



Conserving the land, protecting our future.

June 5, 2018

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Supervisor James Schmitt and Members of the Town Board
of the Town of Pawling
160 Charles Coleman Blvd.
Pawling, NY 12564

Re: Route 22 Re-zoning
Planning Board Recommendation

Dear Supervisor Schmitt and Town Board members:

In making its determination of land use on Route 22 north of the Village, the Town should take into consideration the needs, values, and economic interests of the Village and the rest of the Town as a whole, in order to avoid the risk of spot zoning.

Any zoning changes that compromise the rural character and views from the northern approach on Route 22 should not be undertaken without considering their potential cost in degrading Pawling's principal attraction to tourists, home buyers and long time residents alike: its natural beauty, environmental richness, and recreational amenities. Important natural resources, on which the health of the Harlem Valley ecology as a whole depend, such as the Great Swamp and the Harlem Valley wild life corridor should not be impaired without understanding the impacts of such degradation may have on water quality and the resilience of natural systems that are already under stress in these times of changing climate.

The Oblong Land Conservancy can assist the Town by identifying the natural resources at risk under various re-zoning options, and by helping evaluate those impacts. Oblong can help identify the sectors of Pawling's economy, including tourism, hospitality, and real estate and associated construction and maintenance that could be impaired if natural resources and rural character are degraded. Oblong can also bring to bear resources from the wider conservation community, such as the quantitative



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studies now being undertaken by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to measure the economic benefits of the Appalachian Trail to host communities, including Pawling specifically.

This conservation perspective that Oblong can bring would be most useful to the Town if integrated into the planning process from the outset, and on a continuing basis. A single consultation, or a comment on a near final proposal would not be as helpful as bringing a conservation perspective in from the beginning, and applying it to each proposal under consideration.

Therefore, the Oblong Land Conservancy proposes the Town should invite it to join as a regular part of a Town/Village committee to consider re-zoning of Route 22.

If the Town chooses to make the committee purely governmental, as recommended by the Planning Board, then the Conservation Advisory Board could provide a vehicle to bring a conservation perspective to the task. However, since it appears the Town Board has not yet named a Conservation Advisory Board in 2018, one would have to be re-constituted.

Oblong has had a longstanding place in the Town of Pawling's Conservation Advisory Board, through the membership of our vice chairperson Sibyll Gilbert. In the event of her being unable to serve at this point, Oblong could recommend another knowledgeable person who could share the fruits of Oblong's experience, and help access to the resources of the wider conservation community.

We look forward to working with the Town to help ensure a vibrant, and environmentally sustainable future for Pawling.

Respectfully yours,



Philip van Buren, Chair
the Oblong Land Conservancy