



Town of Dover Town Board

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

The Dover Town Board is concerned that both the Benjamin Companies and the County's Planning Commissioner, Roger Akeley, have misunderstood the Board's intention in retaining the respected new urbanist planning firm of Looney Ricks Kiss (LRK) in connection with the proposed Dover Knolls development project at the site of the former Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center. LRK was retained neither to prepare a new plan for the site nor to critique the proposed development plan prepared for the developer by Torti Gallas. Rather, the Town Board retained LRK to facilitate a resolution of the current impasse in negotiations.

What started as a cooperative planning process has become adversarial, and the Town Board is eager to move the project forward and develop a consensus plan that enjoys the support of both the developer and the Town. Over the last few months, town residents have requested a public dialogue and mediation to break the impasse. "We wanted to bring in a respected third party with a national reputation for transit-oriented development of the kind the Town wants at the HVPC site," said Town Supervisor Jill Way. "LRK has both the facilitation skills and the design skills to do this. In addition, we feel that the public has not been given an adequate opportunity to participate in planning for this project, and LRK can facilitate an effective public involvement process to increase public understanding and support for the project."

It is unfortunate that the Benjamin Companies chose to interpret the Town Board's decision to retain LRK as a delaying tactic, rather than as a good-faith attempt to respond to the public's wishes and expedite the design and approval process. Since no consensus plan can be achieved without the developer at the table, the Town Board would like the developer to reconsider its decision to withdraw the application.