

Dear Chairman Sutherland & Planning Board Members,

Subject: Camp FIMFO

Community members have raised many valid concerns about Camp FIMFO. My purpose is not to reiterate those but to raise a sensitive subject that folks may hesitate to bring up.

I was speaking to an acquaintance who lives in Liberty, NY about the proposed FIMFO project. I mentioned to him that the planning board was concerned about what would become of the completed site in the event that FIMFO failed down the road. He answered immediately, as if it were a foregone conclusion, that the Hasidic community would absolutely purchase the site as they have with other properties in the county. He sees similar activity happening in Liberty and feels that Liberty is limited in recourse due to freedom of religion to address any violations.

The discussion brought back memories of when a Chabad center was established in my former neighborhood. Many in the neighborhood considered them to be bad neighbors specifically because they flouted local laws, disrupted the community, and the town was powerless to stop it.

The following occurred:

- Land with wetlands was purchased and a variance was issued to build a single family house
- Once the variance was issued, plans to build a Chabad that flouted zoning laws were begun immediately
- The Chabad paved over wetlands for parking, opened a school and held events
- The town rightfully issued violations and held a hearing with significant input from residents
- The Chabad's lawyer presented an expert on freedom of religion
- Despite clear and overwhelming evidence of wrongdoing, the EPA and town government quickly folded. The Chabad continues their operations & activities to this day
- This much larger town with 10X the population and significantly greater resources was defeated in their attempts to ensure that local laws were applied equally to all residents

The consequences were:

- traffic and parking became a nightmare, particularly during religious holidays - we counted over 60 days of holiday celebrations!
- Congregants, often with baby carriages and big families, who refrained from driving, walked along a dangerous road with no shoulder or sidewalk, often at night and dressed in black.
- The increased traffic and significantly more pedestrian traffic, especially at night, was a big problem for law enforcement and EMS (police were used to direct traffic during events at taxpayer expense)
- The Chabad received a tax exemption and are not paying taxes.

It is not farfetched to imagine that 1) Camp FIMFO could fail and 2) that the Hasidic/Orthodox community could buy or rent it and that some local regulations may not be adhered to. We have seen no business plan or 5-10 year business projections from FIMFO to assure us that their business will be viable in the longer term. Other businesses have struggled here with The Field of Dreams concept: "If you build it, they will come."

- The Resorts World Catskills Casino is failing. I read they were losing \$10MM/mo at one point
- The Catskills Mountain Resort failed as a hotel & restaurant. My understanding is that a religious group leased the property through October of this year, and that group has an option to buy the resort if it can get a special use permit from the town
- Brookwood Camps has been repurposed and was renting to a religious group this past summer
- A property in the Highland Lake community near Hartung Road was sold recently to a religious organization, Beit Tehillah, and they were holding events this Fall.

Is it that hard to imagine that this could happen to Camp FIMFO down the road? It makes sense to look around the corner. Look at the problems and tensions created from the expansion of the village of Kiryas Joel within the Town of Monroe in neighboring Orange County. For context, watch the movie "City of Joel" on Amazon video.

It's clear that the FIMFO project is directly opposed to the wishes of the majority of residents and is poised to ruin the pristine natural beauty of the Delaware River and change the character of our little town. If Camp FIMFO is built and then (likely) fails, there are many options for what could become of the property. One of those options is that another potential bad neighbor could create more headaches like those described above for our community.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully,

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A concerned citizen of the Town of Highland

# Fimfo

I am tired of Eldred, and Sullivan county in general, being treated like the redheaded step child that you can do anything to. We are rural residents. We are not stupid people you can pull one over on.

In the very least, we need a full environmental impact statement — not some statement that says everything should be fine. “Should be fine” is not good enough. We can’t accept a “should be.” This area is too fragile — eagles, other wildlife and the river itself. This is not the area to make what could easily turn into an environment disaster. This project is one flood away from disaster — just look at the river level today.

And for the record of Fimfo:

Just look at their history in Hinsdale, MA.

Fimfo’s attempt in the Berkshires was turned away because they refused to pay hook up charges to the sewers. Here they don’t want to pay taxes. It was deemed too large a project for the type of neighborhood it was going into.

