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Hon. Frank deMayo, Town Supervisor
Town of Liberty
120 North Main St, Liberty, NY 12754

April 21 2020

Public comment on the Town of Liberty's proposal to upgrade the Swan Lake WWTP

Dear Frank,

As everyone knows, the Swan Lake sewer plant is outdated, faces periodic compliance failures and struggles to meet capacity during two months of the year when seasonal visitors are in residence. This plant must therefore be brought into compliance immediately - not in three years time - and updated for the future in a way that is cost-effective for taxpayers and respects the community's desire to maintain the rural character and natural beauty of Swan Lake.

The revised proposal presented at the Public Hearing on April 20 is better than the version that was presented at the last Public Hearing on August 31 2020 because it reduces the planned expansion of the plant's capacity to 686,000 GPD and says that cost-saving measures will be "actively considered."

But given that there will still be substantial impacts on sewer rates (which will rise by up to 82%), property taxes (which will increase by up to 15%), and residential development in the sewer district (which will add up to a thousand new housing units), the Town must concretely commit to and implement measures to understand and ameliorate these impacts. In the absence of such measures I cannot support this proposal.

Therefore, specifically and within the next nine months, the Town must:

- a) Reduce the amount borrowed to finance this proposal and the corresponding level of debt service to no more than \$10 million through a combination of grants, hook-up fees, other contributions from developers, and value engineering. These measures must be fully implemented within an identified timeframe and not merely "considered." Now that the Town has publicly committed to incorporating such cost-saving measures it will be held publicly accountable for delivering on these commitments. If this does not happen, the Town will have failed the Swan Lake community. This will make it even more difficult to rebuild trust between the community and the Town Board.

- b) Make sure that any new development that is made possible by this proposal respects the rural character, natural environment and scenic beauty of Swan Lake - since that is what attracts people to live here and invest their time and energies into improving their community. This means undertaking all the necessary studies of traffic patterns, road safety and other impacts on services; opposing any variance to the zoning law which increases permissible housing densities; and insisting on appropriate design and aesthetic standards for all new construction. At some point I hope there will also be an opportunity to revisit the zoning law and return it to what the Swan Lake zoning subcommittee (of which I was a member) originally recommended, which was a maximum of two units per acre, not four two-family dwellings which makes a mockery of the label 'low density' residential development.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this public comment.

Sincerely Yours,

Michael Edwards