

06/24/2019

I would like to thank the Town Council for setting up tonight's Open Meeting with residents to discuss the Studio Apartment Supportive Housing project being developed by Valley CDC at 132 Northampton Road in Amherst. I believe it is essential to have a courteous and respectful debate on this sensitive topic, in which different points of view may be expressed and taken into consideration before the town government votes on whether or not to borrow 500,000 dollars to fund this project. I regret that I will not be able to listen to the presentations or participate in the debate as I am out of town, which is why I am sending this brief letter. I support low-income housing in Amherst, and wholeheartedly agree that the lack of affordable family housing in our town should be one of the key priorities of the town government. My concerns have to do with the specific development project that is being proposed by Valley CDC for 132 Northampton Road. I find the lack of adequate support services on site to be a matter of concern. As you know, in the current project, a manager would be present on site 20 hours a week only; no medical, social, or psychological support would be provided for the residents in the ten allocated units who are transitioning from homelessness or the residents in the two units who are under the care of the Department of Mental Health. I believe providing more consistent on-site support for residents would be a good way to move forward. As an alternative, I would be thrilled with a development project that would serve low-income families, thus addressing an urgent need for affordable housing in Amherst. Many families, I am sure, would welcome affordable housing in a residential neighborhood close to downtown, on the edge of a sports facility that also serves as a recreational area, with the opportunity to send their children to a wonderful, supportive local public school (Crocker Farm Elementary). I hope that tonight's debate will be productive, and yield positive ideas on how to move this discussion forward.

Sincerely,

Laure Katsaros  
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