And when the whitewashing didn’t work, the strong arm tactics began.

They are a long way from reputable. Their display shows pictures but they say that’s not what’s going here. They show mobile homes and call them RV’s. We are not getting the truth from them.

Yes, our community could use more business opportunities but this is neither the project nor the company we need in our town.

Chere Krist 793 St. Rt. 55, Eldred



## Planning Board and Zoning

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**From:** jc~ Jane Cyphers <jane\_skates@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 1, 2022 12:29 AM  
**To:** Planning Board and Zoning  
**Subject:** Dear Planning Board

"Given that the Northgate Resorts Camp Fimfo proposal will most certainly inflict significant environmental and community impact, SEQRA demands that the Town of Highland Planning Board secure/prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to SEQRA, basing a decision on a mere Environmental Assessment, as the Planning Board seems to be proposing, does not fulfill the legal mandates of SEQRA. In addition, based on all we know to date, as well as the continuing information gaps in what Northgate Resorts has provided regarding proposed Camp FIMFO, it would be irresponsible and unjustified for the Town of Highland Planning Board to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA."

There are issues you have not addressed regarding this project, issues that a full EIS will. Please do not delay on the EIS. The many residents who live here and visit here who love and protect our beautiful Delaware deserve a voice. We are stewards of this river, and you, the planning board are our first line of defense. Some of the amenities that are part of this project are not the kind of amenities that will help the beautiful Delaware keep it's Wild and Scenic status. Please consider the pristine location and nature of the site. Theme parks and pools and paint ball can be built anywhere. Why by the river? And the threat of floods. One of my best friends lost their trailer they had at The Red Barn Campground a few years back. Floods are the new norm now. Pools by the river? Swimming in the river isn't good enough? There are plenty of pools Brooklyn to swim in. Why this site? It's an insult.

I have read that paintball products can negatively affect the intestinal tract and can lead to dehydration, diarrhea, vomiting, urination issues, and to top it off, a severe elevation in the blood sodium levels. So, if Paintball is part of this park, there's a good chance the wildlife at this site may come in contact with these products. These are nesting areas for eagles. These products should be kept far away from these sites. These theme park type games should be put off site, away from these very pristine areas. There are countless generations yet to experience the beautiful pristine Delaware as we have experienced it. It's time to do a full EIS.

Preservation is a must

Jane Cyphers  
Milanville Pa  
jane\_skates@yahoo.com

December 2, 2022

Re: Proposed Northgate Resort Camp FIMFO development

Dear Town of Highland Planning Board,

I have lived 30 minutes north of the proposed FIMFO development site for 33 years. I write to ask you to require that a full Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for this project.

The scale of the proposed project and the resulting threats to our natural landscape, wildlife habitats, and water quality warrant a full review and statement. Our local economy depends on the natural beauty and clean water we are tasked with protecting. Reports from other communities grappling with problems caused by Northgate developments are further evidence that a full Environmental Impact Statement is needed.

For example, nearby Gardiner, NY has been fighting to keep Northgate from continuing to expand its "campground." An August meeting concerning Northgate's requests for waivers and special permits for expansion led the town attorney to ask, "At what point is it not a campground?" The [local paper reported](#) that the "rhetorical question echoed **allegations made by many frustrated Gardiner residents that the recreational facility is no longer a mere campground, but has become a theme park, and a public nuisance, since its 2014 acquisition by Northgate Resorts.**

Given that the Northgate Resorts Camp FIMFO proposal will inflict significant environmental and community impact, SEQRA requires that the Town of Highland Planning Board secure/prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to SEQRA.

