



A Public Service Announcement

A New County 911 Emergency Center Needs to be Done Right

Twenty years ago the county began planning for a new emergency 911 call center—and now with failing infrastructure, it's more critical than ever. The most logical locations discussed and studied over the years were two county-owned properties but suddenly, out of the blue, the County Executive attempted to rush through a private purchase of a plot of land in New Paltz for the project. Thanks to the diligence of some Ulster County legislators, many alarming facts have been brought to our attention. We recently met with two county legislators to discuss this proposed “911 Center.”

The Ulster County Executive’s Office is apparently pushing very hard to build a new 911 Call Center in New Paltz. Kingston is the County seat, so why the push to locate the project in New Paltz? What would be the advantages of locating this type of project in New Paltz, rather than Kingston? The following facts were supplied to me and are given in consideration here:

- The individual who owns the New Paltz property ("the property") has allegedly made substantial donations to both Mike Hein and Pat Ryan, the past and current County Executives.
- The property consists of two vacant parcels of contiguous, commercial-industrial zoned land, which parcels comprise 57.3-acres. The subject property is reduced to 52.3-acres after accounting for unusable wetlands,
- Formerly, the property was an apple orchard filled with toxic pesticides still in need of remediation.
- An Appraisal Report by Ackerly & Hubbell and dated July 15, 2022, indicates the fair market value of said parcels is One-million, Two-hundred Fifty-thousand dollars (\$1,250,000.).
- The current owner wants 3.2 million dollars for the subject parcels.
- A “minimum of 5-acres - no maximum” is the size of property needed for the project, in

accordance with the “... Initial Site Screening Criteria” report. When asked about why the property couldn’t be sub-divided since the size is excessive compared to what’s needed, the response from the Executive’s office was, “We want to know who our neighbors will be.”

- The County presently owns the property at Golden Hill, where the new 911 Center could easily be built at no charge for any additional property.

Apparently some Democrat and Republican legislators in the County are in favor of spending money to house the new 911 Center in New Paltz.

In our opinion, this is insanity. While we are definitely in favor of (and support) a new 911 Center and are not opposed to spending money to construct it, we are against wasteful, unnecessary spending to the tune of 3.2 million dollars. It is an absolute and total waste of taxpayers’ money and any legislator who votes in favor of such a purchase should not be re-elected next year. Just for starters, the asking price is more than double what the property is worth. With property values decreasing and inflation increasing, Ulster County citizens can’t afford to spend anything in an irresponsible manner and there is just no reason not to make the prudent choice to stay in Kingston on land that will not cost one additional dime—and the Golden Hill property is one of the sites under consideration anyway. Wasted dollars and back-door deals like this threaten our trust in democracy and undermine our future prosperity. We need and deserve a new state-of-the-art emergency call center and we must have elected officials that put the people before local elites.

The Director of the Department of Emergency Services lives in Highland (much closer to New Paltz than Kingston), which may be his reason for wanting it there. He could think about moving to Kingston if that’s so important to him. And many of the legislators are from the more southerly areas of the County, which could be their reasoning. But then, of course, one has to wonder if big donors are in some way being taken care of.

Contact your County Legislators.