
11 begin.

12 MS. PELLAGREE: Yes, 2 Sunny Ridge
13 Plaza. I have been a long-time
14 resident of Harrison. I grew up here.
15 I moved back here to start my family.
16 I have been a member of Willow Ridge
17 for the better part of Willow Ridge.
18 The highest and best use for Willow
19 Ridge is to remain just that a, golf
20 club.

21 Entertaining offers from
22 residential developers and private
23 schools does not serve our community
24 well, if at all. Our schools are
25 taxed. We are maxed out.

1 I appreciate people outside of
2 Harrison signing onto speak.

3 I appreciate Alex and some of the
4 kids and teenagers and people from
5 Scarsdale. I know many people that
6 have spoken out, but, you know what,
7 they don't live in Harrison and we do.
8 We have enjoyed Willow Ridge for many,
9 many, many years. We would be losing a
10 landmark property, a signature
11 championship golf course.

12 We would be losing a beautiful
13 large open space for both private and
14 public venues.

15 I'm just not clear. I'm listening
16 so carefully. I'm just not clear on
17 why anyone would be opposed to the Town
18 acquiring and maintaining the integrity
19 of what Willow Ridge has been.

20 We were already told our taxes
21 will barely, if at all, be affected by
22 this acquisition. We know by the Town
23 owning this will increase our property
24 value.

25 I'm just trying to wrap my head

1 around the opposition. It just doesn't
2 smell right. To me it's a home run for
3 everyone in this Town. I appreciate
4 your time.

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
6 comments.

7 Is there anyone else who would
8 like to speak?

9 MR. PICCINNI: Cliff Kendall.

10 MR. KENDALL: Hi, can everyone
11 hear me?

12 I just want to start. I do
13 support the acquisition of the club. I
14 will make a caveat to that. I'm not
15 necessarily a fan of the practice of
16 emanant domain. I will look forward to
17 learning why we are going that route.
18 I take that upon myself as a
19 responsibility to learn more.

20 I want to address some of the
21 things that were brought up. Alex, the
22 younger gentleman who grew up at the
23 club. He spoke eloquently about his
24 childhood there and the advantages of
25 the club.

1 I think we need to take in mind
2 that the club becoming a Town property
3 and a public entity won't exclude any
4 child or family from becoming members
5 of the club. Right now there are
6 certain folks who join private clubs
7 because they are private, right? And
8 there are certainly benefits to having
9 a private opportunity, private
10 facility, limiting number of folks and
11 folks that want to be members with, but
12 I think that the Town has a great
13 opportunity here to expose not just the
14 children of the Town but adults. Like
15 myself, I live right around the corner
16 from the club. I live at 660 Harrison
17 Avenue, which is literally around the
18 corner from the club. Again, I could
19 but don't choose to spend 25 or \$50,000
20 or a hundred thousand dollars to join
21 the club. I would love the opportunity
22 to play more golf. I think there are a
23 lot of children and adults in the Town
24 that have that desire as well and have
25 an affordable option with the club.

1 To the point, one of the gentleman
2 brought up earlier, that golfers are a
3 limited population in the country.
4 That's a fact, but the facility
5 provides for a lot more than just golf.
6 We have tennis, swimming, and the event
7 forumn in the clubhouse that can be
8 used by every member of the Town. All
9 of those benefit the Town.

10 I don't get up to the pool or lake
11 very often, but I know it's always very
12 crowded. So the Town having another
13 swimming facility I think would be a
14 great advantage, even if it's at a
15 greater cost than the other Town pools
16 today.

17 Going to the environmental impact
18 statements, there were some things that
19 the gentlemen mentioned, there are a
20 lot of environmental impacts to be
21 considered. I would state, if the
22 property is sold to a developer, that
23 is a much bigger environmental impact
24 to our Town than the Town using it as a
25 golf course.

1 There are 120 homes being built up
2 on wetlands and open space, is
3 certainly going to be an impact to
4 those wetlands. I imagine it not only
5 being a large impact but also a huge
6 financial and time consuming task for
7 that developer to go through.

8 I think that the property could be
9 held up, if they are trying to sell it
10 to developers, can be held up for a
11 great period of time for that purpose
12 and also have an impact on how waters
13 flow through this community.