Basing a decision on a mere Environmental Assessment, does not fulfill the legal mandates of SEQRA. Based on what we know to date about the proposed development plans and given the information gaps in what Northgate Resorts has provided, it would be irresponsible and unjustified for the Town of Highland Planning Board to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Louise Washer  
646 River Road, Milanville, PA

## **Planning Board and Zoning**

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**From:** jacqueline sailer <jacquelinesailer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 1, 2022 11:35 AM  
**To:** Planning Board and Zoning  
**Subject:** Northgate Resorts Camp Fimfo proposal -- Full environmental impact statement on proposed project must be made

**To the Town of Highland, NY Planning Board members,**

**I am a property owner on the upper Delaware River whose interests and enjoyment of the scenic and wild area will be directly and negatively impacted by the FIMFO proposal. A full impact statement must be prepared. Given that the Northgate Resorts Camp Fimfo proposal will most certainly inflict significant environmental and community impact, SEQRA demands that the Town of Highland Planning Board secure/prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to SEQRA, basing a decision on a mere Environmental Assessment, as the Planning Board seems to be proposing, does not fulfill the legal mandates of SEQRA.**

**In addition, based on all we know to date, as well as the continuing information gaps in what Northgate Resorts has provided regarding proposed Camp FIMFO, it would be irresponsible and unjustified for the Town of Highland Planning Board to issue a Negative Declaration pursuant to SEQRA.**

**Please acknowledge receipt of this communication and further, add it to the record of the Town of Highland's consideration of this proposal.**

Jacqueline Sailer  
917-974-6859  
[JacquelineSailer@gmail.com](mailto:JacquelineSailer@gmail.com)



Edward Stone  
39 Devlin Rd.  
Highland Lake NY 12743

December 12, 2022

Mr. Norman Sutherland  
Chairman, Town of Highland Planning Board  
Town Hall  
4 Proctor Rd.  
Eldred, NY 12732

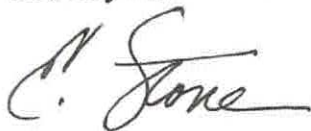
Dear Mr. Sutherland,

I attended the last three board meetings during which the plans for the proposed Camp FIMFO in Barryville were discussed. I want to commend you for your commitment to conducting the meetings with decorum and civility. However, I along with many of the attendees I spoke with were not happy with your strict limitation of only 1 three-minute comment per person and also your not allowing a back and forth Q & A with Northgate representatives. Many people I spoke with felt that Northgate has not been forthcoming and totally honest with their presentations and want specific questions answered.

I understand your concern that this could deteriorate into a rancorous event. Please keep in mind however, that contentious issues are dealt with every day in government and the courts and I have complete confidence that you can manage it.

I trust you realize that you and the entire Planning Board are in the unique position to preserve not only the character of a town but also one of America's iconic waterways. Please let the discussion go forward.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Stone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Edward Stone

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/central\\_berkshires/hinsdale-rejects-northgate-rv-park-proposal/article\\_82913ed8-7346-11ec-8796-b39208316131.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/central_berkshires/hinsdale-rejects-northgate-rv-park-proposal/article_82913ed8-7346-11ec-8796-b39208316131.html)

## Hinsdale officials reject RV park plan, calling it too much for a small town

By Larry Parnass, The Berkshire Eagle  
Jan 11, 2022

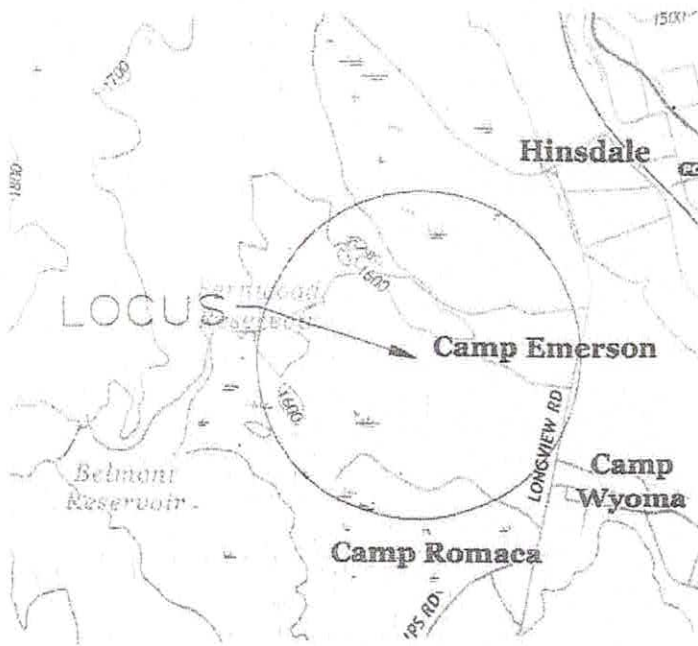


A view of the 155-acre Camp Emerson property in Hinsdale, the proposed site of an RV park. On Tuesday, the town's Zoning Board of Appeals rejected a special permit application from Northgate Resort Ventures LLC to transform the camp into one of its portfolio of RV destinations.

