
John O'Farrell
Superintendent



September 14, 2026

Supervisor Edmund J. Smyth and
Members of the Huntington Town Board
100 Main Street
Huntington, New York 11743

Dear Supervisor Smyth and Members of the Huntington Town Board:

The Half Hollow Hills Central School District is appreciative of the efforts of the Town Council to consider the concerns of the school district and to require a Benefit Agreement for all new developments within the Melville Town Center Overlay District. However, as new specific applications are brought forward, we feel compelled to reiterate our foundational concerns.

In 2024, the District respectfully submitted a letter to this Council expressing concerns with the proposed zoning changes and creation of the Melville Town Center Overlay District (MTCOD). In response to community concerns relating to the adverse impacts of overdevelopment, the Town publicly referenced and codified the following language:

The Town Board will pause the acceptance of new applications after the submission of the first application(s) totaling four-hundred (400) residential units in the Melville Town Center, and thereafter each successive submission of application(s) totaling four-hundred (400) units in the Melville Town Center, to assess the cumulative impact of the developments on traffic conditions, fire/emergency and educational services. The total number of residential units in the Melville Town Center shall not exceed one thousand five hundred (1,500) units.

As a District, we understood this pause to be the primary mechanism by which the Town could guide or dictate future development based on real analyses of the *actual* cumulative impacts to our educational services. Reliance on *projected* cumulative impacts would base future decisions of the Town Council on the same data that we believe may be unanalogous to our unique circumstances.

Central to all of our concerns regarding the MTCOD is the possibility and risk that the industry standard projections for student yield per development do not adequately apply to Half Hollow Hills. The reality of this risk was made clear to us after proposing an agreement that would have required developers to ensure full funding for all students generated from their properties. This proposal was

summarily rejected, as we were assured that no lender would incur that level of risk. If the developers themselves, or a financial institution with a significant potential benefit will not take that risk, it seems reasonable that a school district would operate similarly.

Over the next several weeks and months, the Half Hollow Hills Central School District will be engaging in a public dialog with our residents about our inability to maintain current programs and operations without proposing a tax levy that is in excess of the mandated 2%. We are faced with the reality of reducing our expenses by either cutting programs or "piercing the cap," which will require a supermajority vote of our community. These problems will be exacerbated by any influx of new students that are not fully funded by new PILOT payments.

As part of this public conversation, we will be discussing the impacts of the Canon PILOT, the LIPA PILOT, MTCOD developments and other municipalities "piercing the cap." Although we have no authority to affect these decisions, we are obligated to communicate their impacts on the tax levy and educational services.

With that information as context, we respectfully ask the Town Council to adopt a more conservative interpretation of the "pause" referenced in Town Code 198-34.1 and delay the consideration of the Cornerstone Melville project until such time as we can measure the *actual* cumulative impacts of the Melville Crossing development on the Half Hollow Hills community.

Very truly yours,



John O'Farrell
Superintendent



Dr. Stephanie Gurin
Half Hollow Hills Board of Education
President

Cc: Hon. Andrew P. Raia, Huntington Town Clerk
Half Hollow Hills Board of Education