

The Star Ledger article published on May 19th 2006 entitled "Public advocate asks legislatures to make seizures of private property for public use harder, more transparent," and the associated report, "Public Advocate Releases Report on Reforming the Use of Eminent Domain for Private Redevelopment" should be read by all citizens that live within or around a "Smart Growth" or "Center" designated area.

I was made aware that my property was included within the boundaries of a proposed "Village Center" at a March 2006 planning board meeting. At a "special" meeting between the plan endorsement sub-committee, representatives of the State Office of Smart Growth and representatives of the Highlands Counsel, held on April 25, 2006, I raised concern that my property could be seized through eminent domain, to support the goals of "Smart Growth". The response from Barry Ableman (representative from Smart Growth) and the plan endorsement sub-committee was pure sarcasm. Also an elected member of the township committee who is also a member of the planning board got up while I was speaking and wrote: "NIMBY Not In My Back Yard" on the white board.

It is easy for all of the appointed and elected officials of the public body of Holland Township to make a mockery of the citizens in the proposed "Village Center" designation, because none of them live within its boundaries.

I hope that the public body of Holland Township will no longer dismiss public concerns over eminent domain being used for private redevelopment. I further hope that the public body of Holland Township becomes more familiar with the New Jersey State Constitution and Legislation and reconsider their current plan for a "Village Center."

1. The New Jersey State Constitution does allow for the private redevelopment of blighted areas for public purpose and public use.
2. Criteria "e": allows for an area to be deemed blighted if there is a "lack of proper utilization of areas..., resulting in a stagnant or not fully productive condition of land potentially useful..."
3. In 2002, the New Jersey State Legislator, (under Governor Jim McGreevy) added criteria "h" to the definition of blighted.
4. Criteria 'H': further defines a blighted area to include; **"The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principals adopted and pursuant to law or regulation."**

The State Office of Smart Growth requires that a Village Center to contain 3-5 units per acre. Also, most of Holland Township is in the Highlands Planning area and the State may be looking to send development into designated "Centers". By petitioning OSG for plan endorsement of a "Village Center" designation, the public body of Holland Township will be allowing for my property (due to only having 1 unit on 14.5 acres) and various other properties within the to fit the definition of blighted. Once, blighted, we are all subject to eminent domain.

All residents of Holland Township should attend the next public hearing, which is tentatively scheduled for June 12th 2006. Residents should confirm the date, time and

place with the planning board secretary at 908-995-0057. Also further information on the plan endorsement and “Village Center” is available at: [www.hollandhighlands.org](http://www.hollandhighlands.org)