GOOGLE EARTH

HINSDALE — In the end, a “massive” plan to transform a family-owned summer camp into a national RV destination was deemed to be too much for a small town.





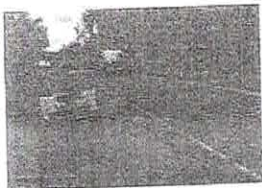
A national company sought permission to remake Camp Emerson in Hinsdale into a destination for recreational vehicles.

NORTHGATE RESORT VENTURES LLC PERMIT APPLICATION

“My opinion on it is that it’s not in harmony,” he said. “It doesn’t keep the small-town character. It doesn’t lessen the congestion.”

Member Bruce Alexander seconded the motion, and he joined Viner and another member in voting to deny the application. Member Dan Thornton listened but did not vote, because he had expressed opposition to the project before it was filed to the ZBA.

“I don’t understand how you can put a development this big in that area and not have it completely change the character of the neighborhood,” Viner said, during a five-minute recitation of his reasons for denying the proposal, which had been the target of vigorous opposition at two previous ZBA sessions, in late November and in December.



Controversial ‘Yogi Bear’ RV park proposal resurfaces in Hinsdale, where developer promises ‘mutual prosperity’

“I can’t get over the amount of vehicles per day making the trips and just how that alone isn’t going to change the character,” Viner said. “I can’t get over the fact that it’s not detrimental.”

“Because of these reasons, I’m going to make a motion that we vote to deny Northgate’s proposal,” he said.

The board must still draft its decision and file it with the town clerk, after which Northgate will have an appeal period.

Midway through the night's proceedings, Viner faced off criticism from a town resident, Walter D. Ulmer, who accused the ZBA of being too cordial with representatives of the applicant. Ulmer said he feared increased traffic on Robinson Road, where he lives, if RV drivers used that as a route to reach Pittsfield.

"You have to let it play out," Viner told Ulmer.



Zoning panel members got cold feet in Hinsdale over proposed RV park. The town hustled up a legal solution

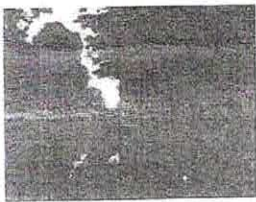
Larry Parnass can be reached at [lparnass@berkshireeagle.com](mailto:lparnass@berkshireeagle.com) and 413-588-8341.

#### **MORE INFORMATION**



The Hinsdale Zoning Board of Appeals voted unanimously Tuesday night to reject a special permit application filed by Northgate Resort Ventures LLC. The decision ends, for now, more than six months of public debate about the proposal's impact on the Longview Avenue neighborhood surrounding Camp Emerson, and on the town as a whole.

Northgate has a right to appeal the decision. In early December, ZBA members sought, and secured, proof that the town of Hinsdale will defend them legally, if they are named in litigation resulting from a denied application.



Hinsdale's RV park applicant has a history of challenging local zoning decisions it loses

“To me, it’s a massive, massive development. It would be the biggest development in Hinsdale,” said Jeffrey Viner, the ZBA chairman.

The decision is a setback for the Lein family, which reached an agreement to sell the camp it had run for half a century, contingent on Northgate winning approval for its special permit to develop 317 RV campsites on the 155-acre property. The company runs nearly two dozen RV camping facilities around the country, many branded as Yogi Bear campgrounds.

Sue Lein was one of more than 60 people who watched Tuesday’s proceedings via a Zoom broadcast, while an additional 20 or so observed from the auditorium of the Nessacus Regional Middle School in Dalton.

Just before 8 p.m., after 90 minutes of additional evidence collection, Viner moved to reject the application. He did that after reviewing the town’s relevant bylaws, one of which states that a special permit application must be in harmony with the town’s character.