14 There was also a point brought up
15 about COVID. I don't really understand
16 why. COVID, while it's certainly a
17 concern for everybody, not just in
18 Harrison but all over the country, I
19 don't see any relevance to this matter,
20 especially when we are talking about
21 social distance support, and I'm not
22 sure why the gentleman brought it up.

23 I appreciate you listening to me,
24 and I do support this and do hope to
25 learn more about the emanant domain

1 process.

2 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
3 comments, Mr. Kendall.

4 Is there anyone else who would
5 like to speak?

6 MR. PICCINNI: Robert Egan.

7 MR. SMITH: Mr. Egan, you need to
8 unmute your screen there.

9 MR. EGAN: Good evening. Thank
10 you.

11 MR. SMITH: We can hear you now.
12 If you can state your address you
13 may begin.

14 MR. EGAN: Yes. 47 Fenimore
15 Drive. I have been a resident of
16 Harrison since 1976. My one concern --
17 I have actually two concerns.

18 The one thing I would really say
19 -- a lot of the things about the
20 possible profitability of a Town golf
21 course has been addressed to some
22 degree, I beg to differ that Rye Golf
23 has actually been profitable or self
24 sustaining. I think that is not a --
25 something that you can say is true.

1 Also, I'm more concerned, one
2 question -- not that I support any
3 development the Willow Ridge property
4 is, has the Town addressed the fact
5 that the tax revenue could far outweigh
6 the benefit of actually having a Town
7 golf course?

8 MR. SMITH: Do you have any other
9 comments, sir?

10 MR. EGAN: No, I don't.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your
12 comment.

13 Is there anyone else who would
14 like to speak?

15 MR. PICCINNI: Hannah Kenny.

16 MS. KENNY: Yes, hi. I'm Hannah
17 Kenny. I live at 239 Sunny Ridge Road.
18 My family and I have been here about
19 four-and-a-half years. It's been
20 really terrific hearing people's input
21 tonight. I don't have much experience
22 with Willow Ridge. We are not members
23 there or anything, but I have a lot of
24 empathy for the families that have
25 spoken tonight about their experience,

1 the years they have spent there and the
2 blood, sweat and tears they have
3 invested into the place.

4 And I hope that if the Town does
5 succeed in acquiring this property,
6 that there is some way that we can
7 maintain a nod toward that legacy.

8 I'm pretty excited about the
9 prospects of the Town being able to
10 acquire this hopefully not through
11 emanant domain but something through a
12 better form of negotiation. I do think
13 it would be nothing but a home run for
14 our Town.

15 The one input that I wanted to
16 provide is that I have noticed since
17 living here that there are a lot of --
18 there are not a lot of sidewalks in the
19 Town where there is a lot of public
20 access where people walking through
21 different neighborhoods to get to
22 different places.

23 I'm excited that I think that
24 there is going to be sidewalk that is
25 going to create continuation on Union

1 between the middle school and the high
2 school which should provide a safe for
3 the children to be able to get to
4 school.

5 And if this does happen and if the
6 club is going to be used by a lot of
7 children, I would like to just state
8 here that it would be wonderful if the
9 Town would consider putting sidewalks
10 somewhere along the way from Union up
11 to a safe crossing up to get to the
12 club itself.

13 We are on Sunny Ridge. People
14 come through Sunny Ridge quite a bit,
15 traffic in and out of the train
16 station. That is a fairly logical way
17 that children would walk up to be able
18 to get that way.

19 That's very down the road, but I
20 just thought I would put it out there
21 at this moment that along Harris Avenue
22 it would be really nice to have more
23 safe passageways to be able to have
24 these recreations. Thank you.

25 MR. SMITH: Thank you for the

1 comments, Ms. Kenny.

2 Is there anyone else that would
3 like to speak?

4 MR. PICCINNI: Pat Perito.

5 MS. PERITO: I just had a
6 question. I live on 6 Irving Place in
7 Franklin Park. No ridges from where
8 I'm coming from.

9 I've lived in Harrison my whole
10 life. I want to know if the Board is
11 going to put together a proposed budget
12 on how this will impact the Town's
13 budget and taxes?

14 MR. SMITH: Do you have any
15 additional comments?

16 MR. PERITO: No. I think I'm
17 going to put them together on paper.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you very much
19 for speaking.

