

To the Editor:

There are several key issues facing Holland Township today, and the decisions our Township Committee and Planning Board make concerning these issues will affect not only the current residents, but future generations as well. Holland is at the crossroads, and the future of our community is at stake. What our elected and appointed officials decide now will determine whether our Township remains the rural community we all came to love or becomes a community of high-density, overcrowded developments that developers love.

The following is a brief summary of the most critical issue that requires the immediate attention of all Holland Township residents.

The Holland Township Committee and Planning Board are proposing to petition the State Planning Commission for Plan Endorsement, which includes requesting Village Center designation for part of the Township. If the petition is approved, about 1.5 square miles of Holland along Route 519, from the Huntington Knolls (Jiovino) development to Hawk's Schoolhouse Road, will open up to unwanted and unneeded development, allowing a minimum of three housing units per acre. This Village Center designation is not mandated by the state and does not benefit Holland Township, but most certainly will benefit developers. The center will not minimize, but will encourage development with unforeseen consequences. For example, we risk having the courts overturn the current one-acre zoning in most of the proposed center.

Our Township officials decided on this without following recommendations outlined by the state's Plan Endorsement guidelines, which call for creation of a special committee with representation by a wide spectrum of the citizenry and various Township commissions, to prepare the initial petition. In other words, only token public input was allowed, and a promised second public hearing was cancelled.

This issue should be of great concern to every resident of Holland, especially to those living within the proposed boundaries of the center. Therefore, we urge everyone to attend the meeting of the Subcommittee on Plan Endorsement scheduled for April 25, at 7 p.m., at the Holland Township Municipal building. Ignoring the state guidelines, this subcommittee has no public representatives and consists of four Planning Board members. The public will be allowed to observe, and perhaps ask questions of the state Office of Smart Growth representatives who will attend.

Detailed information on Holland's Petition for Plan Endorsement, the state guidelines, and the actual criteria for a Village Center (as well as any change in the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting date) can be found at this Web site: [www.hollandhighlands.org](http://www.hollandhighlands.org)

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