

VILLAGE OF POMONA

100 LADENTOWN ROAD

POMONA, N.Y. 10970

Phone (845) 354-0545 ~ Fax (845) 354-0604

Village of Pomona

Planning Board Meeting/ Public Hearing

October 27, 2022

7:30 PM

Present

Chairman Daniel Kolak

Board Member Donna Poliseo

Board Member Mark Friedman

Board Member David Horowitz

Village Engineer Bryon Rose

Village Planner Jonathan Lockman

Village Attorney Stephen Honan

Village Clerk Chakiera Locust

Meeting Minutes

Salute to the flag

Donna Poliseo makes a motion to open public hearing regarding 60 Halley Drive

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 3-0-1 David Horowitz not yet present

Discussion regarding the application continues along with discussion of professional comments

Donna Poliseo makes a motion to approve 15 ft wall waiver

Motion seconded Mark Friedman

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Motion carries 3-0-1 David Horowitz absent

During the open period Chairman Kolak reads his letter into the record regarding houses of worship

David Horowitz makes a motion to close the public hearing regarding 60 Halley Drive

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

Donna Poliseo makes a motion to open public hearing regarding 13-15 High Mountain Road

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

Discussion of the application continues along with discussion of professional comments

Discussion of the need for a waiver for the driveway slope is discussed with the board and village engineer the applicant discusses the need for the waiver

Mark Friedman makes a motion to approve the driveway slope waiver

Motion seconded by Donna Poliseo

Motion carries 4-0-0

No open period comments

Mark Friedman makes a motion to approve 13-15 High Mountain application

Motion seconded by David Horowitz

Motion carries 4-0-0

Discussion regarding 31 High Mountain begins

David Horowitz makes a motion to close public hearing regarding 13-15 High Mountain

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

Donna Poliseo makes a motion to schedule a public hearing for 31 High Mountain Road for November 11, 2022 at 7:30 pm

Motion seconded by David Horowitz

Motion carries 4-0-0

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Mark Friedman makes a motion to open public hearing regarding 7 Hidden Valley Drive

Motion seconded by David Horowitz

Motion carries 4-0-0

Sporoco Youngblood present regarding the application of 7 Hidden Valley Drive

The board and professionals discuss professional comments and memos

Open period for public comment

David Horowitz makes a motion to approve application regarding 7 Hidden Valley Drive

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

David Horowitz makes a motion to close public hearing regarding 7 Hidden Valley Drive

Motion seconded by Donna Poliseo

Motion carries 4-0-0

David Horowitz makes a motion to open the public hearing regarding 43 Tamarack Lane

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

Discussion of the application begins with the applicant and board members

David Horowitz makes a motion to continue the public hearing on November 17th at 7:30pm

Motion seconded by Donna Poliseo

Motion carries 4-0-0

Chairman Kolak discusses board meeting minutes and the need for a stenographer

The board agrees they would like the chairman to request a stenographer for the meetings

Donna Poliseo makes a motion to close the meeting

Motion seconded by Mark Friedman

Motion carries 4-0-0

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Prof. Dr. Daniel Kolak
38 White Birch Drive
Pomona, NY 10970
USA
kolakdan@msn.com

July 23, 2021

Dear Honored Trustees of the Village of Pomona:

I write to inform you of the Planning Board's houses of worship (HOW) discussion (item 4 of our Agenda) at the Planning Board meeting of July 22, 2021. I first expressed my own views in general terms as follows.

Present law in the Village of Pomona which allows large scale community level houses (by special permit approval of the Village Board and Site Plan approval of the Planning Board) on lots with three acres or more, and permits gatherings as accessory use to single family residences provided they occupy less than half the home's areas are together entirely inadequate to provide for the medium-scale Neighborhood House of Worship category that so many members of our Village require for the practice of their religion. This third category, which already exists and has been worked up in surrounding villages into a form that makes our version of it well versed in the nuanced details of safety and fairness, is in my view a moral obligation for the Village of Pomona not merely to accept officially but to celebrate. My thinking on these matters is informed by my knowledge and experience as a professional philosopher gainfully employed by a leading secular, state university. And, for what it's worth, it is as follows.

First, the essence of a thing as defined by Aristotle is that unique defining characteristic that makes something what it is rather than something else. Well, one may then ask not only what is the essence of a particular religion, say Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and so on, but also what is the essence of a particular recognized distinct practice of those religions that in some cases are more distinct internally within their denominations than externally amongst themselves. Witness the distinction between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, which in some ways differ from each other more than they do from Hinduism or Christianity, even up to the question of whether or not God exists! It is my understanding that our neighbors who identify as Jewish yet wish to gather at houses of worship rather than (or in addition to) large temples are in themselves a unique and fascinating way for this community to foster and develop a traditional way of life safely ensconced in the laws of our county, state, and country. This clearly in my view is the intent of the Founding Fathers; Thomas Jefferson, as I read him, and his wise colleagues, prohibited the establishment of a national religion not to prohibit religion but on the contrary, to *prohibit the prohibition of religion*. People by and large tend to miss the profound poignancy of this point. As any good historian will tell you, the enemies of religion are rarely atheists or agnostics (though sometimes it is the other way around) but, typically, other religions. And, again, what is *essential* to the particular practice of religion, prayer, and worship of so many members of our community is, as anyone who has thought deeply about it can tell you, simply, clearly, and unfairly *prohibitive* of the continuation of one of the great freedoms that makes the United States of America the greatest country in the world, second to none. Not because of our military strength, which is awesome. Not because of our wealth, which is

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extraordinary albeit in some exceptional cases unfairly encumbered. Because of our *freedom*. And I use "absolute" in its Hegelian sense: the Absolute, in trying to realize itself through us, is best realized in those nations that evolve *freedom*, the ultimate source of our power.

Why I am wholeheartedly in favor of the proposed changes to the Zoning Local Law to create a third, medium-scale Neighborhood House of Worship category may sound lofty, but it is eminently practical and thoroughly attainable. I am pleased to report that the other Planning Board Members wholeheartedly concur. They expressed rightful concern with issues of safety, parking, impact on neighbors, fire and other related safety issues, but also expressed how impressed they (and I) are by the work that went into this proposal and that everyone involved should be commended. Details of course need to be further ironed out in some cases, such as the parking on only one side of the road, signs, lighting, etc., but these are mere details over which we should at no point lose sight of the fertile forest, nor of the beautiful trees for which we Pomonians rightfully pride ourselves and preserve to keep.

I also stated at our meeting that, in my view, we (the Village officials) have a PR problem with this entire HOW issue, exacerbated in no small part by the lack of information and education of some of our residents about the facts of the matter (not merely misinformed ideas behind them), and requires some strong leadership in the positive direction from the Village. That our surrounding communities have enacted such a law, that we are behind not ahead (Pomona should be a shining example leading progressive change, not following someone else's initiatives), that having such a law would in fact alleviate some of the issues (such as parking, etc.) by providing explicit well worded clear and distinct rules for all to follow, including requiring permission from the Village boards to have a HOW, should be made available to all Village residents. Well known. Out in the open. Where, for God's sake, an idea, like we the people, can breathe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,



Daniel Kolak
Chairman, Pomona Village Planning Board

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