20 Would anybody else like to speak?

21 MS. GREER: I don't see anybody
22 else raising their hand.

23 Do you, Mike?

24 MR. PICCINNI: No.

25 MR. SMITH: Can we record the

1 written comments and the Q&A? Can we
2 preserve that or do I need to read
3 those up?

4 MS. GREER: No. I can read them,
5 if you want. I don't know how you want
6 to handle the anonymous ones.

7 MR. SMITH: We don't have to read
8 them out loud. If we record them and
9 put them in the record, that's
10 adequate.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is a Mike
12 Piccinni question.

13 Mike, are we going to be able to be
14 preserve the questions and make them
15 part of the record?

16 MR. PICCINNI: I think you can go
17 back to them and review the recording,
18 but I'll just copy and paste them into
19 a Word document.

20 MR. SMITH: Why don't you do that,
21 that way we can make sure they are
22 apart of the record and everyone on the
23 Board can see them.

24 MS. GREER: Otherwise, I can
25 spectate pictures if, Mike, you can't.

1 Let me know if you don't get it,
2 Mike.

3 MR. SMITH: Hearing there are no
4 additional speakers, I'll turn this
5 back over to you, Mr. Allegretti.

6 My recommendation, based on our
7 conversations leading up to this
8 meeting, is that the public hearing be
9 left open, and if that's the desire of
10 the Board, you can move on to the
11 balance of your agenda.

12 COUNCILMAN GORDON: That's fine.
13 What I'll do, Mr. Mayor, members of the
14 Board, if anyone would like to make any
15 comment at this time, certainly the
16 Board has the opportunity. If they
17 don't want to. They don't have to.

18 Certainly, we are going to
19 suggest, as Mr. Smith suggested, to
20 continue this to the January 7th
21 meeting for additional comment period,
22 additional information, and then the
23 matter will hopefully be concluded on
24 the next meeting.

25 MAYOR BELMONT: Any of the Board

1 members have any comments?

2 Can you see me?

3 MR. SMITH: Yes.

4 MAYOR BELMONT: I appreciate
5 everybody's comments tonight, and we
6 will review them and any other comments
7 in the January meeting.

8 MR. PICCINNI: I would just add
9 that it appears that some people may
10 have been maxed out by Zoom.

11 I extend them the opportunity to
12 participate in the next meeting in
13 January. I apologize for that
14 happening.

15 MS. GREER: Mike Piccinni, did we
16 have a max on the meeting; no, right?

17 MR. PICCINNI: There is a 500 max
18 limit on the webinar. There were some
19 people that sent me emails and said
20 that the password was not right. I
21 tried to re-register them. Two people
22 sent me emails. Hopefully, they got on
23 eventually. I'm not sure if they did
24 or not.

25 MS. GREER: We are not near the

1 max. We have 200.

2 COUNCILMAN GORDON: For whatever
3 reason, I was alerted to a couple of
4 people who got emails saying their
5 authorization to enter the meeting was
6 revoked, please join on Facebook. I
7 assumed that that was a volume
8 limitation problem.

9 MR. PICCINNI: I think they put
10 their passwords in wrong and it locked
11 them out.

12 COUNCILMAN GORDON: Okay. Thank
13 you.

14 MAYOR BELMONT: Recess the public
15 hearing.

16 COUNCILMAN GORDON: It is
17 continued to January 7th.

18 MAYOR BELMONT: Motion to continue
19 it to January 7th.

20 COUNCILMAN SCILIANO: I'll make
21 that motion.

22 COUNCILMAN DIONISIO: I'll second.

23 MAYOR BELMONT: All those in
24 favor?

25 (Whereupon, all Board members

1 replied, "aye.")

2 MAYOR BELMONT: Thank you, Brody.
3 Everyone feel good? Okay. Keep going.
4 Everyone need a break?

5 That's actions and resolutions.

6 (Executive session.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
COUNTY OF NASSAU)

I, JANINE M. COLASANTI, a Notary Public
for and within the State of New York, do
hereby certify:

That the within transcript is a true
and accurate record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am not related
to any of the parties to this action by
blood or by marriage and that I am in no way
interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
on the 12th day of January, 2021

* * *

Janine M. Colasanti

JANINE M. COLASANTI, RPR