## **Planning Board and Zoning**

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**From:** Gregg Willinger <gregg@willingertalent.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2023 5:51 PM  
**To:** Planning Board and Zoning  
**Subject:** NO CAMP FIMFO

To The Town of Highland Planning Board:

I write this as an 11-year resident of Barryville and as President of York Lake Shores HOA, a residential community therein.

We are VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED to the massive project from Northgate. It will ruin our water, the natural surroundings we love so much, the peace and quiet of the area. Instead, our roads will be jammed up all summer long with traffic and pollution and make this an undesirable place to live.

Appreciate you listening to all of our concerns and blocking this terrible project.

**Gregg Willinger**  
**President**  
**Homeowners Ass'n of York Lake Shores Inc.**  
**PO Box 155**  
**Barryville, New York 12719**



## Planning Board and Zoning

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**From:** TOM HAYES <tomhay972@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 21, 2023 4:35 PM  
**To:** Planning Board and Zoning  
**Cc:** guntheA@nyassemble.gov  
**Subject:** Camp FIMFO development project

Dear Highland Town Planning Board,

I am a full time resident of Barryville, living not far from the proposed Camp FIMFO campsite. Our home is a part of about 100 properties surrounding York Lake.

From what I have come to understand, the Camp FIMFO project will have an impact on local traffic and the Delaware River including erosion, wildlife, water shortage, pollution, and safety.

I also understand the project will have a sizable tax credit.

To what benefit will Camp FIMFO have to our community? If given approval to proceed, the project will set a precedent for other corporations to move in and destroy the serenity and environment our residents have long loved.

Over the past months, it has become difficult to understand what Northgate is actually proposing since the goal posts continue to move so sporadically. This also makes it increasingly difficult for agencies to assess the final plan, making those that have ruled "no problem" obsolete.

What is necessary is a final proposal, and an independent environmental impact study to understand what Camp Fimfo intends to do to our community.

As a tax paying resident, I demand final development plans from Northgate be made public. I also demand the Town Planning Board officially recognize this project as having significant impact on the environment, and engage an independent environmental impact study to outline these problems. This would also give Northgate a chance to mitigate these issues.

Sincerely,

Thomas and Kristina Hayes  
139 York Lake Estates Road  
Barryville, NY. 12719

## Planning Board and Zoning

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**From:** Alex Kaczun <alex.kaczun@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 23, 2023 5:30 PM  
**To:** Planning Board and Zoning  
**Cc:** alex Kaczun; lubajkaczun@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Northgate\_FIMFO

Dear Highland Planning Board,

We are especially deeply concerned about our well water situation if the FIMFO project is allowed to continue.

As well as, this project may result in significant impact to our environment.

Please provide independent research into the matter asap before allowing any approval or going forward.

Thank you.

Best regards— Orest A. & Luba J. Kaczun

225 York Lake Estates Road, Lot C  
PO Box 252  
Barryville, NY 12719

1-631-235-4409 Orest A. Kaczun (Cell)  
1-631-235-4408 Luba J. Kaczun (Cell)



Members of the Planning Board;

Please note that I am writing to weigh in on the Pimso project. We bought our house 36 years ago when we were still a hamlet and RSE 55 an old country road.

We cross country ski and hike on the neighboring roads we swim in the beautiful lakes and of course, the river.

Sadly the old road turned into a highway and a bot stone was built abutting our property.

There are loud speakers blasting in spite of the noise ordinance.

These are minor compared to the magnitude of the Pimso effect but I can attest to the inconvenience and pollution of these 'advancements' in our town

We kayak in the river and enjoy dining in our local restaurants -

We sometimes wait for our water to fill back up and endure the occasional black out.

We heat with oil as well as our wood stove. Now, retired, we couldn't ask for more nor do we want it.

I would appreciate an assessment by a

legitimate concern as to the effect Fmbs  
will have on the climate, environment  
and culture of highland.

It seems akin to replacing our  
town buildings with skyscrapers; not what or why  
we live here.

Please take this into consideration and  
work toward keeping our town's natural  
beauty and function.

Thank you for your attention.

Jane Murr